

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.

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Nat. Register of Historic Places  
National Park Service

### 1. Name of Property

Historic name: I. J. Fox Building

Other names/site number: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of related multiple property listing: \_\_\_\_\_

N/A

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

### 2. Location

Street & number: 407 Washington Street

City or town: Boston State: MA County: Suffolk

Not For Publication:

Vicinity:

### 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this  nomination  request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

national  statewide  local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

A  B  C  D

<u>Brona Simon</u>	<u>November 13, 2015</u>
<b>Signature of certifying official/Title: Brona Simon, SHPO</b>	<b>Date</b>
_____ <b>State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government</b>	

In my opinion, the property <input type="checkbox"/> meets <input type="checkbox"/> does not meet the National Register criteria.	
_____ <b>Signature of commenting official:</b>	_____ <b>Date</b>
_____ <b>Title :</b>	_____ <b>State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government</b>

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**4. National Park Service Certification**

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
- determined eligible for the National Register
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain:)

*John Edson H. Beall*  
Signature of the Keeper

*12.29.15*  
Date of Action

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- Private:
- Public – Local
- Public – State
- Public – Federal

**Category of Property**

(Check only one box.)

- Building(s)
- District
- Site
- Structure
- Object

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**Number of Resources within Property**

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	buildings
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	sites
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	structures
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	objects
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register \_\_\_\_\_

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

COMMERCE/TRADE/Specialty Store

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

VACANT/NOT IN USE

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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## 7. Description

### Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

MODERN MOVEMENT: Art Deco

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**Materials:** (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: Brick, Limestone, Granite, Synthetic

### Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

### Summary Paragraph

The seven-story, Art Deco-style, I. J. Fox Building is located in Boston's Downtown Crossing shopping district, on the west side of Washington Street in the block between Winter and Bromfield streets. Designed in 1935 by the eminent New York architecture firm Elias, Rothschild & Company, in association with the local Boston firm Shepard & Stearns, the I. J. Fox building served as a showroom for the I. J. Fox Furriers retail establishment, reportedly the largest furrier in the United States. The limestone-clad symmetrical façade features a black-granite base with a stepped-back ziggurat design at the first story, and a delicate ironwork balcony between the third and fourth floors. The remaining stories feature a smooth limestone surface terminating with a stepped parapet at the roofline, in keeping with the Art Deco style. Between 2012 and 2014, the I. J. Fox Building was rehabilitated with the assistance of state and federal historic tax credits to accommodate commercial space in the basement level and floors one through three, and residential units on the upper floors. The building retains a high degree of integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.

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## Narrative Description

The I. J. Fox Building is located on the west side of Washington Street in Boston's Downtown Crossing shopping district. North and south of the building, along Winter and Bromfield streets, are low-rise masonry commercial buildings that predate the Great Fire of 1872, as well as early 20<sup>th</sup>-century commercial buildings designed in the popular styles of the era, including Beaux Arts, Colonial, and Classical Revival styles. South of the building is the Washington Street Theatre District (NRDIS 1979), which includes 19th century theater buildings as well as modern, high-rise residential buildings. Located on the east side of Washington Street, opposite the I. J. Fox Building, is the former Filene's Department Store (NR 1980) and the adjacent parcel that previously contained the 1951 and 1973 Filene's buildings (demolished in 2008), which are currently being redeveloped for a high rise residential building.

The seven-story, steel-frame masonry building is situated at the rear edge of the sidewalk on Washington Street, and occupies the entire lot. The façade (east) elevation is clad in limestone, with a polished, black-granite base extending between the first and second stories (Photos 1 and 2). Measuring three bays wide, the façade features a two-story, recessed pedestrian entrance at the center bay that provides access to the interior retail space (Photos 1, 2, and 3). The entrance is flanked by massive replacement, plate-glass storefront windows. At the north and south ends of the façade are secondary entrances, not original to the building. Installed in 2013, these entrances are slightly recessed and placed at an angle, to provide access and egress to and from the residential units, which currently occupy the building's upper floors. The first-story storefront is topped by Deco-inspired, stepped-bronze ornamentation, surrounded by polished granite that extends to the third story (Photos 1, 2, and 3). The second story of the recessed entryway is set off by a bronze frame with chamfered granite edges that give way to raised, bronzed-aluminum panels, carved with sweeping curls and stylized floral motifs at either side (Photo 5). An artificially lit, ornamental skylight with colored glass featuring a Deco-inspired floral motif crowns the recessed entry (Photos 3 and 6); both the skylight and panels extend from the interior to the exterior. A flagpole pierces the granite paneling at the second-story center bay, and a decorative iron balcony spans the façade between the third- and fourth-story windows (Photo 1). The upper five stories each contain three original, double-hung, steel-framed, 1/1 windows. At the roof, a slightly stepped parapet features horizontal reverse-cable fluting at either side of the facade. The unadorned, seventh-story center bay once held a flagpole, which was likely removed ca. 1980.

The north and south (side) elevations, visible above the lower, neighboring buildings at 403 and 415 Washington Street, feature solid, red-brick walls, devoid of fenestration (Photo 1). The rear (west) elevation is only visible from a lightwell created by the rear wall and neighboring buildings.

The interior of the building consists of a full basement level and seven upper floors that were heavily altered over the years to accommodate the building's previous retail tenants and the current residential layout. The main entrance at the center of the first floor leads to an open, multistory lobby area between the first and second floors. The most striking interior feature is the black-granite panel etched with the I. J. Fox logo, positioned between the first-floor ceiling and second-level floor, above the main entrance. The panel is framed by gilt bronze reliefs of minks and squirrels, with a fox head projecting from the top center of the panel (Photo 4). Carved, bronzed-aluminum panels flank each side of the entry (Photo 5) and extend to the ceiling of the second floor. The panels terminate at the decorative skylight, which extends inward from the recessed entryway (Photos 3, 5, and 6).

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### *Certified Rehabilitation*

Between 2012 and 2014, the I. J. Fox Building underwent a substantial rehabilitation that resulted in the renovation of this prominent building in Boston's Downtown Crossing neighborhood. The repurposed building was designed to accommodate commercial space on the basement, first, and second floors, with residential units on the upper floors.

As part of the rehabilitation project, the limestone masonry façade was repointed, cleaned, and repaired by skilled masonry craftsmen in accordance with detailed specifications that were approved by the Massachusetts Historical Commission and National Park Service. The original iron balcony located between the third and fourth stories was cleaned, repaired and repainted. A new, historically sensitive aluminum-and-glass storefront system replaced the existing 1991 storefront, based on documentation provided in newspaper articles and photographs from 1935, 1936, 1939, and 1942. New granite panels were installed below the storefront windows, and black fritted (semi-opaque) glass panels were inserted above the storefront's clear-glass display windows and beneath the bronze ziggurat Art Deco detailing. The ornamentation original to the building—specifically the stepped granite, the polished-granite panels, the bronze moldings, and the bronze panels—were cleaned and repaired, and remain as prominent visual elements of the façade. The configuration of the storefront system was slightly modified to accommodate both the commercial entrance and the new residential side entrances. The original steel sash on the third through seventh floors were retained and repaired; the original steel sash at the building's rear elevation were replaced with new 3/3, double-hung aluminum sash. New windows were installed along the center bay of the rear elevation, increasing the availability of natural light along the rear wall.

Rehabilitation work on the interior of the building included the removal of all nonhistoric finishes, including partitions, wall paneling, and drop-tile ceilings. New residential units occupy floors four through seven, with three units on floors four through six and two units on the seventh floor (Photo 8). The basement level and floors one, two, and three will be occupied by a single retail tenant. The stair, which was not original, stair enclosure, and shaft at the northeast corner of the building were removed and replaced with a new steel stair in the same location that meets current building code requirements. One of the two passenger elevators and part of the hoistway were removed; the remaining elevator was upgraded to current building codes, and services all levels of the building.

State and federal historic preservation tax credits were utilized for the rehabilitation project; as such, all work was consistent with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and was reviewed and approved by the Massachusetts Historical Commission and National Park Service.

### **Archaeological Description**

As the I. J. Fox building footprint includes the entirety of the property upon which the building has been built, there is no remaining potential preservation of archaeological resources.

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## 8. Statement of Significance

### Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

### Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

- A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- B. Removed from its original location
- C. A birthplace or grave
- D. A cemetery
- E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- F. A commemorative property
- G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

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**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

ARCHITECTURE

COMMERCE

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Period of Significance**

1935 – 1965

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Dates**

1935 (construction)

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Person**

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Architect/Builder**

Elias, Rothschild & Co.

Shepard & Stearns

HEW Construction Co., builder

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**Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph** (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

The I. J. Fox Building, built in 1935 at 407 Washington Street, is an excellent example of a well-preserved Art Deco commercial building in Boston's Downtown Crossing/Central Business District. The building meets National Register Criterion A for its association with the development of the retail core of Boston's Central Business District, and for its association with I. J. Fox, Inc., a nationally prominent, early to mid 20<sup>th</sup>-century luxury furrier. The building also meets Criterion C as a rare example of the Art Deco style in downtown Boston, designed by the New York-based firm Elias, Rothschild & Company and the locally prominent firm of Shepard & Stearns.

Since its construction, the I. J. Fox Building has been an integral element of the Washington Street streetscape, due primarily to its highly visible location and distinctive design and materials. The period of significance begins with the construction of the I. J. Fox Building in 1935 and extends to 1965, the standard 50-year cutoff period established by the National Register program.

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**Narrative Statement of Significance** (Provide at least one paragraph for each area of significance.)

ARCHITECTURE: Construction of the I. J. Fox building in 1935 established an important feature of the Washington Street streetscape that remains a rare example of the Art Deco style in downtown Boston. Designed by the New York firm Elias, Rothschild & Company, in association with the locally prominent firm of Shepard & Stearns, the building's intricate façade was considered by Elias to be the epitome of his firm's massive plate-glass storefronts conceived during the early 20th century. It continues to serve as an important component of the downtown shopping district, and is the only known example of the New York firm's work in Massachusetts. Other extant buildings designed by Elias, Rothschild & Company are located in Chicago, Indianapolis, San Francisco, and New York.

COMMERCE: The Washington Street area of downtown Boston contains a significant concentration of retail buildings that served as the region's central business district in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Although the area began to decline as a retail destination during the mid 20th century, the I. J. Fox building remains as a testament to the neighborhood's growth. While several nearby buildings, including the original Jordan Marsh building and R. H. White's department store, have been demolished and replaced with nondescript modern buildings, I. J. Fox survives as one of the last vestiges of the early 20<sup>th</sup>-century Washington Street shopping district.

*Development of Boston's Downtown Shopping District*

Washington Street, originally known as Marlborough Street, was initially the only land route connecting Boston to the mainland and is considered the first Boston "Main Street." Extending north to south, the street was renamed in 1789 following the election of George Washington as the first president of the United States of America. Development of Washington Street grew southward from the Old State House during the mid 18<sup>th</sup> century. By the turn of the 19th century, the blocks of Washington Street nearest

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Downtown Crossing had undergone significant development and included a mixture of Colonial houses, mansions, shops, and taverns. Boston was becoming one of the most densely populated cities in America, having grown from a provincial town of 30,000 ca. 1800, to a city of 107,347 ca. 1840, and 250,526 by ca. 1870.

As the city prospered and grew in its commercial prowess during the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century, Washington Street was transformed. The former residential buildings and small-scale brick commercial establishments disappeared. Following the Civil War, the downtown shopping district grew substantially as the country transitioned from small retail shops to large specialty shops and department stores. Larger commercial buildings of iron, granite, and marble were constructed along both the east and west perimeters of the streetscape, ushering Washington Street into its period of maturation. The Great Fire of 1872 also played a significant role in the street's later success as a retail center. Though the fire decimated 65 acres of downtown Boston and more than 700 buildings—including many of the newly constructed commercial establishments along Washington Street—it ushered in the shopping district's golden era. Following the fire Washington Street was widened, and the blocks scorched by the conflagration were reconstructed with modern, tall buildings that utilized improved construction techniques. Central to the growing shopping district was the stretch of Washington Street between Milk and Essex streets, with its nexus located at the intersection of Washington and Summer streets. The last two decades of the 19th century, following the Great Fire, were witness to the growth of the retail dry-goods trade and ready-made clothing industry, and their ultimate relocation to Washington Street.

By 1880, department stores and specialty clothiers, hatters, and tailors began to migrate downtown, including R. H. White's at 536 Washington Street (1883, demolished), Commonwealth Clothing at 694-702 Washington Street (1888, BOS.2341), and the Henry Siegal Company at 590-622 Washington Street (1905, BOS.2330). The early decades of the 20th century were witness to the district's maturation through the construction of large department stores and tenant buildings that served the apparel and garment trade. The construction of the Filene's Building at 384 Washington Street in 1912 cemented the area as the retail epicenter of downtown Boston, followed by the S. S. Kresge Company at 477-481 Washington Street (1920, remodeled 1959 and late 20th century, BOS.2143), Jordan Marsh Company at 432-472 Washington Street (1948, addition 1975-1978, BOS.2120), and Woolworth's at 350 Washington Street (1967, BOS.2117).

Washington Street remained the primary shopping district for Bostonians through the mid to late 20th century. However, the proliferation of suburban shopping malls—with vast amounts of free parking, and new, clean buildings—in the early 1970s contributed to the district's slow decline. In an attempt to compete with the suburban stores, retailers including Jordan Marsh and F. W. Woolworth made additions to existing buildings or constructed new, modern stores, while other retailers installed modern storefronts, signage, and interiors. Further attempts to maintain the downtown shopping district were made by the city in 1978, when Washington Street was made an "auto-restricted zone" and the central Downtown Crossing area was repaved with bricks and pavers, new streetlights were installed, and new benches were placed in the area between Filene's and Jordan Marsh on Summer Street.<sup>1</sup> Unfortunately, these

<sup>1</sup> City of Boston Redevelopment Authority, *Downtown Crossing*, January 1981.

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improvements proved to be unavailing, as department stores along Washington began to close. Today, Macy's remains within the modern former Jordan Marsh store, adjacent to the site of the original Filene's building.

*Historic Overview of 407-411 Washington Street*

As early as 1722, residential buildings occupied the site of the I. J. Fox Building. During the 18th century, the property was located on "Marlbrough Street," between Winter Street to the south and Rawsons Lane (renamed Bromfield Street in 1828) to the north. According to the Bonner Map of 1722, four buildings stood between the two roadways, including a five-story, Federal-style structure that occupied the site. By 1798, the land between Winter Street and Rawsons Lane was heavily populated and had been divided into fourteen separate lots. The land that currently comprises 407-411 Washington Street included two former parcels: 8 Marlborough Street, owned by Elizabeth Cole, and 9-10 Marlborough Street, owned by T. Thompson and Elizabeth Cole. The parcels south of 8-10 Marlborough, beginning at the corner of Winter Street, were owned by William Dennison, followed by Hopkins, Jalisburg, Ann Dashwood, John Gardiner, and Ellis Miller; those immediately north of 8-10 Marlborough were owned by D. Townsend (two parcels), Samuel Hale (two parcels), E. Oliver, and D. Curtis.

Rawsons Lane was renamed in 1751 to Bromfield's Lane, and again in 1828 to Bromfield Street. The portion of Marlborough Street that extended between Summer and School Streets was incorporated as Washington Street in 1824, changing the two parcels at 8-10 Marlborough Street to 237 and 241-243 Washington Street. At the time, the parcels contained a four-story, brick commercial building that was divided by a wood-frame partition to serve two separate commercial entities. Between 1874 and 1885, the lots' numbers along Washington Street were changed for a final time to 407-411 Washington, likely to accommodate the street's ongoing extension and incorporation into existing thoroughfares.<sup>2</sup>

The second half of the 19th century bore witness to the ever-increasing commercialization of Washington Street. The Century Building at 427-435 Washington Street was designed by Gridley J. F. Bryant in 1846. Executed in the early phase of Boston's Italian Palazzo style, the existing store at 427-429 Washington Street remains the final extant remnant of the block that extended seven bays to Winter Street, and turned the corner to continue five bays on Winter Street. Jeweler E. B. Horn, has occupied this location since 1878.

Between 1888 and 1908, the building at 407-411 Washington Street was sold to the President and Fellows of Harvard College, a seven-member board established in 1650 that remains the oldest corporation in the United States. It is also known as the Harvard Corporation and is one of the two governing boards operating as a subsidiary of Harvard University.

Harvard leased the property and building therein to commercial outfits throughout the duration of its proprietorship. As early as 1907, the space was occupied by Browning, King & Co. Inc., a men's retailer

<sup>2</sup> Auditor of Accounts' Annual Report, 1875-1876; A Record of the Streets, Alleys, Places, Etc., in the City of Boston, 1910.

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made popular throughout the second half of the 19th century and into the first quarter of the 20th century. The wholesale clothing house was established in Chicago in 1868 by Henry William King and his associate W. C. Browning. Browning & King went on to outfit the entire Navy during the Spanish-American War, and as of 1927 the firm owned 31 stores around the country, specializing in cheviot suits (woolen fabric suits and overcoats made with a coarse twill weave, originally made from the wool of the cheviot breed of sheep). In 1934, the corporation toppled into bankruptcy, due in large part to mishandled investments made on the eve of the Great Depression. By October 1934, the President and Fellows of Harvard College successfully applied to the City of Boston to have the former Browning and King building razed. Within one month a new commercial establishment was interested in building on the vacant parcel, the New York-based I. J. Fox Corporation.

*Isidore Joseph Fox and the I.J. Fox Corporation*

Isidore Joseph Fox, son of Russian immigrants Rachael and Hyman Fox and a third-generation furrier, was born in Christchurch, London, England, in 1888, before immigrating to New York in 1907. Upon his arrival, Fox first went to Philadelphia, where he found employment as a trolley-car conductor and dishwasher before returning to New York. In 1915 he was employed as a fur examiner for the National Cloak and Suit Company, a large mail-order house.<sup>3</sup> On the eve of World War I, Fox met and married Rosalie Lilienthal before his deployment to France, where he served with the 77th Division in that unit's campaign in the Argonne.<sup>4</sup>

Fox returned to the United States in 1919, and started his furrier business in a limited capacity. He purchased fur scraps from nearby furriers and designed them into collars and cuffs, which he then sold to coat manufacturers. In his first season of business Fox cleared a profit of \$1,800 and by 1921, Fox felt ready to enter manufacturing and retail on a large scale. He partnered with Max Weisman; together they each invested \$2,500 and rented a loft at 16 West 36th Street for \$150 per month. The firm's success allowed Fox to open his own business in 1930 at 393 Fifth Avenue in Manhattan. The Boston branch would quickly follow, as construction at 407-411 Washington Street began just five years later in January 1935. Fox's brother-in-law, David Lilienthal, served as the corporation's national vice president and president of the Boston store.

Designed by the New York architecture firm Elias, Rothschild & Company in association with the local Boston firm Shepard & Stearns, the I. J. Fox Building was completed in March 1935 and met with great acclamation. As described in an article from the Boston Globe, the "new I. J. Fox Building reflects simple elegance. Its stately appearance in the heart of the downtown retail district lends a new modern note to the busy shopping thoroughfare." The storefront boasted the tallest plate glass in the country at the time, detailed with gray pearl granite and inlaid with bronze (Figures 3 and 4). Behind the plate-glass show windows, carved-glass valances "put a final touch of elegance to the beautifully treated window display." Of note, the craftsmen responsible for the design and placement of the bronzed panels and glass valances presently remains unknown, but could be the focus of additional research in the future. At the

<sup>3</sup> "I. J. Fox Dead at 58; Made Women of U.S. Fur-Conscious," *Daily Boston Globe*, December 18, 1947.

<sup>4</sup> "I. J. Fox Dies at 58; Fifth Ave. Furrier," *New York Times*, December 18, 1947.

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store's opening, mannequin figures were created to resemble famous motion picture or stage stars. Woodwork throughout the entire store featured "Oriental" and American walnut and primavera wood. The main floor featured fur cardigans, scarves, boleros, and other fur accessories, and the second floor contained buying offices and "huge recreational rooms for the employees." The third floor was deemed the "Silver Room and Imperial Salon," where silver walls, drapes, and carpeting surrounded higher-quality furs that included mink, sable, and ermine, as well as a large selection of girls' and women's dresses. The executive offices were also situated on this floor, as well as fur cleaning rooms. The fourth floor was known as the "Gold Room," and featured gold-papered walls, gold-brocaded draperies, fixtures made to give a gold effect, and rugs with a gold cast. It was in the "Gold Room" that the "smart, 'Stardom' cloth coats and suits (were) being shown...designed in the I. J. Fox Hollywood Design Studio, under the personal supervision of Mr. Fox."<sup>5</sup>

The fur designing studios and workrooms were housed on the fifth floor with 50 expert fur craftsmen repairing and remodeling fur garments, and the sixth and seventh floors were devoted exclusively to the "new, modern cold storage vaults."<sup>6</sup> All three upper levels were open to the public, with visitor galleries positioned at each entryway. David Lilienthal, president of the Boston store, paid tribute to head architect Albert Elias the day before the store opened, congratulating him on his creative efforts. Mr. Elias stated that he considered the new I. J. Fox store in Boston to be his "crowning achievement."<sup>7</sup>

The I. J. Fox Corporation opened branches in Cleveland in 1940 and Philadelphia in 1945, followed by Paris and London in later decades. The fur company was soon considered "America's Largest Furrier," spending more than \$1 million each year in advertisements. On December 7, 1930, Boston's W1XAV broadcast what is considered the first television commercial during a video portion of the Fox radio orchestra program "The Fox Trappers."<sup>8</sup> Widely credited with popularizing moderately priced furs and introducing many new fur mutations, Fox famously dramatized the retail fur trade by paying \$11,000 for a Norwegian platina fox in 1940, and later donated live ocelots from the Brazilian jungle to the three zoos in New York City and municipal zoos in Cleveland and Boston. In July of 1947, the American Schools and Colleges Association named Isidore Fox one of five men deemed Horatio Alger heroes "entitled to an enduring place in the history of American business, symbolizing the American tradition of over-coming handicaps and achieving success through industry, sacrifice and ethics."<sup>9</sup>

Following Isidore Fox's untimely death at age 58 in December 1947, his son, Howard A. Fox, was elected president of the Fifth Avenue store. Lilienthal remained president of the Boston location and was promoted to chairman of the board, a post previously held by Isidore. Fox's wife, Rosalie Fox, remained secretary and treasurer.

<sup>5</sup> "New I. J. Fox Building Gives Washington St a Modern Note," *Daily Boston Globe*, March 24, 1935.

<sup>6</sup> "Anniversary Sale at I. J. Fox, Furriers, Recalls Interesting Story of Founder," *Daily Boston Globe*, October 2, 1938; "New I. J. Fox Building."

<sup>7</sup> "New I. J. Fox Building."

<sup>8</sup> Stephen Taylor, *Fats Waller on the Air: The Radio Broadcasts and Discography*, 30.

<sup>9</sup> "Horatio Alger, Inc.," *TIME*, July 21, 1947.

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As sales began to dwindle during the mid 1960s, an effort was made by Lilienthal and the Fox family to consolidate operations into a smaller premises in Downtown Crossing. In 2002 I. J. Fox relocated again, this time to Huntington Avenue, before it was acquired by Harris & Klaff Furriers. Today, the firm is known as Fox & Klaff, located at 1333 Beacon Street in Brookline, Massachusetts.

The building was sold to Morris Levy on July 2, 1965, founder of Strawberries Records and former president of Roulette Records, one of the nation's largest independent music companies. Following the sale of the I. J. Fox building to Strawberries, the interior finishes, including the "Silver Room," "Gold Room," and "Imperial Salon," were removed, and modern wall partitions and dropped ceilings were added. In 1994, the record company earned a Preservation Award from the Boston Art Deco Society for the maintenance of the interior lobby's Art Deco ornamentation, as well as the exterior polished-granite façade and the Deco details of the two-story entryway.

Strawberries remained in the building until it was sold to F.Y.E. (For Your Entertainment) in June 2011. F.Y.E stayed at the Washington Street location for less than one year before selling the property to the current owners in January 2012.

*Shepard & Stearns and the Elias, Rothschild & Company, Architects*

The two firms involved in the design and execution of the I. J. Fox Building were widely celebrated architects in their respective cities. George Frederik Shepard, Jr. (1872-1954) and Frederic Baldwin Stearns (1874-1959), grandson of John Goddard Stearns of the Boston architectural firm Peabody & Stearns, began their partnership in 1911, though the firm was not formally established until 1921. Both men were natives of Massachusetts and attended the Massachusetts Institute of Technology for degrees in architecture. Prior to their work together, both men had extensive experience in their respective fields. Shepard was hired as a draughtsman at Peabody & Stearns in Boston, followed by Henry Bacon in New York. Upon his return to Boston, Shepard managed the Winslow & Bigelow office before becoming partner with Derby and Robinson in 1921. Stearns remained in Boston, first hired as a draughtsman at Winslow & Bigelow, followed by his work as a construction foreman with the Arthur C. Whitney Construction Company and Cadman & Despradelle Architects. He was later hired as superintendent with Rutan & Coolidge, followed by Derby, Robinson & Shepard.

Among the most notable buildings and structures designed by Shepard & Stearns were the YWCA building in Boston (1929; 140 Clarendon Street; BOS.2368, NRHP 2004), and the Faxon House (1880; 310 Adams Street; QUI.86, NRHP 1989), and South Junior High School (1927; 444 Granite Street; QUI.401, NRHP 1989) in Quincy, Massachusetts.

Elias, Rothschild & Company had extensive experience designing luxury retail establishments prior to construction of the I. J. Fox building, though I. J. Fox was the only building designed by the firm in Massachusetts. The firm maintained offices at Fifth Avenue and 47<sup>th</sup> Street in New York City, and at one time employed 25 draughtsmen. Examples of the firm's work include the Gothic Revival-style Adler Shoe Store at 121 West 42<sup>nd</sup> Street in Manhattan (1922), Selig's Dry Goods Company Building in

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Indianapolis, Indiana (1924; NRHP 1984), and the Michaels Brothers' Furniture Store at Third Avenue and 152<sup>nd</sup> Street in the Bronx (1936).

Art Deco was a movement in the decorative arts and architecture that originated in the 1910s, and developed into a major style in Western Europe and the United States during the 1920s and 1930s. Its name was derived from the Exposition Internationale des Arts Décoratifs et Industriels Modernes (International Exposition of Modern Decorative and Industrial Arts), held in Paris in 1925, where the style was first exhibited. Organizers insisted that all architecture and decorative arts shown at the Exposition depart from tradition. The style is often characterized by sleek, streamlined ornamentation that is geometric or stylized from representational forms and arranged in symmetrical patterns, as evidenced by the I. J. Fox Building.

The rehabilitation of the I. J. Fox Building has preserved and enhanced a rare Art Deco-style commercial building located in the City of Boston's Downtown Crossing commercial district. The recently completed rehabilitation project has contributed to the commercial vitality of Downtown Crossing, and provided new housing opportunities for this growing residential community.

### **Archaeological Significance**

Due to the lack of preserved land within the parcel, the property has no archaeological significance.

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Name of Property

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## 9. Major Bibliographical References

**Bibliography** (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

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Newly Arranged Department." March 15, 1936.

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October 2, 1938.

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**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
  - Other State agency
  - Federal agency
  - Local government
  - University
  - Other
- Name of repository: \_\_\_\_\_

**Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned):** BOS.2134

**HPCA #** 27,677

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### 10. Geographical Data

**Acreege of Property** less than one acre

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

#### Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: \_\_\_\_\_  
(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

- |                       |                      |
|-----------------------|----------------------|
| 1. Latitude: 42.35613 | Longitude: -71.05989 |
| 2. Latitude:          | Longitude:           |
| 3. Latitude:          | Longitude:           |
| 4. Latitude:          | Longitude:           |

**Or**

#### UTM References

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

NAD 1927 or  NAD 1983

- |             |                 |                   |
|-------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| 1. Zone: 19 | Easting: 330356 | Northing: 4691374 |
| 2. Zone:    | Easting:        | Northing:         |
| 3. Zone:    | Easting:        | Northing:         |
| 4. Zone:    | Easting :       | Northing:         |

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**Verbal Boundary Description** (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The nominated boundaries of the I. J. Fox Building (407 Washington Street) follow the parcel perimeters along Washington Street (east), 403 Washington Street (north), 413 Washington Street (south), and the rear of the property (west). The boundaries are outlined in bold on the accompanying City of Boston Assessor's map (Figure 1), and include assessor parcel 0304737000 in its entirety.

The proposed boundaries include land totaling less than one acre, as represented on the City of Boston Assessor's map. The boundary is based on the parcel delineations surveyed by William S. Crocker, Civil Engineer, on May 15, 1934 (Figure 2), surrounding 407 Washington Street (0304737000).

**Boundary Justification** (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The proposed boundaries include the original parcel historically associated with the 1935 construction of the I. J. Fox Building, 407 Washington Street, Boston, Massachusetts.

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### 11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Alisa Augenstein, Planner and Doug Kelleher, Principal, with Betsy Friedberg,  
organization: Massachusetts Historical Commission  
street & number: 220 Morrissey Boulevard  
city or town: Boston state: MA zip code: 02125  
e-mail: besty.friedberg@sec.state.ma.us  
telephone: (617) 727-8470  
date: November 2015

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### Additional Documentation

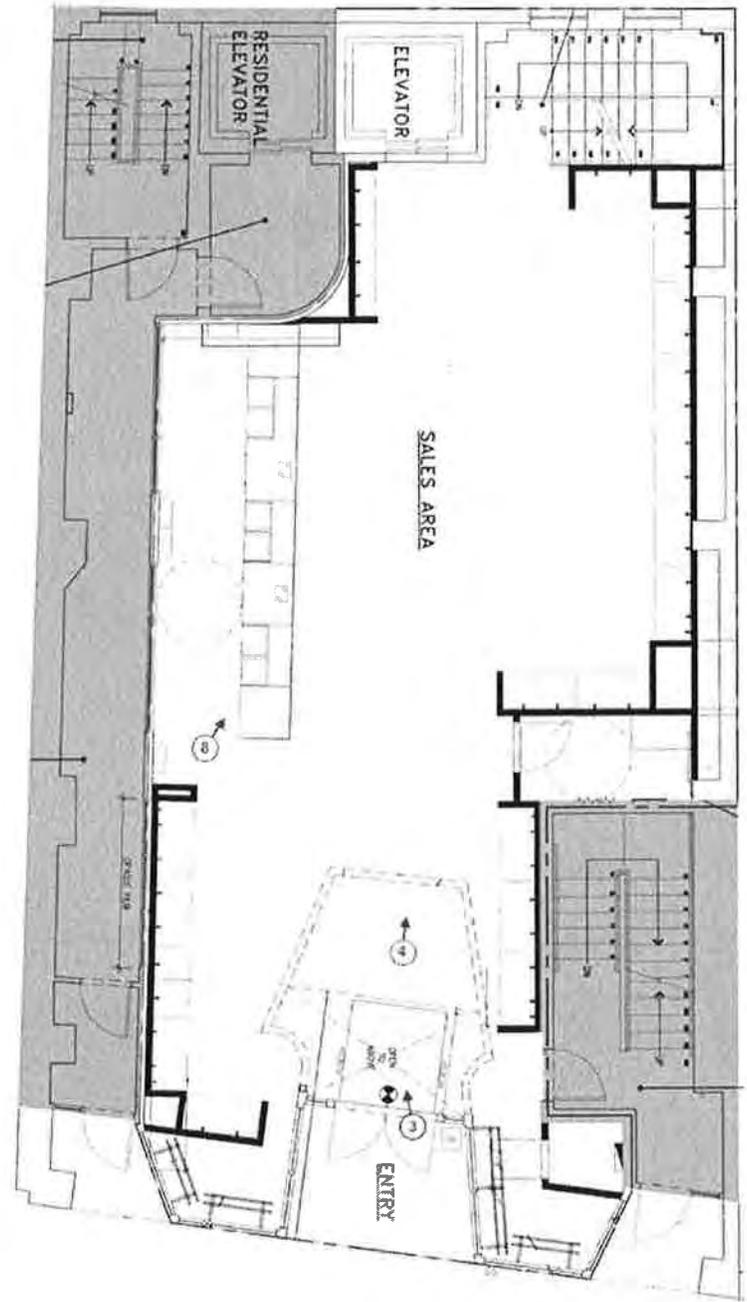
Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A USGS map or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

I.J. Fox Building  
Name of Property

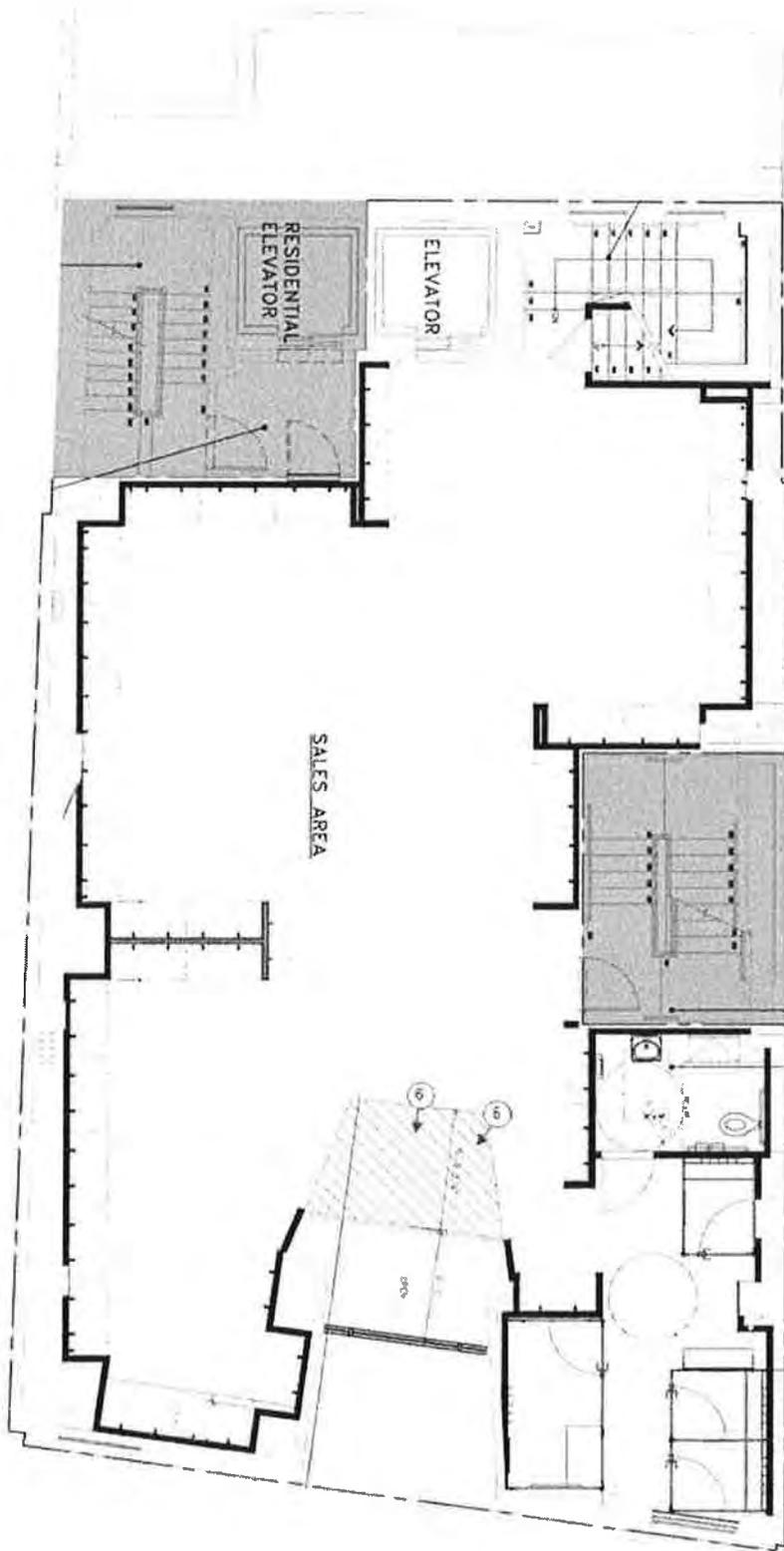
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### KEY TO PHOTOGRAPHS Exterior and First Floor



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**Second Floor**

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Figure 1: City of Boston Assessor's Map





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Figure 3: 1935 View of the east elevation of Washington Street, Boston, facing west; the façade (east elevation) of the I. J. Fox Building is visible at the center of the photograph (source: Bostonian Society).

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Figure 4: 1956 View of the east elevation of Washington Street, Boston, facing north; the façade (east elevation) of the I. J. Fox Building is visible behind the “LOEW’S” sign, at the center of the photograph (source: Massachusetts Institute of Technology).

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### Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

### Photo Log

Name of Property: I. J. Fox Building  
City or Vicinity: Boston  
County: Suffolk  
State: MA  
Name of Photographer: Doug Kelleher, Principal, Epsilon Associates, Inc.  
Date of Photographs: March 2015  
Location of Original Digital Files: 3 Clock Tower Place, Ste. 250, Maynard, MA  
01754

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

Photo #1 (MA\_SuffolkCounty\_I.J.FoxBld\_0001)  
East and south elevations, camera facing north.

Photo #2 (MA\_SuffolkCounty\_I.J.FoxBld\_0002)  
East elevation, camera facing southwest.

Photo #3 (MA\_SuffolkCounty\_I.J.FoxBld\_0003)  
Detail of recessed entrance and artificially lit ornamental skylight with colored glass featuring a Deco-inspired floral motif.

Photo #4 (MA\_SuffolkCounty\_I.J.FoxBld\_0004)  
Detail of etched glass panel with projecting fox head.

Photo #5 (MA\_SuffolkCounty\_I.J.FoxBld\_0005)  
Second floor, detail of carved bronzed aluminum overlay.

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Photo #6 (MA\_SuffolkCounty\_I.J.FoxBld\_0006)

Detail of artificially lit ornamental skylight with colored glass featuring a Deco-inspired floral motif.

Photo #7 (MA\_SuffolkCounty\_I.J.FoxBld\_0007)

Interior, first floor commercial build-out.

Photo #8 (MA\_SuffolkCounty\_I.J.FoxBld\_0008)

Interior, sixth floor residential unit with detail of original steel sash window.

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.





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**HOLD FOR INSTALL**

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OF \_\_\_\_\_

POST/CAUTION Hardware  
HOLD for IBM/Innovator  
Technician Install



