

Massachusetts Cultural Resource Information System

Scanned Record Cover Page

Inventory No:	BOS.1760
Historic Name:	Silverman Building
Common Name:	Isaacs, Jacob Building
Address:	165 Friend St Chapel Pl
City/Town:	Boston
Village/Neighborhood:	Central Business District; North Station;
Local No:	
Year Constructed:	1914
Architectural Style(s):	Craftsman;
Architect(s):	Norcross, Frederick Albert;
Use(s):	Abandoned or Vacant; Apartment House; Commercial Block; Other Manufacturing; Showroom;
Significance:	Architecture; Commerce; Industry;
Area(s):	BOS.AL
Designation(s):	Nat'l Register District (02/27/1986);
Building Materials:	Wall: Brick; Cast Stone;
Demolished	No



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Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Massachusetts Historical Commission
220 Morrissey Boulevard, Boston, Massachusetts 02125
www.sec.state.ma.us/mhc

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BOSTON LANDMARKS COMMISSION Building Information Form Form No. Area CBDADDRESS 165 Friend St. COR. Chapel Pl. (alley)NAME present originalMAP No. 26N/12E SUB AREA No. StationDATE 1914 Building permit 8/3/1914
sourceARCHITECT F.A. Norcross (permit)
sourceBUILDER none listed on permit
sourceOWNER Nicholas Vafilopoulos/
original presentPHOTOGRAPHS 2 6/3*80le row 2-fam. 3-deck tan apt.
(non-residential) "one store and lofts"NO. OF STORIES (1st to cornice) 5 plusROOF flat cupola dormersMATERIALS (Frame) clapboards shingles stucco asphalt asbestos alum/vinyl
(Other) brick tan stone cast concrete iron/steel/alum.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION 2 X 7 bay early 20th century pier and spandrel Commercial Style structure in tan brick with cast stone accents. Brick storefront piers and lintel. Above, continuous rising brick piers flank paired windows and brick spandrals with cast stone corner blocks and sill courses. Upper story windows slightly arched. Stepped pediment at roofline edged in cast stone.

EXTERIOR ALTERATION minor moderate drasticCONDITION good fair poor LOT AREA 1142 sq. feetNOTEWORTHY SITE CHARACTERISTICS Corner site with Chapel Place (alley)
and parking lot to west.

SIGNIFICANCE (cont'd on reverse)

165 Friend St. maintains the scale of the street but is not individually distinctive. The building was used for a store and light manufacturing in the late 1910's and from 1923 through the 1930's as a salesroom for the Coombs-Woodman Co, wholesale floor covering dealers.

Architect F.A. Norcross also designed

Moved; date if known _____

Themes (check as many as applicable)

Aboriginal	_____	Conservation	_____	Recreation	_____
Agricultural	_____	Education	_____	Religion	_____
Architectural	_____	Exploration/	_____	Science/	_____
The Arts	_____	settlement	_____	invention	_____
Commerce	_____	Industry	_____	Social/	_____
Communication	_____	Military	_____	humanitarian	_____
Community/	_____	Political	_____	Transportation	_____
development	_____				

Significance (include explanation of themes checked above)

buildings at 64-74 Kneeland, 61-85 Canal (Canal Street Building), 89-115 Canal, 20-24 East (Boston Hide and Leather Co.) and 18-20 Oxford St., all in the Central Business District. He is listed in the Boston City Directories from 1895 to 1935.

Preservation Consideration (accessibility, re-use possibilities, capacity for public use and enjoyment, protection, utilities, context)

Part of suggested "Bulfinch Triangle" National Register District.

Part of Bulfinch Triangle
National Register District
listed 2-27-86

Bibliography and/or references (such as local histories, deeds, assessor's records, early maps, etc.)

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BOSTON CBD SURVEY UPDATE**

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HISTORIC BUILDING NAME: Silverman Building

CURRENT BUILDING NAME:

ASSOCIATED ADDRESS: none

RECEIVED

NOV 21 2013

MASS. HIST. COMM.

EXISTING DESIGNATIONS

DESIG CODE	DATE	NAME
NRDIS	2/27/1986	Bulfinch Triangle Historic District

CHANGES OR CORRECTIONS TO PAGE 1 BASE INFORMATION

Assessors Parcel ID: 0301613000
Assessors Address: 165 Friend St.
Current Owner: ONE 65 FRIEND ST CONDO ASSN
Building Date: 1914

RECORDED BY:

Larson Fisher Associates, Woodstock, NY

ORGANIZATION:

Boston Landmarks Commission

DATE:

August 2013

ADDITIONAL ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

It does not appear that any exterior changes have occurred to the building since the 1980 inventory form was completed.

ADDITIONAL HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

Three in a string of what appear to have been four wood frame tenements on the southerly side of Chapel Place were replaced with the existing five-story commercial building in 1914. The property and three buildings had been owned by Abigail O Spamer, a Massachusetts native living in Baltimore. The 1912 map associates the three lots with Thomas G. Washburn, a real estate agent. Issued two years later, the building permit identifies the owner as Nicholas Vafilopoulos of 105 Summer Street, but no record of him has been discovered. By 1919 the building was in the possession of Jacob Isaacs, a lawyer

Coombs-Woodman Co., a dealer in floor coverings, was the tenant in 1923. By 1930 there were three floor covering dealers at the address: Frank McGeough, Joseph F. McDonald and J.E. Silverman Co., Inc. The same three concerns were occupants in 1940, but only McDonald and Silverman remained in 1950. A review of the permit record suggests that Silverman owned the building. The 1960 directory had no listing for the address, and the building may have been vacant. By 1977 Kevin Geller and John Wise, trustees of the Owl Realty Trust, had possession of the property and in 1980 were the subject of complaints from neighbors that the building was being used for human habitation. The owners successfully petitioned the city to legalize the occupancy for one office and three apartments. By 1983 the building became a condominium under the 165 Friend Street Association, and it has functioned as such ever since.

Fred A. Norcross, Architect

Fred A. Norcross (1871-1929) was born into a Christian Scientist family in Allston, although spent most of his career designing commercial and residential buildings for Jewish developers. His parents, Albert H. Norcross and Pauline F. Homestead, were both born in Maine, although their son and only child was born after they settled in Brighton where, in 1880, Albert H. Norcross was employed as a foreman in the car shops. The details of the architect's education and training are not known. By 1889 he was employed as a draftsman, suggesting that he learned his craft in the Boston architectural apprentice system. In 1895 he was first listed as an architect in the city directory with his office and residence on 16 Bradbury Street in Allston, which was his parents' home. When he married Emma C. Chain (1873-1954), daughter of Jacob N. Chain and Sarah C. Weaver of Connellsville, Pennsylvania in 1900, they established a household at 45 Ridgemont Street in Allston where they were enumerated in the 1910 census with their two children, Richard Warren (b. 1902) and Ruth Pauline (b. 1909), Fred's widowed father and Emma's widowed mother.

Norcross began his practice at the time when the multifamily apartment building had gained acceptance in Boston. His earliest documented buildings were built in the 1890's. In 1900 he designed 24 Anderson Street, 100 Myrtle Street and 38 to 40 Grove

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Street; all on the north slope of Beacon Hill and most for Jewish developers. During his 36-year career, Norcross designed hundreds of apartment buildings in the North End, Roxbury, the Fenway, Brookline and Brighton, all constructed of brick or stone. He designed at least two houses of worship: Adath Jeshurun Synagogue on Blue Hill Avenue in Boston (1906) and the First Church of Christ Scientist in Needham, which he designed in 1919 and which was completed in 1927. Both buildings are of brick and were designed with twin symmetrical towers; the towers were never built on the Needham church, however.¹

Commercial buildings designed by Fred A. Norcross include Canal Street Trust Building, 53—85 Canal Street (1916), 61-85 Canal Street (1915; BOS.1628), 69-115 Canal Street and 89-115 Canal Street (1922; BOS.1629) as well as 64-74 Kneeland, 165 Friend, 20-24 East (Boston Hide and Leather Co.) and 18-20 Oxford. His last commission was a block of storefronts in Central Square, Cambridge at 468 to 480 Massachusetts Avenue designed in 1929.

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

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¹ National Register Nomination Form for Congregation Adath Jeshurun Synagogue, 22 September 1999.

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SUPPLEMENTARY IMAGES and LOCATIONAL INFORMATION

Assessors Map (north at top)



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Photographs

(credit Larson Fisher Associates, 2012-13 unless otherwise noted)



View from NW