

# EVENTSPACE:

## A CENTER FOR THE ARTS IN THE FORT POINT CHANNEL

Preliminary Competition Brief for the 2006 Rotch Traveling Scholarship



## THE EVENTSPACE

**event** 1a. Something that takes place; an occurrence. b. A significant occurrence or happening. c. A social gathering or activity. 2. The final result; the outcome. 4. Physics A phenomenon or occurrence located at a single point in space-time, regarded as the fundamental observational entity in relativity theory.

A prominent Boston based foundation with a long tradition of generosity in support of the arts has made available a grant to support and reinforce the activities and programs of the arts community in Fort Point Channel. The Foundation wishes to establish a temporary headquarters that addresses the fundamental challenge of providing an identity for their mission while acknowledging the unpredictable nature of the arts. The Foundation has an ambitious program for its temporary headquarters to 1) bring attention and new visitation to the Fort Point Channel and, 2) further its mission in fostering innovative forms of collaboration among disparate arts. The Foundation will play a central role in providing the outlet for these new forms of collaboration while also underscoring the unique and rooted nature of arts in the FPC.

The chosen method to accomplish this is to make their temporary headquarters a “happening,” or **EVENTSPACE**, a place that captures the spark of artistic collaboration and social gathering. It should embody the temporal and shifting nature of both neighborhood development and artistic collaboration, but is rooted in this specific moment in time. It is the recognition that the Fort Point Channel, like the tenuous nature of art, is in flux, changing and adapting to new ideas, pressures, economies, and social values. It should be a social phenomenon that generates a “buzz” throughout the region about the compelling arts scene in the FPC. They have settled on a temporary headquarters in the hopes that they would reinvent themselves as the arts and the Fort Point Channel change around them.

The FPC lies at the edge of the downtown financial district, a burgeoning business zone around the new convention center, the tunnel to the airport, and the Boston Harbor. Historically a working port area, it is slated to grow as a vibrant mixed-use neighborhood in the following generation, with hundreds of units of housing bringing a dense urban population drawn to the already compelling cultural scene. This rush to growth will bring rich opportunities for artists to interact with new demographics, but also change some of the dramatic and unique features that brought artists to the FPC in the first place. Already the FPC has numerous live/work studios, galleries, performing arts spaces, and the soon to be completed Institute for Contemporary Art. The Foundation seeks to augment this established cultural infrastructure with a building that creates critical discourse about the nature of the arts in the FPC. It is their intention to create a space that



simultaneously highlights the specific history of the FPC as an active participant in the generation of culture, and also accommodates for the change that is taking place in the coming years. The **EVENTSPACE** must embody what is local and inspiring about FPC, and what is progressive and indeterminate about the arts; it is the event between past and present.

The Foundation encourages a broad range of proposals that are not necessarily building or architectural projects in the traditional sense, nor even on a single site. Yet they hope to achieve maximum impact with the available funding. The **EVENTSPACE** is intended as an investigation that would support between 5,000-20,000 s.f. of building construction overall. It is the responsibility of the architect to develop a more specific program within their proposal but at a minimum it should include an attitude about:

- \* Place(s) of exhibition
- \* Place(s) of celebration/presentation/education
- \* Place(s) of creation
- \* Administrative needs
- \* Public needs
- \* Any other programs that would be specific to the thesis of the building: this might include an information center, arts resource library and reading room, temporary space for an artist-in-residence, digital media studio/production shop, film screening room, experimental performance space or anything else that might support the arts in FPC.

Its location is undetermined. It might be an intervention within an existing building or site, or it might occur at a previously undiscovered or underutilized site. It might occur at an edge condition of the District or as part of the existing urban infrastructure, but should advance the Foundation's mission. How temporary or permanent the building will be is up to the architect, but should be addressed as part of the formal inquiry of the Foundation's identity.

The boundaries are outlined by the map provided. It is delineated at the western edge by the channel along Dorchester Ave; to the east by South Boston Bypass Road; to the south by 2nd St; and to the north by the Boston Harbor. A larger printable version can be accessed at [http://www.mapjunction.com/places/Open\\_BRA/](http://www.mapjunction.com/places/Open_BRA/)

## REQUIREMENTS

Entries must be received by 10:00 AM at:  
Boston Architectural Center  
320 Newbury Street  
Boston, MA 02115  
by February 6, 2006.

Out of state competitors' boards must be postmarked no later than 10:00 AM of the same date.

The speculative argument and a concise description of the proposal and your intentions should be included in the form of text and diagrams and/ or photographs that support the argument. Text should be no more than 300 words. Any supporting research, documentation, diagrams that help to convey the attributes of the proposal in a compelling way.

The following constitutes the minimum requirements:

- (2 maximum) 24x 30 boards vertically arranged
- Locus plan 1"=100'-0"
- Site plan 1"=40'-0"
- Plan representation 1/8" =1"-0" or larger
- Sections at 1/8"=1'-0" or larger
- Supporting 3-D representation, such as a physical or computer generated model, axonometric and/or perspective drawings. At least one perspective representation is required.
- Photographic documentation of the immediate context of the proposal.

No models or projections from the boards are permitted, although model photographs or drawings may be mounted on boards. The jury has no preference for electronic representations or hand drawings. Finalists should be prepared to provide pdf files of their submitted proposal. The Rotch Committee reserves the right to use the drawings for publication.

## CRITERIA FOR EVALUATION

- The content and quality of ideas expressed by the analysis and speculative argument of your proposal.
- Quality, consistency and clarity of the presentation. The ability of your drawings and representations to suggest a compelling and evocative image for the **EVENTSPACE**.
- Demonstration that the submitting architect has the talent and skill to imagine the proposal realized in built form.





## BACKGROUND

As you proceed across the Summer Street Bridge en route to the new Convention Center you are greeted by a small oval sign that reads “Fort Point Channel- home of New England’s oldest and largest artist community.” The sign sits just below the rusting scaffolding on a Melcher Street building with the letters “The Boston Wharf Co. Industrial Real Estate”. Long gone are the rail yards and wool carding operations which once occupied the brick warehouses. The Fort Point Channel is now part of the ‘new Boston’ and undergoing a dramatic transformation.

Boston’s artists inhabited the formerly industrial area and their presence has been directly responsible for its vitality and attractiveness as an alternative location to work and live. The FPC’s growth and transformation serves as a model of how a utilitarian part of the city can evolve into a vital new economy with the infusion of arts and culture as described by Richard Florida in his writings about the Creative Class.

The recent divestiture of the properties of the Boston Wharf Company and ongoing plans for the new South Boston Seaport immediately threaten the presence of the working artist in the Ft. Point Channel. Community groups and planners are creatively looking for ways to sustain the artist’s community along with emerging development.

The Midway Studios is one such example on former Midway St. now 15 Channel Center Street, providing 89 permanent affordable living/ work spaces for artists. The project was a creative partnership between Fort Point Cultural Coalition and Beacon Capital Partners. [www.fortpoint-dc.com/MayorMeninoWelcomesArtiststoNewHome.htm](http://www.fortpoint-dc.com/MayorMeninoWelcomesArtiststoNewHome.htm)

Fort Point Arts Community, Inc. and its member organizations are developing and implementing programs to sustain the artist community in the Channel. FPAC is helping artists to find affordable space and providing venues for showcasing and marketing artist’s work such as their gallery at 300 Summer Street. They and other groups are building relations through programs and projects with other educational and cultural organizations in Boston. [www.fortpointarts.org](http://www.fortpointarts.org)

FPC artists have long been hosts to “Open Studios” sponsored by Boston Open Studios Coalition, who support artists in neighborhoods throughout Boston. Fort Point Channel’s Open Studios represent the longest running and most successful event of this nature, connecting art buyers with both established and emerging artists in their studio setting. [www.bostonopenstudios.com](http://www.bostonopenstudios.com)

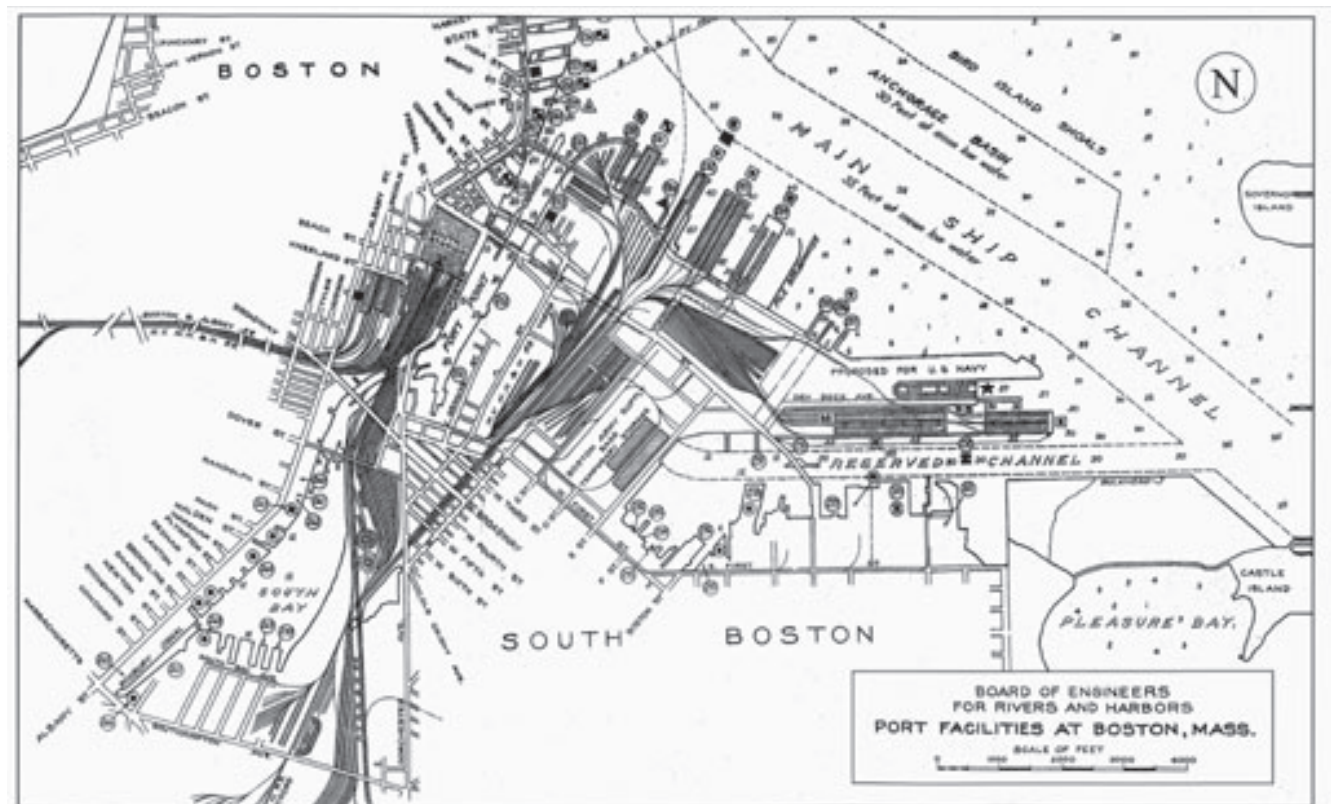
The relocation of Boston's Institute for Contemporary Art to the FPC, designed by Diller + Scofidio with Perry Dean Rogers introduces an identifiable establishment to the FPC. Located adjacent to the former warehouse district the ICA's very presence helps to secure FPC as the contemporary arts district in Boston. The new facility will continue to provide programs and events showcasing the most inventive exploration in the arts. Their broad range of programs such as "fast Forward, Family Matinees and 'the Museum you want' are engaging diverse audiences throughout the Boston Community. Their impact reaches well beyond the site as evidenced by the recent installation by Julian Opie on the Northern Avenue Bridge. [www.icaboston.org](http://www.icaboston.org)

At the opposite end of the district, off A Street, is the new educational facility built by Artists for Humanity called the Epicenter. This new 'industrial shed' provides a diverse array of educational program for adolescents at risk representing the power and potential impact the arts have in the greater Boston community. [www.afhboston.com](http://www.afhboston.com)





historic data courtesy of  
Boston Public Library









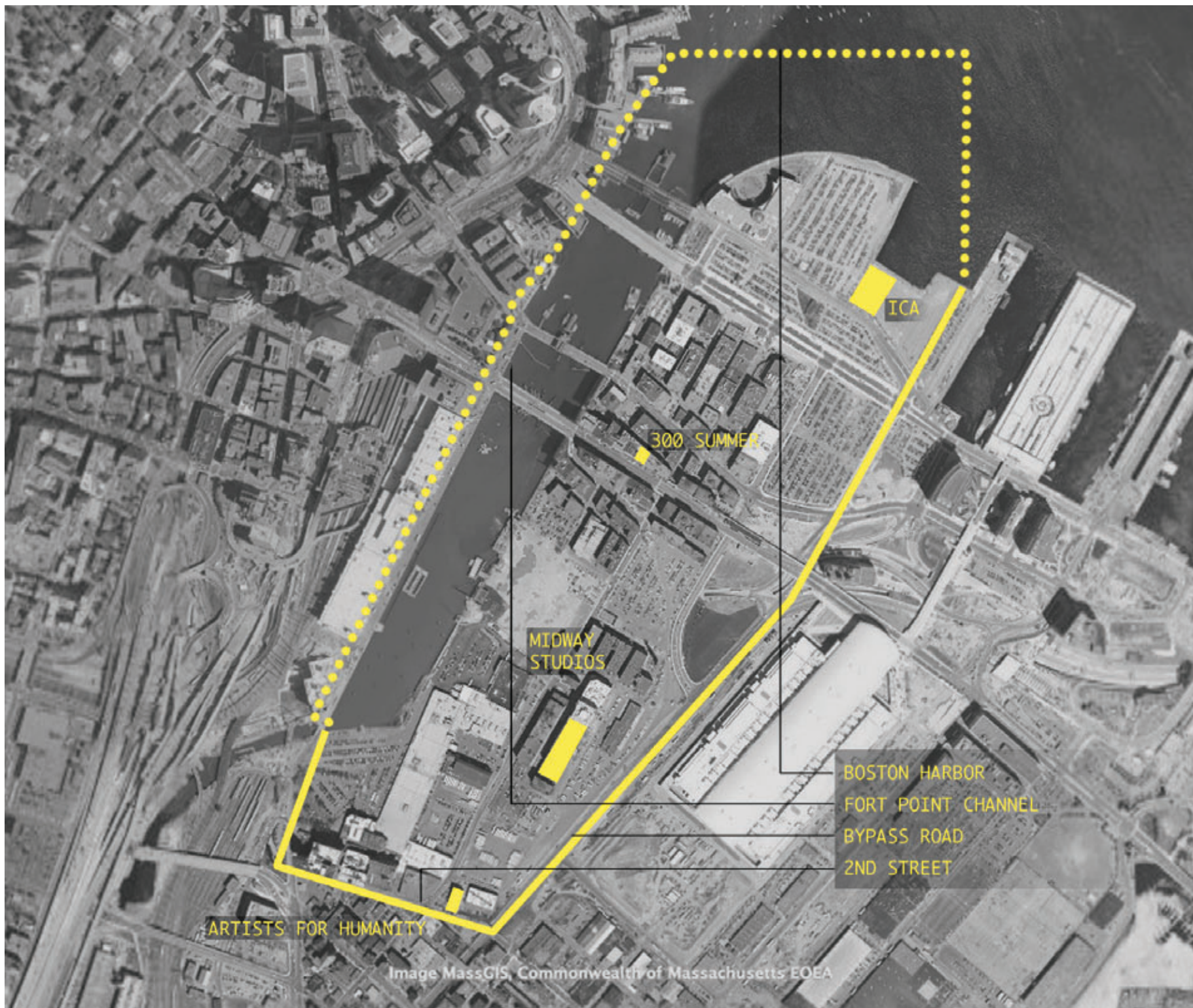


Image MassGIS, Commonwealth of Massachusetts EOE