



2010

**Rotch Scholarship
Design Competition**

**Boston History
Museum
in City Hall**

Cultural Context

For fifty years, Boston architects have had an ambiguous relationship with the city's storied past. Rather than develop an architectural culture that self-confidently riffs off of the historic city with contemporary interventions akin to Carlo Scarpa's work in Verona and Venice, architectural production in Boston tends to ricochet between the kind of contempo-brick contextualism that the city has been known for since the 1980s and one-of-a-kind projects by out-of-town architects of which the Carpenter Center at Harvard and the Baker House at MIT are the most famous examples. Steven Holl's sponge-inspired dormitory at MIT and the ICA by Diller Scofidio Renfro are the most notable recent followers of this trend.

The debate about the physical history of Boston has taken a new turn with the recent controversy about the fate of Kallmann McKinnell and Knowles's Boston City Hall (1963-1968). Mayor Menino's recent plan to jettison the late mid-century monument for a disaggregated city government was partly inspired by his desire to take municipal jobs to Dudley Square, the depressed commercial center of Roxbury, a

primarily African-American neighborhood, and partly a real estate deal predicated on the value of the City Hall site if it were to be converted, through the sale of City Hall, into a tabula rasa parcel for a private mixed-use development. Several commentators also suggested that the Mayor was impressed with the dramatic architecture and waterfront setting of the ICA and wanted to commission a high-profile architectural statement for analogous symbolic purposes.

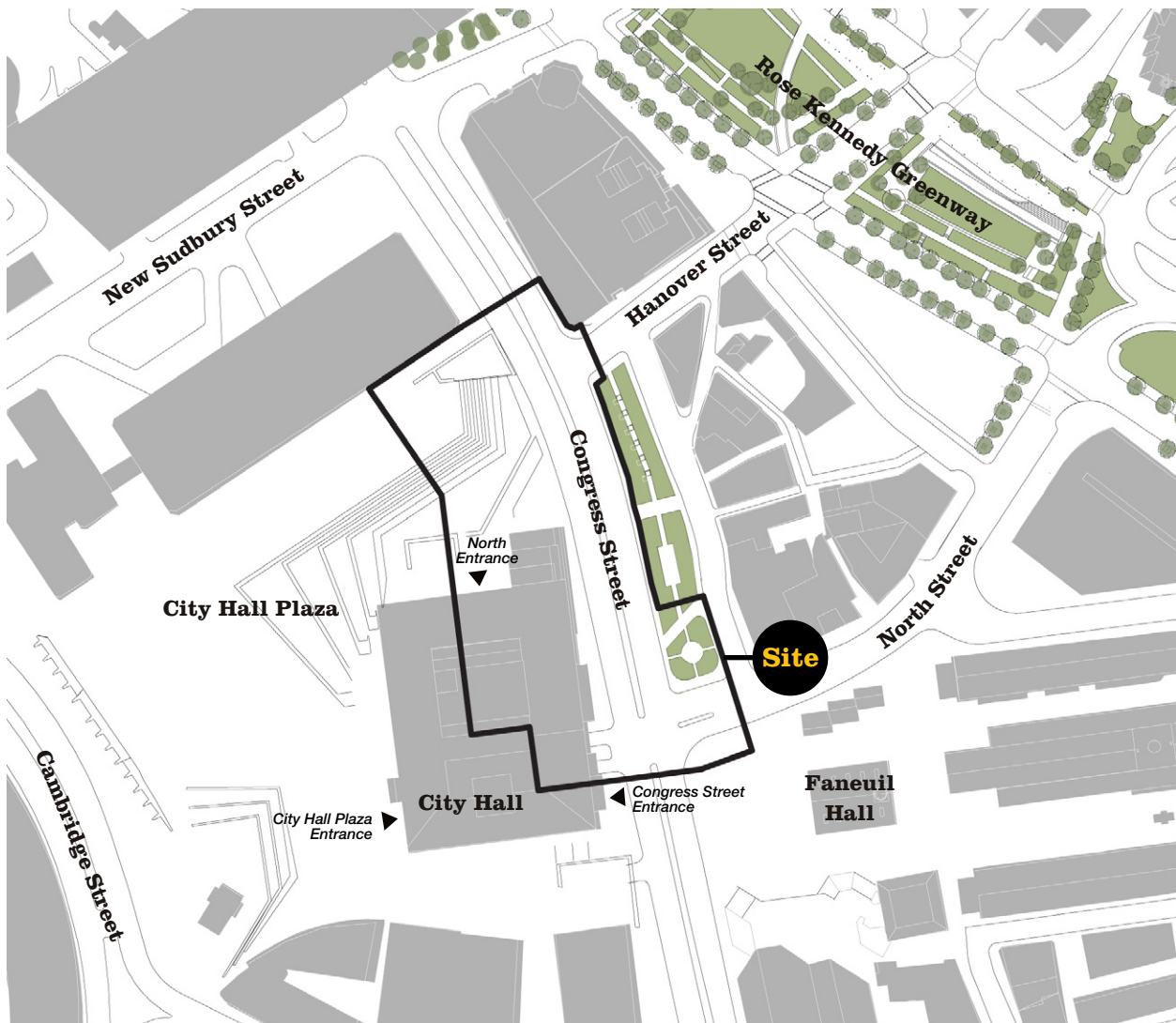
With the collapse of the global economy and the related demise of the kind of speculative real estate development that would have fueled Menino's vision, questions remain about the future of City Hall, even as the city continues with its plan to build a slightly reduced version of a municipal office building in Dudley Square. Before the economic viability of the Mayor's scheme was a question, several groups came out against the plan to demolish City Hall including Docomomo, an international organization that is dedicated to preserving the legacy of mid-century modern buildings, and ArchitectureBoston, a magazine published by the Boston Society of

Architects. Elizabeth Padjen, editor of the magazine, invited six emerging architecture firms to envision reuse scenarios of the building; their proposals were highlighted in a special issue of the magazine¹. More recently, environmental advocates have argued that all mid-century modern buildings are worthy of saving, no matter their aesthetic merits, given the embodied energy of concrete construction and the costs and environmental risks of demolition².

To explore this complicated range of issues and cement Boston City Hall as an essential artifact of the city's history, the final phase of the Rotch Travelling Scholarship design competition will test the consequences of locating a history museum dedicated to the City of Boston in the first three floors of Boston City Hall while the rest of the city government functions are consolidated in floors four

through nine or relocated to the new Dudley Square location. This change will require a comprehensive rethinking of the plan and section of the lower levels of the building and a new expression along Congress Street to make the new program legible as an important component of a mixed-use building.

The original intention of the architects was to see the ground levels as open and flexible public spaces beneath the machinations of an enlightened city bureaucracy. But because of security and functional changes, resulting in closed entrances and inaccessible outdoor space, Boston City Hall has lost its sense of connectivity. The museum program has the potential to open up parts of the existing building to the surrounding city. As a result, the project scope includes the part of Congress Street that abuts City Hall and the plaza that is directly north



of the building—see project site diagram on page 2. Proposals should re-envision the use and design of these urban spaces in keeping with the strategies for the distribution and design of the museum program.

Note that the “classic” western expanse of City Hall Plaza and the west front of the building are NOT included in the project scope.

¹ “Graphic Essay: Imagine That!”, ArchitectureBoston, September/October 2007, Vol. 10 No. 5, “Re-Imagining City Hall”.

² See Charles N. Tseckares, “A Green Future for Old Buildings”, Op-Ed in the Boston Globe, November 23, 2009.

Program Background

In 1998, the Boston History Center & Museum, Inc. was established by the Bostonian Society, the Freedom Trail Foundation, and the Boston History Collaborative. The organization has since conducted an ambitious programming initiative and fund-raising campaign to establish a museum on the Rose Kennedy Greenway. In 2001, the group answered a Request for Interest for Parcel 12 issued by the now-defunct Massachusetts Turnpike Authority. To give weight to their submission, the organization commissioned the design of a signature building by Moshe Safdie. The boat-like proposal was meant to be one of several eye-catching buildings that were planned to cover the Greenway ramp parcels and give spatial definition to the new parks. Other proposals included a state-of-the-art YMCA, to be located just north of the North End parks, a Daniel Libeskind-designed cultural center opposite Rowe’s Wharf, and an ambitious “Garden under Glass” on the

three parcels immediately north of South Station. The lack of fund-raising capacity of the organizations, the high costs of building over the ramp parcels, and the recent collapse of the world economy, has stalled all of these ambitious proposals.

After the Boston History Center & Museum’s efforts on Parcel 12 halted, the group enlisted Cambridge Seven to design a new version of the museum on Parcel 9, a pork chop shaped parcel along Blackstone Street, the site of the weekly Haymarket. This manifestation of the project, a building with a glass façade that would dramatically lean over the sidewalk, was proposed in response to a Request for Proposals for the Massachusetts Turnpike Authority-controlled site in 2008. In the fall of 2009, the Boston Redevelopment Authority came out in favor of an alternative proposal, an apartment building with a market hall on the ground floor, weakening the Boston History Center & Museum’s chances to win control of the site. In early 2010, the Massachusetts Department of Transportation cancelled the RFP process for Parcel 9 for reasons that are still not clear.

It is hoped that the proposals generated for the Rotch Scholarship Design Competition will inspire the group to explore the radical redesign of the lower levels of City Hall as a viable option for their vision.

Site

Floors 1 through 3 of Boston City Hall, north-east section of City Hall Plaza, Congress Street adjacent to City Hall (see project site diagram on page 2)



Program

A museum of the history of the City of Boston

Galleries	28,000 SF
Permanent galleries	(21,000 SF)
Special Exhibition gallery	(7,000 SF)
Lecture Hall and Meeting Rooms	5,000 SF
Lecture Hall for 225 people	
Four multi-purpose meeting rooms	
Theater	3,000 SF
Bookstore	1,500 SF
Cafe	1,000 SF
Offices and Support	7,500 SF
Net Area	46,000 SF
Circulation, Mechanical, & Storage (50%)	app 23,000 SF
Gross Area	69,000 SF

Qualifications

Maintain existing City Hall Plaza and Congress Street entrances and access to City Hall functions on floors 4 through 9.

The northern entrance to City Hall functions can be eliminated or re-appropriated by the museum program.

Program and design the plaza directly north of City Hall and the Congress Street sidewalks and roadbed, as shown in the Site Scope Map.

The Lecture Hall and Theater should be accessible without the need to enter into the ticketed galleries of the museum.

The Bookstore and Café are required to have separate entrances so that they can be open at different times than the other museum functions.

The Café should have a related outdoor café space (the area is not included in the SF above).



Evaluation Criteria

Does the proposal create a compelling new image for the City Hall building?

Does the proposal strengthen the legibility and access to City Hall functions as a result of the transformation of the spaces and image of the first three floors?

Does the proposal find its logic through an analysis and interpretation of the existing building?

Does the proposal create better connections between City Hall and the Congress Street edge?

Does the proposal include a strong idea about the urban landscape and its specific relationship to the building proposal?

References

Building Plans & Sections:

Links to these files provided in the email

Maps & Aerials:

www.mapjunction.com/bra/

http://www.bostonredevelopmentauthority.org/pdf/ZoningCode/Maps/1H_GovCenter.pdf

www.googleearth.com

2D and 3D Models:

www.bostonredevelopmentauthority.org/BRA_3D_Models/Index.html

(For 2D: CAD Layers can be found under Building footprints, Streets, City blocks)

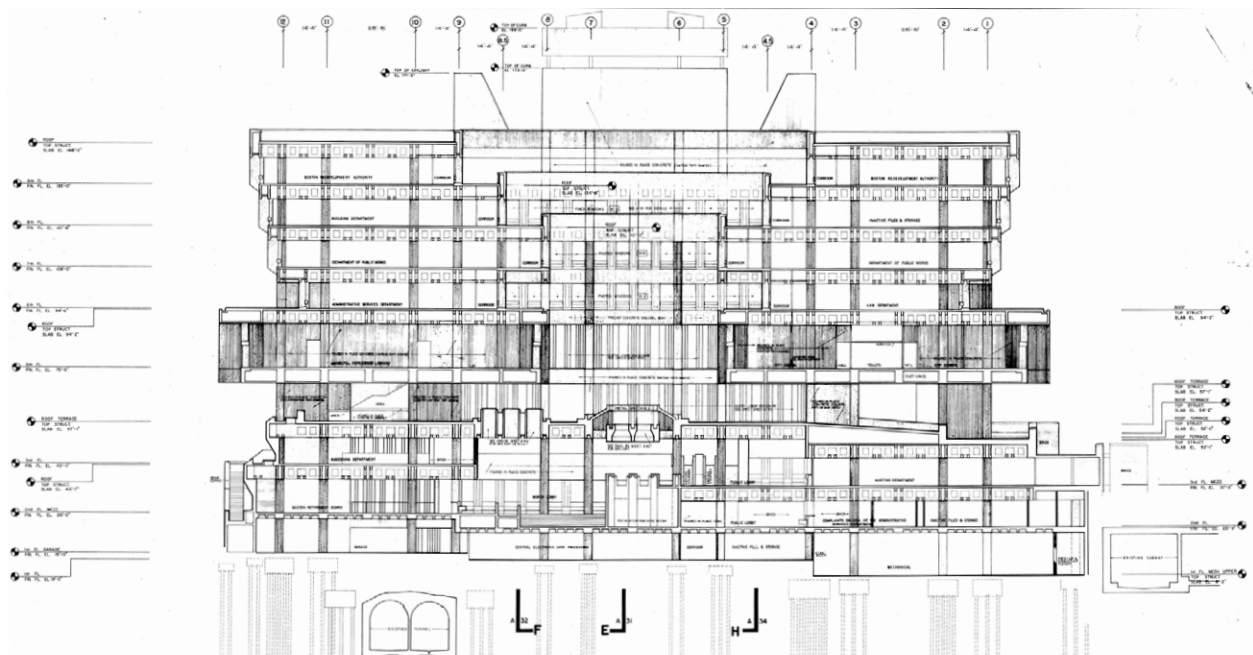
Additional Resources:

“Graphic Essay: Imagine That!”, ArchitectureBoston, September/October 2007, Vol. 10 No. 5, “Re-Imagining City Hall”.

http://www.architects.org/documents/publications/ab/sepoct2007/Graphic_Essay.pdf

Heroic: Boston Concrete 1957-1976

<http://www.overcommander.com/heroic/>



Submission Requirements

(4) 30" x 36" vertical format boards containing the following:

300 word explanation of design intentions
Site Plan
1/4"=1' Site Section that includes City Hall, Congress Street and adjacent buildings
Building Floor Plans
Diagrams (minimum 3)
Circulation
Program
Urban design strategy
Aerial 3D View
2-3 eye-level Perspectives
Symbol and Full Name

Please note that the boards must be flat- no pop-up projections or mounted models are permitted. The Rotch Committee reserves the right to use any boards or individual images on the boards for publication.

Electronic Submission

- ▶ Due by 10:00 am on March 8, 2010 (your local time) to snastasia@architects.org
- ▶ Email a digital copy of your boards in pdf format and/or low 72 dpi jpeg
- ▶ Attachments/boards may be submitted separately but each email must be smaller than 15MB
- ▶ You are welcome to use FTP software like:
<http://www.yousendit.com/>
<http://www.sendspace.com/>
<http://www.dropsend.com/>

Board Submission

- ▶ Must exactly match digital submission, no edits permitted
- ▶ Due by 5:00 pm on March 12, 2010.
- ▶ Mail or drop off to:
The Rotch Scholarship
c/o Boston Society of Architects Fourth Floor
52 Broad Street
Boston, MA 02109

Also by Friday 5:00pm March 12, 2010, we'll need you to send the following to snastasia@architects.org:

- ▶ Separate images and text from your boards
- ▶ Your headshot

Final Jury

You are required to present your submission to the jury for the Final Competition on Friday, March 19, 2010. The presentation will take place at KI showroom 115 Broad St, Boston. Please note that travel expenses are the responsibility of the finalist.

You will have a 25 minute period for your presentation; however the jurors may wish to ask questions so please prepare your presentation with at least 10 minutes for questions.

Statement of Sole Authorship

I hereby assure the Rotch Committee that I am the sole author of my submission for the 2010 Rotch Competition. I have not received criticism, suggestions or help of any sort other than through the use of books and other published literature.

Signed_____

Print Name_____

Symbol_____

Note to all Competitors:

The above statement of sole authorship shall be placed in the sealed envelope pasted on the back of the board. Your symbol and full name must appear on the envelope as well as on the face of your submission boards.