

# Boston Preservation Alliance

25 West Street, Boston, Massachusetts 02111 617 426 4674

P.O. Box 1165, Boston, Ma. 02103 Chairman: 242-5656 or 55

March 16th. '82

The Honorable Kevin White,  
Mayor  
Mayor's Office  
Boston City Hall  
Boston, Ma. 02201

Dear Mayor White,

On behalf of the Boston Preservation Alliance, an association of twenty seven preservation and historical organisations in the City of Boston, I express my concern to you on the future of the United Shoe Company Building at the corner of High and Federal Streets. You vetoed the designation of the United Shoe Building as a landmark a year ago, while apparently expressing firm reservations about the prospect of a high rise building on the site. The Preservation Alliance has wished to see the structure retained and therefore supported the designation. An agreement made between the owners and the Landmarks Commission postponing any action on the building soon comes to an end. We are therefore very anxious to know your position on the United Shoe Building.

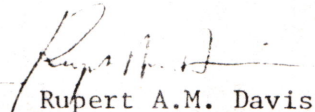
I am compelled to say to you that this building is, in the minds of many, one of the finest of its period remaining in our city. The Art Deco style has been very much unappreciated in Boston. It is time we recognised the importance of the fine products of that style that we possess. Further, whether viewed from South Station, or other adjacent vantage points, the United Shoe Building establishes itself as a unique part of Boston's skyline. To see it demolished for new construction would be a dismal, discomfoting prospect. The profile of our city will be the poorer if this building should be lost.

I would like to emphasize that the Preservation Alliance is not necessarily against new development in appropriate places. We do not feel that this site is appropriate for new development, especially if that means a high rise building. If new development were to mean a building of essentially the same volume and magnitude, it seems not unreasonable to suggest that the old building could be kept and rehabilitated.

I respectfully draw your attention to a recent publication of the Chamber of Commerce, entitled "Boston: Guidelines for Development". The guidelines single out, among other things, Boston's livable scale and historic built environment as worthy of retention in the future development of the city. We heartily agree, and would like to point out that these resources are fragile and irreplaceable.

Demolishing the United Shoe Building in order to erect an office tower on the site (whether high rise or not) will surely lessen the character and historic built environment of Boston. I am,

Yours Sincerely,



Rupert A.M. Davis  
Chairman