



IMAGE BY OF CHRISTIAN SCIENCE PUBLISHING SOCIETY

Church Administration Building

Expansion and consolidation of the Mother Church.

Tower Completed: 1972

177 Huntington Ave, Boston, MA 02115

I.M. Pei & Partners | Lead Designer: Araldo A. Cossutta

Reinforced Architectural Concrete (Cast-In-Place)

Architectural Style: Brutalist

26 Stories, 275,000 Square Feet

<http://www.pcf-p.com/a/p/6522/s.html>

Essay By Katherine Lee

WORKS CITED

Administration Building (1972): Christian Science Center Complex. Boston Landmarks Commission Study Report. City of Boston, January 25, 2011.

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“Christian Science Center.” Pei Cobb Freed & Partners. Web. 01 Feb. 2016.

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Lyndon, Donlyn. *The City Observed: Boston* (New York: Vintage Books, 1982), 201-202.



CONTEXT

I.M. Pei's tower, which stands along the intersection of Boston's Huntington Avenue and Belvidere Street, was part of a three-phase master plan to revamp and extend the influence of the Christian Science Center's Mother Church. The extension to this complex came to be one of Boston's most activated public spaces attracting tourists from all over the world. The tower is situated at the base of a 670-foot long reflection pool, which is surrounded by public seating separated by greenery and landscape details from the traffic of the main street (Christian Science Center). From within the tower views overlook the complex itself as well as the Fenway area spanning all the way to the Charles River, the South End, and the Boston Harbor.

BUILDING INFORMATION

"Measuring approximately 183 feet long by 86 feet wide, the Administration Building is a 26-story office building, with an additional story below ground. The structure rises 355 feet from a rectangular footprint, and was built to house the Church's fifteen general departments, with information, reception, and lounge areas on the ground floor, and the directors' offices and board room on the top two floors." (Administration Building).

IMAGE COURTESY OF GOOGLE EARTH PRO (EDITED BY KATHERINE LEE)



BUILDING DESCRIPTION

This tower building appears large in size but ultimately works in favor of completing the formation of the plaza. The concrete material, which makes up the building in its entirety was skillfully crafted and complements the existing buildings surrounding it.

The two sides of the building parallel to both the reflection pool and Huntington Avenue are made up of a concrete grid system framing the building's glass apertures. At the base of these facades, is a double-height lobby space exposed in view on the plaza side (facing the reflection pool) where the building's secondary entrance stands. The façade facing Huntington Avenue features a substantial concrete base, which camouflages a staircase leading down to the buildings below ground space. Above this concrete base are the grid apertures.

The building's primary entrance faces Belvidere Street. Metal and glass doors are placed within a concave concrete structure attracting users from the open plaza space. To the side of the entrance is a narrow glazed slit that extends the full height of the tower. This façade of the building is polygonal in form with six sides, contrasting to the opposite side of the building (facing Massachusetts Avenue), which is only formed with three sides. On this façade, is a single column of glass openings placed in the middle of the polygonal form. This façade as well as the façade facing Belvidere Street read primarily as solid, especially in contrast to the two others. It was observed and noted by Donlyn Lyndon that this polygonal form reads as faceted bays and could be "re-collective in giant scale of the familiar Back Bay protrusions" (Lyndon).

IMAGE BY OF PHIL PRESTON | THE BOSTON GLOBE