

# THE ELIOT HOTEL



The Eliot Hotel was built in 1925 in what had become, and continues to be today, Boston's most elegant and prestigious neighborhood. The neighborhood materialized in the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, reclaimed from mudflats in what was the largest urban landfill project of its time in the world. Wealthy Bostonians flocked to the Back Bay and built their townhouses in the fashionable French Empire style. Many cultural institutions followed and the Back Bay became the center for much of Boston's cultural life.

Along Commonwealth Avenue, designed after the Champs Elysee in Paris, a number of hotels were built. Often these hotels became residential hotels, catering to those who wanted the prestige of a Commonwealth Avenue but could not afford their own homes. These opulent hotels have all but vanished with the exception of the Eliot Hotel

Built by the family of Charles Eliot, one of Harvard University's foremost leaders at the turn of the last century who was responsible for huge growth of the university's endowment and who was very connected with the philanthropic and cultural organizations of the city, the Eliot Hotel's neo-Georgian exterior rises complementarily to the similarly styled Harvard Alumni Club next door, built in 1914.

Charles Eliot had already passed away when his family decided to build the hotel. They had hoped that retiring academics would find the hotel's location adjacent to the Harvard Club to be an incentive for residing here. But soon the Great Depression ensued and many enterprises struggled, including those in Boston's Back Bay. The hotel was purchased by the Nathan Ullian family and continues to remain independently owned and operated by the Ullian family.

For many decades, the hotel was considered more "charming" than luxurious. In the 1980's, however, as Boston's economy flourished, the neighborhood underwent a second renaissance with gentrification expanding from Back Bay's core into surrounding areas. The Ullian Family seized the opportunity to create a true luxury boutique hotel, much like the venerable hotels found in European Capitals. The metamorphosis of the property was truly amazing. Its sumptuous elegance, class and sophistication coupled with its intimacy and warmth, fit in perfectly into historic Back Bay.

The final evolution of the hotel resulted in the creation of its restaurant Uni, which under the direction of its Executive Chef and James Beard Award Winner, Ken Oringer, has become one of the top restaurants in North America and has been consistently chosen as Best of Boston.