

The Ames Mansion, as classified by the Massachusetts State Building Code, is a Group B - Business Use, and of Type 3 or 3A. The "Type 3" designates exterior masonry wall construction with either normal or heavy timber floor and roof framing. The facility is not subject to any code restrictions as to number of stories or allowed area per story as it is an existing structure.

It is interesting to note that there are certain aspects of the egress stairs, elevators and fire protection systems in the mansion that would normally be upgraded by code requirements. However, because this is an historic building, it receives generous exemptions according to the code. The exemptions were given by the City to the present owners in their recent renovation effort. These exemptions are explained in Section 436 of the Massachusetts State Building Code and relate to whether the building is open to the public or is to be used for private business. It should also be noted that although the building is not recorded on the National List of Historic Places, it has received the above-noted code exemption by the City and is subject to the review of the Back Bay Architectural Review Committee for any renovation work.

If the building is to be for private use, no upgrading need be undertaken. However, if the building is open to the public for more than 50 days* per year, certain improvements are required.

These include smoke detection devices and other fire protection devices. It should be noted that the recent renovations provided emergency lighting and exit signs which are part of these requirements.

Other aspects of the recent renovations include new male and female toilet rooms on each of the floors, stair improvements, new finishes, lighting, and power distribution. These all add considerably to the use of the mansion as an office facility.

If this building was not exempt by virtue of Section 436 of the code due to its historic significance, compliance would be required in the following areas:

- A. The supplemental stair would have to be enclosed. Any new doors or partitions, according to Section 2203.12, would require a one-hour rating.
- B. Major modifications would have to be made to the elevator enclosures.
- C. Any additional means of egress would have to be provided from the fourth level.
- D. A standpipe system would be needed.

* This is 12 days according to some interpretations of the code.