

# MSLD Study Committee Notes #5

October 29, 2025  
Bunker Hill Museum

## Study Committee Attendees:

Crystal Galvin  
Kirsten Hoffman  
Intiya Ambrogi Isaza  
Nancy Johnsen (Chair)  
Lindsey Mac-Jones  
Linda Neshamkin  
Ian Urquhart

## Staff:

Gabriela Amore  
Elizabeth Sherva  
Jennifer Gaugler

Action/follow-up items for staff are highlighted in yellow.

## PREAMBLE:

- Chair **Nancy Johnsen** calls the meeting to order at 6:36 PM.
- **Nancy** reviews:
  - Timeline of the landmarking process and the multiple opportunities for public engagement
  - Work plan for the study committee

## I. REVIEW AND VOTE ON MINUTES FROM THE OCTOBER 15, 2025 PUBLIC MEETING

- A. **Kirsten Hoffman** motions to approve meeting minutes, **Crystal Galvin** seconds the motion. Meeting minutes approved unanimously.

## II. PUBLIC FEEDBACK SINCE LAST MEETING

- A. **BLC staff** have not received specific comments directed to the study committee in the last two weeks regarding the proposed district. We have continued to hear some general comments regarding improved communication/notices.
  - 1. **Nancy** notes that upcoming meetings have already been posted in the City's Public Notices and the meetings are also listed in the "Happening" section of the Patriot Bridge. An ad will also be running in the Patriot Bridge.
- B. **Nancy** notes that she did receive a comment about providing two weeks notice, which the committee will endeavor to give, but is not legally required. Also, requests for flyering every household, which the committee will not do for every single meeting, but will try to do for the public engagement events. The committee is currently meeting and exceeding all legal notice requirements, and will continue to strive to spread the word more widely.
  - 1. **Crystal** notes that she has also heard a request to flyer before the next public engagement event.
- C. **Nancy** notes that there have been a few comments regarding battlefield recognition, which is not within the purview of this study committee.
  - 1. **Intiya** asks for staff to reiterate the reason why.
    - a) **Elizabeth** notes that the proposed district is about the built pattern of homes around the monument, not about recognizing the site of a battle.

### III. PREVIOUSLY ASKED QUESTIONS

- A. Does the Protection Area need to be defined at the same time as the Landmark area?
  - 1. **Staff:** It is the staff recommendation to do so, because if a Protection Area is to be added later, it will require a new petition, study committee, study report, BLC vote, Mayoral approval, and City Council approval. The study committee can put alternative options into the study report if they wish (for example, with / without Protection Area) but will need to choose one to recommend to the Landmarks Commission.
- B. Will a Protection Area eliminate the existing NDOD jurisdiction, which regulates more elements than a Protection Area does?
  - 1. **Staff:**
    - a) The NDOD is quite large, and anything outside of the boundaries of a new Landmark District or Protection Area would stay within the purview of the NDOD.
    - b) There's a tradeoff: Protection Areas can stop buildings from being demolished, but cannot require design review. NDODs can require design review, but cannot prevent demolition.
    - c) The South End wrote their standards so that they can review new buildings that replace a demolished building in the Protection Area.
  - 2. **Intiya:** Would the Landmark District or Protection Area be able to regulate height and density?
    - a) **Staff:** Height and land coverage, yes. Density - technically no (we cannot regulate number of units).
  - 3. **Ian:** Can the height limit of the new district override what is allowed by Zoning?
    - a) **Staff:** Yes. For example in the South End, the height limit in the Landmark District's standards and criteria is lower than what is allowed by zoning.
  - 4. **Nancy:** Also true in the Protection Area?
    - a) **Staff:** Yes.
  - 5. **Linda:** Will Planning know to flag something that needs Landmark review?
    - a) **Staff:** Yes, it is tagged by geographical location. Permits are flagged so applicants will know they are in a designated area and can review what they can and cannot do before they get as far as Landmarks review.

### IV. DISTRICT BOUNDARIES

- A. **Staff:** Reviews the difference between Landmark Districts and Protection Area (see slide).
  - 1. Three existing districts have protection areas: South End, Fort Point Channel, and Eustis Street.
- B. **Nancy:** Suggests that study committee review the example standards and criteria on their own to help inform future discussion.
- C. **Intiya:** How is land coverage defined?
  - 1. **Staff:** There's no formal definition in Ch. 772. We can try to find a technical definition.
- D. **Intiya:** Which criteria apply?
  - 1. **Staff:** A, B, and D (National Register; social/economic history of development; architectural style/period). C doesn't apply as a reason for designation of the district.
- E. **Crystal:** How do we decide where to limit the Landmark/Protection Area when the architecture is similar outside of it? We can see historic architecture well outside of these boundaries.

1. **Lindsey:** Why limit to the original boundary?
  - a) **Ian:** The designation needs to satisfy specific criteria.
  - b) **Staff:** We also need to consider how much regulation the community would find acceptable.
2. **Nancy:** We need a coherent story about the Landmark District, which was given in the petition (the planned development). The Protection Area can be based on sight lines and protecting views.
3. **Intiya:** Feels like Monument Avenue should be included – it is also planned development and it is very significant to the neighborhood.
4. **Lindsey:** Aim for more and then let people give feedback if they don't like it!
5. **Nancy:** Agrees with swinging wider. Q: If it didn't pass the Mayor or City Council, would it be dead?
  - a) **Staff:** The same district could be petitioned again, but would have to wait one year.
  - b) **Nancy:** We should try to anticipate that the Mayor and City Council may push back on a larger Landmark District.
6. **Elizabeth:** You could swing big and then take it to public engagement and hear what people have to say.
7. **Nancy:** One reason we considered expanding was that BLC staff reported that people at the Mayor's Coffee Hour were very interested in expanding the district.
  - a) **It would be helpful to have a map of building ages.**
8. **Ian:** On the walk, it was hard to define where the boundary would end. To me, the "Monument Square district" is around Monument Square. Even though other architecture reads similarly, it is not necessarily connected to Monument Square in the same way.
9. **Crystal:** On the boundary walk, it seemed like members of the public were in favor of less restriction, rather than more.
- F. **Kirsten:** Q: Is an element of the standards and criteria figuring out what is and isn't a contributing building?
  1. **Staff:** Yes, this can be done in a data table in the report.
- G. **Nancy:** Committee members were handed out an assignment to walk the neighborhood and mark up the buildings, areas, and features that seem significant. It would be helpful for the committee to do this before the next meeting.
- H. **Gabby:** Flags the language in Ch. 772 in the first sentence of the Protection Area definition: "visually related...but is not necessarily of sufficient..." (gives some latitude in how the Protection Area is defined without having to have as coherent a narrative as the Landmark District).

#### **I. PUBLIC COMMENT:**

1. **Dan Kovacevic, Prescott St:**
  - a) **It would be nice to have a chart showing the difference between the Landmark District, Protection Area, and the NDOD.**
  - b) Why stop in the middle of the Town Hill Historic District? Not including City Square, Edward Everett House, etc.
    - (1) **Gabby:** This is a working map – it was just a transcription error because our last map was cut off.
    - (2) **Nancy:** Please submit your own annotated map to the study committee.
  - c) **There was a survey done of the historic buildings in Charlestown that is in the library – a working example of several hundred buildings that have been reviewed.**
  - d) **Charlestown Preservation Society produced a manual of the vernacular of Charlestown architecture – a tool for developers showing all the architectural styles and details.**

- (1) **Linda** might have one!
2. **Name not given:** You said the Protection Area is limited to 1200 feet from boundary. Why does the Protection Area seem much bigger in South End?
- a) The Landmark District there is much larger, but the Protection Area does not exceed 1200 feet from its boundary.
3. **Johanna Hynes:**
- a) Training Field – Are you including the grass and the history tablets?
- b) Q for Intiya – Do you know what year Monument Ave was created? 1871, much later than most people think. This proposed district seems to be about wealth. Not addressing the public housing area is discrimination.
- (1) **Intiya:** My career is dedicated to housing affordability. That is not the same issue as preserving architectural elements.
- c) The Bunker Hill Monument is a defining element of the neighborhood, and the area is important for having been a battlefield.
4. **Name not given:** Is there something in the BLC's rules that limits the size of the Protection Area? Because the area outside the Protection Area feels the same and both within and outside of the Protection Area there are a mix of styles. Maybe the protected area should be all of Charlestown.
- a) **Staff:** Yes, the legislation establishes a maximum distance from the Landmark District boundary.
- b) **Intiya:** This particular committee was established to look at a specific boundary, not to review the designation of all of Charlestown.
- c) **Linda:** The original petitioners were looking at the architecture and urban design of a planned development around Monument Square. 10 petitioners could bring a new petition with a different idea.
5. **Intiya:** Question for next time (going back to Johanna's question) – would the actual Training Field grounds be included in the designation?

## V. PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT EVENT

- A. Tabled to the next meeting (beginning of agenda).

## VI. ADJOURNMENT: 8:05 PM

- A. **Intiya** motions to adjourn, **Crystal** seconds. Unanimous vote to adjourn.