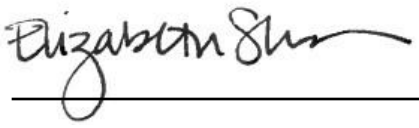
SWALLOW MANSION

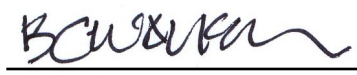
33 Cordis Street, Charlestown (Boston)

BOSTON LANDMARKS COMMISSION
STUDY REPORT

Petition # 294.24
Boston Landmarks Commission | Office of Historic Preservation
City of Boston

Approved by:  April 21, 2026

Elizabeth Sherva, Executive Director — Date

Approved by:  April 21, 2026

Bradford C. Walker, Chair — Date

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Report posted on April 21, 2026

Cover image: Front of 33 Cordis Street, Charlestown, July 2025, photograph by Carter Jackson.
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. DESIGNATION

The Boston Landmarks Commission was established by Ch. 772 of the Acts of 1975 as amended to identify and safeguard the public's interest in preserving historic sites that represent distinctive features of the political, economic, social, cultural or architectural history of the city. As part of the process of designating a new Landmark or District, a Study Report is prepared to locate and describe the site; to provide a record of the rationale for creating the designation; to identify the character-defining features; and to list Standards and Criteria that will guide the Boston Landmarks Commission in evaluating proposed changes in the future.

The designation of the Swallow Mansion was initiated in 2025 after a petition with 64 signatures was submitted to the Boston Landmarks Commission asking that the Commission designate the property under the provisions of Chapter 772 of the Acts of 1975, as amended (hereinafter "Chapter 772"). The purpose of such a designation is to recognize and protect a physical feature or improvement that in whole or part has historical, cultural, social, architectural, or aesthetic significance.

The Swallow Mansion meets the following criteria for designation as a Boston Landmark as established in Section 4 of Chapter 772:

> B. Structures, sites, objects, man-made or natural, at which events occurred that have made an outstanding contribution to, and are identified prominently with, or that best represent some important aspect of the cultural, political, economic, military, or social history of the city, the commonwealth, the New England region or the nation.
>
> > Constructed at a moment of social tension, amid efforts to both create an upper-class enclave in Charlestown and counter increasing immigrant habitation in the area, the history of the Swallow Mansion uniquely centers around both Boston's political and merchant elite and its immigrants. The subtle changes made to its fabric, including the early twentieth-century alterations that transformed it from the high-style home of the prominent Swallow family into a multifamily home for Irish immigrants, make it a uniquely well-preserved example of Boston's elite housing stock creatively adapted by underrepresented groups to help propel them into better standards of living.
>
> D. Structures, sites, objects, man-made or natural, representative of elements of architectural or landscape design or craftsmanship that embody distinctive characteristics of a type inherently valuable for study of a period, style or method of construction or development, or a notable work of an architect, landscape architect, designer, or builder whose work influenced the development of the city, the commonwealth, the New England region, or the nation.
>
> > The Swallow Mansion, built in 1845, is architecturally significant as a rare Boston-area example of a Greek Revival temple-form house with a full-height columned portico capped by a pediment. Although the Greek Revival style was common throughout New England, only a handful of homes in Boston are temple-fronts with full-height porches. With the monumentality of its columns, entablature, and pediment, the Swallow Mansion could be considered the finest example of a Greek Revival house in Charlestown, and one of the finest in all of Boston. Set back from the street, the house's position on its site is also unique for its neighborhood. From the south end of Cordis Street, the Swallow Mansion rests on its foundation like a temple projecting from the incline of Breed's Hill.

Therefore, Boston Landmarks Commission staff recommends that the Commission designate the Swallow Mansion as a Landmark under Chapter 772; and further recommends that the boundaries corresponding to the Assessor's parcel 0203175000 be adopted without modification. The effect of this designation shall be that review by the Boston Landmarks Commission and/or Commission staff shall be required for the following:

- Any proposed alterations to the exterior envelope of the building.
- Demolition, addition(s), or new construction in the front, side, and rear yards, including fences, screens, sheds, paving and hardscape and similar constructed elements.

If designated, the Standards and Criteria in this report will guide the Commission's review of proposed changes to the property, with the goal of protecting the historic integrity of the landmark. The designation would not regulate use or alterations to interior features or features that are not visible from a public way.

2. LOCATION AND ZONING

According to the City of Boston's Assessing Department, the Swallow Mansion is located at 33 Cordis Street, Charlestown MA 02129. The Assessor's Parcel Number is 0203175000. The boundaries of the parcel are referenced in the deed on Page 85 of Book 69649 at the Suffolk County Registry of Deeds.

The Swallow Mansion is located on the east side of Cordis Street in Charlestown, a peninsula north of Boston. The house occupies the north portion of a 3,900-square-foot, steeply sloping parcel that is set into the south side of the Breed's Hill. Neighboring properties include early-to-mid nineteenth-century buildings that were originally single-family dwellings and often later converted to multifamily apartment buildings. The Swallow Mansion is located roughly one block to the southwest of the Monument Square Historic District, which is listed in the National Register of Historic Places. The house is zoned as a two-family dwelling.

Figure 1. Boston Assessors Map showing the boundaries of parcel # 0203175000.

3. OWNERSHIP AND OCCUPANCY

Current Ownership

According to the City of Boston's Assessor's records, the Swallow Mansion is owned by Dennis Lowney and Daryl Ann DiDiego, with a mailing address at 33 Cordis Street, Charlestown, MA 02129.

Current Assessed Value

According to the Assessor's records, the property has a total assessed value of $1,791,200 with the land valued at $649,800 and the building valued at $1,141,400 for fiscal year 2025. The Swallow Mansion has been assessed as a two-family home since 1989.

4. IMAGES

Figure 2. Front facade of the Swallow Mansion (March 4, 2026).

Figure 3. Side (south-facing) facade of the Swallow Mansion (March 4, 2026).

Figure 4. Side (south-facing) facade of the Swallow Mansion (March 4, 2026).

Figure 5. The Swallow Mansion and adjacent driveway (March 4, 2026).

Figure 6. Narrow gap between the north-facing side of the Swallow Mansion and the adjacent property (March 4, 2026).

Figure 7. Detail of the columns and pediment of the Swallow Mansion (March 4, 2026).

Figure 8. Detail of the front entrance of the Swallow Mansion (March 4, 2026).

Figure 9. Screen capture, Realtor.com (January 4, 2025).

Figure 10. Detail from the 1852 "Map of the city of Boston and immediate neighborhood" by Henry McIntyre. (Norman B. Leventhal Map & Education Center, https://collections.leventhalmap.org/search/commonwealth:3f4632536.)

Figure 11. Detail from the 1868 "Insurance Map of Charlestown" by D.A. Sanborn. (Norman B. Leventhal Map & Education Center, https://collections.leventhalmap.org/search/commonwealth:tt44pw32j.)

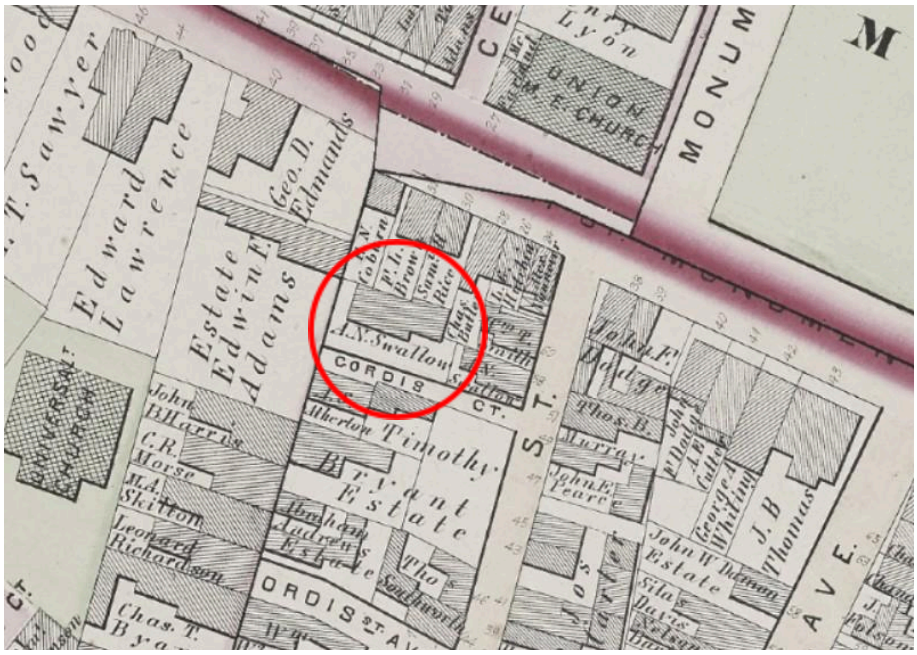

Figure 12. Detail from the 1875 "Atlas of the County of Suffolk, Massachusetts" by G.M Hopkins & Co. (Norman B. Leventhal Map & Education Center, https://collections.leventhalmap.org/search/commonwealth:tt44pv37q.)

Figure 13. Ca. 1925-1959 photo by Rev. Wolcott Cutler. (Digital Commonwealth, https://ark.digitalcommonwealth.org/ark:/50959/8k71p6859).

Figure 14. Ca. 1930-1939, photographer unknown. (Digital Commonwealth, https://ark.digitalcommonwealth.org/ark:/50959/41688166m).

Figure 15. 1968 photo of the Swallow Mansion. Photographer unknown. (BOS.4446, BLC Inventory form for 33 Cordis St, https://mhc-macris.net/details?mhcid=bos.4446.)

Figure 16. 1986 photo of the Swallow Mansion by Edward Gordon. (BOS.4446, BLC Inventory form for 33 Cordis St, https://mhc-macris.net/details?mhcid=bos.4446.)

5. ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

Number 33 Cordis Street is a substantial temple-form wood-framed Greek Revival house. The three-bay main façade is sheathed in flush boards, while the four-bay sidewalls are clad with clapboards. There are baseboards between the high brick basement and the clapboards of the sidewalls.

Wide paneled Doric pilasters accent the corners of the building, which has a side hall plan. A monumental Ionic-columned portico dominates its main façade. It spans two full stories between a full basement and a broad pedimented attic. The four columns of the main façade are fluted, with well-carved Ionic capitals. The columns rest on a replacement (20th-century) brick platform with wrought iron railings. A wide pedimented attic has tripartite windows which are a variation on a Palladian theme with a tall square-headed central window. A pedimented dormer is located on the Boyle Street roof slope.

The entrance has “Colonial" (circa early- to mid-20th century) pilasters, sidelights and a solid fanlight superimposed over original heavy pilasters and cornice-headed entablature. Elegant, tall windows appear on the main façade's first and second floors and on the first floor of the sidewall. The tall windows have 9/6 wood sash. Standard sized windows of the second floor side have 6/6 wood sash. In general, all windows are fully enframed with shallow cornice-headed lintels. Sideboards are carried out from the main block to the Ionic capitals.

The front yard is enclosed by a granite block retaining wall on two sides with granite fence posts. The front yard is tree-shaded and the side yard grass-covered along Boyle Street. The building is situated on the steep incline of Breed’s Hill’s southwest slope.

6. HISTORY AND SIGNIFICANCE

6.1 Historic Significance

33 Cordis Street in Charlestown, locally known as the Swallow Mansion, is best known as the home of the Swallow family, whose grocery store chain and foray into local politics were well known in Boston during the second half of the nineteenth century. However, a closer look at the house's past reveals that this is only one part of its rich history. Constructed amid efforts to create an upper-class enclave in Charlestown and stem the influx of Irish immigrants, the unusually fine Greek Revival house at 33 Cordis Street projected an image of fashionable prosperity that, at first, attracted wealthy merchant class owners. Eventually, however, it was subdivided to serve as the unlikely multifamily home of immigrants. The few alterations to its fabric reveal this history, and today the house provides a glimpse into how Charlestown's housing stock was adapted by disparate demographics in the early twentieth century.

Charlestown in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries

Charlestown occupies the traditional homelands of the Massachusett, on land known as the Mishawum peninsula. Native Americans lived in the place we now call Boston for at least 12,000 years and are still here today. Archaeological investigations throughout Boston document surviving evidence of Native presence throughout the city, even in developed areas. (See the Archaeological Sensitivity statement below for specific information about the known and potential ancient Native uses of this property.)

Prior to European settlement, Charlestown was bound by the Charles River and Mystic River and connected to the mainland by a narrow strip of land, eventually named Charlestown Neck. The earliest Europeans arrived in present-day Charlestown in 1629, when the first governor of the Massachusetts Bay Colony, John Endicott, brought settlers from England on behalf of the Massachusetts Bay Company to secure its claim to the land. and to establish a town , named after King Charles I, and its layout is credited to Thomas Graves of Kent, England, whose street plan can still be partially observed on Town Hill and in City Square—was once the center of town's governance and commerce. Sent by Endicott from Salem in 1630, John Winthrop and other passengers settled on Town Hill. The original territory of Charlestown was large, encompassing Malden, Melrose, Woburn, Somerville, and parts of Cambridge. Throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, these areas became independent towns, and the portions of Charlestown near the waterfront and southwestern edge of the peninsula became concentrated centers of residential, mercantile, and civic buildings.[1]

On the eve of the American Revolution, the economy and patterns of living in Charlestown remained much as they had for the preceding century. Like many port towns, residents subsisted off the maritime economy and lived near the town's docks, where they worked as shipwrights, craftsmen, mariners, merchants and sea captains.[2] Buildings ranged widely in age, size, and type, from fashionable free-standing houses made of brick for the town's elite to smaller wood-framed dwellings with incorporated shops or rental housing. These structures were primarily concentrated on its southeastern edge, along the water, with undeveloped land to the north. However, shortly after the War with the British began, Charlestown's architectural and social fabric was permanently changed.

In June of 1775, the town became the site of the Battle of Bunker Hill, named after a hill at its northwest edge near Charlestown Neck. As the conflict wore on, the eastern portion of town was

[1] Laura Baker Driemeyer, "Rising from the Ashes: The Transformation of Nineteenth-Century Building Culture in Charlestown, Massachusetts" (PhD dissertation, Boston University, 2006), 18.
[2] Ibid., 19.

burned to the ground by the British—its tightly packed wooden buildings enabling "the conflagration [to] spread with great rapidity."[3] In the years to follow, many Charlestown residents found it challenging to recover economically and emotionally from the destruction and the closing of Boston harbor, and in the immediate aftermath redevelopment languished. But with the construction of the Charlestown Navy Yard in 1801, maritime industry began to grow, and the town's rural landscape was developed to accommodate homes, schools, and places of worship for new residents. Indeed, 33 Cordis Street and its environs would be firmly situated within this framework.

As Charlestown rebuilt and expanded, formerly undeveloped estates were subdivided into streets bearing the name of their landowners. This practice was especially common on the south slope of Breed's Hill, the top of which eventually became the site of the Bunker Hill Monument. Here, land owned by a few prominent families was developed into streets where speculative developers began constructing homes. Indeed, such was the case for the land owned by Captain Joseph Cordis, whose pasture was developed into Cordis Street around 1799.[4] Within five years, three large houses, including those at 16 Cordis, 21 Cordis, and 32 Cordis, were built on his land.[5] The land at 33 Cordis would lay undeveloped for another four decades, during which time significant demographic changes unfolded in Charlestown.

Early Nineteenth-Century Growth

The occupations of those moving to Charlestown during the opening decades of the nineteenth century very much resembled those who lived there before the Revolution. Roughly 75% of men were engaged in work related to port activities, or in the manufacturing of goods that were shipped around the world, including tanning and leather dressing, soap and candle making, and rum distillation.[6] With the advent of major transportation routes into the city, including the Warren Bridge (built in 1828), direct, convenient access was now possible from Boston. This finally meant that Charlestown's economy and population could become less yoked to maritime activities. By the 1830s, residents, especially the "middling and lower classes," could "live in Charlestown but work in Boston, just a fifteen to twenty-minute walk away."[7]

Despite the town's ascendance, many contemporaries lamented the realization that Charlestown's social fabric would never be the same as it was before the Revolution. As early nineteenth-century observer Timothy Dwight noted, "After [Charlestown] burnt, only a part of its former inhabitants returned. Its additional population has been formed by strangers from many places and of almost every description…The bonds by which they are united are of course feeble."[8] His prejudiced account continued, opining that, "Less harmony is to be expected…this division prevents much of the pleasure of life which might otherwise be found on so charming a spot."[9] Decades later, local historian James Hunnewell agreed. In 1888 he remarked on the "unavoidable change [that] must of course attend the growth of a population…of similar descent, most of whom knew each other…to several-fold greater numbers, coming from many sources and having less in common."[10] Indeed, by the 1830s and 1840s, much of Charlestown's working-class population was composed of immigrants. Many lived in the older multifamily housing near the waterfront, and a large portion of them were Catholics from Ireland who endeavored to escape generational poverty in their home country, where they often worked as tenant farmers.[11] Men frequently found jobs as laborers and skilled tradesmen,

[3] Richard Frothingham, *The History of Charlestown, Massachusetts* (Boston: C.C. Little and J. Brown, 1845), 344.
[4] James F. Hunnewell, *A Century of Town Life: A History of Charlestown, Massachusetts, 1775- 1887* (Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1888), 143.
[5] Driemeyer, "Rising from the Ashes," xii.
[6] Driemeyer, "Rising from the Ashes," 93.
[7] Ibid.
[8] Timothy Dwight, *Travels in New-England and New-York* (New Haven: T. Dwight, 1821) 467.
[9] Ibid.
[10] Hunnewell, *A Century of Town* Life, quoted in Driemeyer, "Rising from the Ashes," 108.
[11] Driemeyer, "Rising from the Ashes," 93.

while women often worked in domestic service.[12] After the onset of the Irish Potato Famine in 1845, immigration from Ireland increased dramatically. Soon, Boston's conservative Protestants began to circulate stories of Irish "immorality" condoned by the "Roman religion," as well as the "idolatry of the sacraments," and the corruption of the papacy.[13] Many well-established families in Greater Boston viewed the Irish Roman Catholic traditions as a "threat to Anglo-Saxon traditions, American freedoms, and democratic institutions."[14]

As Charlestown's population grew more heterogeneous, its elected officials attempted to regularize its hitherto ad hoc development and, as explained by Driemeyer, "segregate the landscape by function and eventually by class and race."[15] When Charlestown was incorporated as a city in 1847, its first mayor, George Washington Warren, used his inaugural address to call for a "a thorough and accurate survey of the whole city to be taken at once…showing by dotted lines such alterations and improvements as ought at some time to be made, the grade at which the streets should be reduced or elevated, and the course and depth of the common sewers…"[16] This suggestion for more systematic and carefully codified development reflected a larger impulse among residents like Warren to find ways to divide the city according to class and create enclaves of middle and upper class housing stock, which could then attract wealthier Protestants to offset the largely immigrant and working class population. Such separation might enable native Bostonians to avoid what Mayor John Prescott Bigelow described in 1850 as the "aged, blind, paralytic, and lunatic immigrants who have become charges on our public charities," many of whom live together in "foul and confined apartments."[17] Deeds for lots on Charlestown's Bolton Place, near High Street, required that "no buildings erected or to be erected upon the premises shall within ten years of the date be occupied by Irish or colored persons or tenants."[18] The imposing Greek Revival house at 33 Cordis Street, built in 1845, emerged directly from this complex set of social considerations.

33 Cordis Street: The Early Years

William H. Bacon of Charlestown purchased the lot at 33 Cordis Street in January of 1845 from Ezra D. Fogg and Eben M. Plummer, a surveyor, for $1,200.[19] Bacon is listed in censuses as a "painter"—a term often used at the time to refer to a builder or housewright. He owned a neighboring plot of land and appears to have built the house with the intention to sell it speculatively—a decision not uncommon in mid nineteenth-century Charlestown.[20] The decision to finish it so lavishly, however, with elaborate molding and double-height columns fronting a fine Greek portico was exceptional. His design choices would point to his desire to sell it to members of the City's merchant class and help establish Cordis Street as a wealthy, fashionable enclave.

Indeed, in 1849 the house Bacon built attracted such a buyer. It appears to have been first purchased by Philip B. Holmes—a cabinet maker from New Hampshire who ran a furniture shop at the corner of Water Street and Main Street, directly across the street from the harbor.[21] Holmes lived at 33 Cordis

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[12] "First Wave Immigration, 1820-1880," Global Boston, accessed August 1, 2025, https://globalboston.bc.edu/index.php/home/eras-of-migration/first-wave/.
[13] Thomas O'Connor, *The Boston Irish: A Political History* (Old Saybrook: Konecky & Konecky, 1995), 43-44.
[14] Ibid., 42.
[15] Driemeyer, "Rising from the Ashes," 214.
[16] George W. Warren, *The Inaugural Address of the Mayor, Delivered April 26th, 1847, Upon the First Organization of the City Government of the City of Charlestown* (Charlestown: Freeman Office, 1847), 7. quoted in Driemeyer, *Rising from the Ashes*, 218.
[17] O'Connor, *The Boston Irish*, 63.
[18] 4-8 and 3-15 Bolton Place, Boston Landmarks Commission Survey, quoted in Driemeyer, *Rising from the Ashes*, 216.
[19] Middlesex County Registry of Deeds, Book 452/Page 444-445, July 15, 1845, E.M. Plummer et al to W.H. Bacon.
[20] Charles P. Emmons, *Fletcher's Charleston Directory*, 1848, 42.
[21] Note: between 1845-1949, 33 Cordis Street appears to have been mortgaged multiple times, creating multiple Middlesex County deeds. The house appears to have been owned by William H. Bacon until 1849. George Adams, *The Charlestown Directory* (Charlestown: Nathan Merril, 1852) 53; Seventh Census of the United States, 1850,

Street with his wife and three young children for only a few years. In 1855, Robert B. Edes Jr.— the owner of Edes and Co. Hardware Company, and a member of a prominent Charlestown family—purchased the fashionable home.[22] Robert Edes Jr. was the son of Captain Robert Ball Edes (1789-1862), who had a prosperous career as an international merchant captain.[23] Robert Edes Jr. and his wife, Priscilla P. Rice bought 33 Cordis Street shortly after their wedding and lived there with their three children and Catherine Kenny, an Irish domestic servant, for twelve years, until they sold it to the man whose family would become the house's namesake: Amaziah Swallow.[24]

At the time of the sale to Swallow in 1862, large swaths of undeveloped land remained on the west side of Cordis Street. The area was primarily populated by a handful of detached houses, most of which were nearly fifty years old, and newer, albeit much smaller attached houses on the southern end of Cordis Street. All of these houses directly abutted the road, but 33 Cordis Street, which was pushed back from the street, sat conspicuously apart. Proudly free from any abutting houses and surrounded by grass on all four sides, its tall basement level was set into the steeply sloping street, making it appear like a veritable temple in the hillside.

These qualities likely appealed to the ambitious Amaziah Swallow. As the owner of one of Charlestown's largest grocery retailers in the Boston area, Swallow was a well-known figure, and his store located at 12 and 13 City Square was a fixture in the town for decades.[25] By the 1870s, Swallow and Co. held contracts with the federal government for supplying warships, and they made daily shipments to grocers across New England.[26] Amaziah Swallow lived at 33 Cordis with his wife Rebecca and their son, George, as their company continued to grow. In the 1870s, George Swallow went into his father's business, which, according to contemporaries, was "flourishing."[27] Its success propelled Amaziah into the city's most prominent circles, including his role as a trustee of the Charlestown Five-cent Savings Bank, and it enabled them to hire two domestic servants, Margaret and James Hammil, from Ireland and Massachusetts, respectively to live in their large home. [28] The success of the Swallow family made it all the more shocking when, suddenly in 1879, tragedy struck.

On the morning of April 17, Amaziah Swallow left his store, and, without "saying anything to his son," went home and committed suicide using a revolver in his son's bedroom.[29] The *Boston Herald* reported on the incident, explaining that "a servant girl in the house," likely Margaret Hammil, discovered Swallow "lying on the floor of the room."[30] The press lamented his death, explaining that "no financial troubles could have caused it," and thus noted that the "cause of the rash act is said to have been depression of the spirits," which they called a "characteristic of the family."[31] Nevertheless, for over two decades the Swallows continued to live at 33 Cordis Street, during which time George Swallow embarked on a career as a politician. In the 1880s and 1890s, he served in both the Massachusetts House of Representatives and Senate, and in 1903 he ran for Mayor of Boston, ultimately losing against Democratic incumbent Patrick Collins.

(National Archives Microfilm Publication M432, 1009 rolls); Middlesex County Registry of Deeds, Book 541/Page 502-503, October 16, 1849, Cyrus Flint to Philip B. Holmes.

[22] Emmons, *Fletcher's Charleston Directory*, 1848, 42. IS IT CHARLESTOWN or CHARLESTON?

[23] Sturgis Library Archives, Genealogical and Personal Document Collection, MS.2, Inventory of the Edes-Barker papers.

[24] Middlesex County Registry of Deeds, Book 881/Page 21-22, December 24, 1862, Edes to Swallow.

[25] For a photo showing the Swallow and Co. Charlestown store, see https://www.digitalcommonwealth.org/search/commonwealth:8k71pc796

[26] Edward Gordon, "Charlestown Survey Project Completion Report," Boston Landmarks Commission, July 1990.

[27] "Affairs About Home: Depressed unto Death," *Boston Herald*, April 17, 1879.

[28] Ninth Census of the United States, 1870; (National Archives Microfilm Publication M593, 1716 rolls); Eighth Census of the United States, 1860; (National Archives Microfilm Publication M653, 1438 rolls).

[29] "Affairs About Home: Depressed unto Death," *Boston Herald*, April 17, 1879.

[30] Ibid.

[31] Ibid.

By the turn of the century, Cordis Street was almost entirely developed, with the neighborhood mostly populated by aging attached houses. The Swallow family's house at 33 Cordis Street now abutted smaller row houses directly to the north, and its Greek Revival style would have been decidedly outdated. Like many of his peers, George Swallow was drawn to Boston's new and affluent Back Bay neighborhood, which he perhaps felt was better suited to his ambitions to take on more prominent positions in local politics. In 1904, after roughly fifty years of ownership by the Swallow family, the house was sold to John and Ellen Buckley for $8,000 and so began a very different chapter in its history.[32]

33 Cordis Street: An Unlikely Home for Immigrants

John and Ellen Buckley immigrated to the United States from Ireland in 1856 and 1861, and by the time they purchased 33 Cordis Street, they were in their 60s and 50s, respectively.[33] They moved to 33 Cordis Street from another Charlestown home, an attached house at 33 Mt. Vernon Street, roughly one-third of a mile away.[34] It's possible that they were drawn to 33 Cordis for its size. When they purchased the house from the Swallows, they lived in it with their four sons and one daughter, who ranged from 16-32 years old, and they quickly made a portion of the home available to tenants. In 1910, Thomas Crowley, a yeast salesman, and his brother Paul, a tobacco salesman, occupied part of the house, and the Crowleys had their own boarder, Johanna Cunningham—all three of whom were from Ireland.[35] It was likely during the years of the Buckley family's ownership, when the house was subdivided for tenants, that the single third-floor window in the house's front-facing pediment was expanded into a tripartite configuration—likely to provide more daylight for the tenants now living there (compare **Figures 13 & 14** to **Figures 15 & 16**).

Over the next forty years, the Buckleys continued to update and adapt 33 Cordis in ways that helped it function as a multifamily home. Census records indicate that in the 1920s their tenants included Margaret Sullivan, an Irish housekeeper, and Rose and William Lovely, a housekeeper and accountant from Massachusetts.[36] When John and Ellen Buckley died, 33 Cordis Street passed to their daughter Julia, who continued to rent out portions of the house and undertook a few modernizations, including the installation of a hot water heater in the basement (1929).[37] Finally, in 1946 33 Cordis Street left the Buckley family when it was sold to Joseph and Catherine Bassett.[38] Although the Buckley family's ownership has been overshadowed by that of the Swallow family, for whom the house is colloquially named, their tenure in the home is historically significant.

The changes in the owners and built fabric of 33 Cordis Street over its first one hundred years make tangible some very significant social and cultural developments of greater Boston in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Indeed, within the ownership of only two families, 33 Cordis Street evolved from a fashionable residence for a well-heeled Massachusetts family—one whose sumptuousness was likely intended, at least in part, to attract similar Protestant families to build houses nearby and discourage what was seen as immigrant encroachment—into a home owned by Irish Catholic immigrants. This transition was facilitated by a few late nineteenth-century cultural shifts, which happened simultaneously.

As lifestyles supported by generations of maritime commerce began to be sustained by inland manufacturing, the city's wealthy ultimately migrated away from the coastline and toward areas like Back Bay, where they could live in new homes and almost exclusively with a similar class of monied

[32] Review of Real Estate Market: Year of 1904," *Boston Daily Globe*, January 1, 1905.
[33] Thirteenth Census of the United States, 1910; (National Archives Microfilm Publication T624, 1178 rolls).
[34] Twelfth Census of the United States, 1900; (National Archives Microfilm Publication T623, 1854 rolls).
[35] Thirteenth Census of the United States, 1910.
[36] List of Boston Residents, 1921, Ward 5, 10.
[37] City of Boston, Permit no. 235, August 26, 1929, Inspectional Services Department.
[38] Suffolk County Registry of Deeds, Book 6223/Page 116, December 12, 1946; List of Boston Residents, 1947, Ward 2, Precinct 3, 16.

leaders of Boston society. This exodus of upper-class Bostonians like George Swallow from their older housing stock, in turn, reduced the value of their grand former homes and made them accessible to immigrants, such as the Buckley family. At 33 Cordis Street, this trend self-perpetuated, as the Buckleys deftly utilized their large house as a means of generating supplementary income by opening their doors to tenants, many of whom were also Irish. This pattern enabled immigrants in early twentieth-century Charlestown, as in other parts of the city, like the North End, to create increasingly isolated enclaves, surrounded by people with shared traditions and beliefs.

During this time, Boston's Irish citizens also "increased their meager incomes, boosted themselves a notch higher on the economic ladder, and took more visible roles in municipal affairs."[39] Although they would struggle to penetrate the city's upper class social order, by the time the Buckleys left 33 Cordis Street, Boston's Irish population was no longer the impoverished minority it was generations before. We see this reflected clearly in the life of John Buckley, who not only owned a large home that he profited from, but who also broke the more personal stereotypes of a disorderly Irishman by working as a watchman for the City of Boston.[40]

In the years after the Buckley family left 33 Cordis Street, the changes they made to the house continued to reverberate, as the Bassetts also utilized 33 Cordis as an income-producing multifamily home. In the late 1940s, Joseph Bassett, an "operator" at New England Laundry Co., and his wife Catherine, a housewife, placed multiple advertisements for tenants in the *Daily Boston Globe*.[41] These ads indicated that 33 Cordis had "two large, furnished rooms," and an available unit with a "large kitchen, bedroom, private bath, toilet, and fridge" that could be rented for "$18 a week."[42] These spaces were described as "suitable for business man or woman" and a "working couple."[43] By 1952, the Bassetts had at least four tenants in their house, in addition to their daughter, Kathleen Bassett.[44] Building permit records indicate that the Buckleys likely never had the house's occupancy type revised, as Catherine Bassett attempted to have 33 Cordis changed from a one-family home to a three-family home multiple times. It appears that her requests were denied, but the Bassetts continued to utilize the house as a multi-family income producing building. In 1954, the Bassetts sold 33 Cordis to Sylvester and Helen DiDiego of New Jersey.

This history of 33 Cordis Street brings us to the ownership of the DiDiego family, who have owned the house for over 60 years. During this time, Sylvester and Helen DiDiego, both of whom operated Syl's Delivery Co., continued to house tenants, and thus leveraged the large size of 33 Cordis Street much as the house's Irish immigrant owners did over fifty years before. In the mid-1950s they installed the necessary egress to fulfill multi-family code requirements, but the DiDiegos appear to have made very few changes to their historic home over their long ownership. Their most significant updates appear to have occurred in 1965, when they made improvements to the kitchen and bathroom and returned the house to a single-family dwelling for the first time since it was owned by the Swallow family.[45] After Helen DiDiego's death in 2020, 33 Cordis Street passed to her children.

The Greek Revival house at 33 Cordis Street, locally known as the Swallow Mansion, is more than the fine home of a wealthy upper-class family. Constructed at a moment of social tension, amid efforts to prevent immigrant occupation and create an upper-class enclave in Charlestown, the house's history centers around both Boston's political and merchant elite and its immigrants. The subtle changes to its fabric reveal how buildings can be creatively adapted by underrepresented groups and

[39] O'Connor, *The Boston Irish*, 112.
[40] Thirteenth Census of the United States, 1910.
[41] List of Boston Residents, 1951, Ward 2, Precinct 3, 15; see, for example, "Classified Ad," *Daily Boston Globe*, June 29, 1947.
[42] "Classified Ad," *Daily Boston Globe*, June 22, 1947, June 29, 2947; September 8, 1949.
[43] Ibid.
[44] List of Boston Residents, 1952, Ward 2, Precinct 3.
[45] City of Boston, Inspectional Services Department, Building Permit no. 96457, January 14, 1965.

used to help propel them into better standards of living while creating small communities of minorities with similar backgrounds. Today 33 Cordis Street remains a very well-preserved reminder of this important aspect of Boston's history.

6.2 Architectural Significance

33 Cordis Street is an exceptionally fine Greek Revival house in Charlestown. It is one of only a handful of houses in Boston with a monumental Greek temple-front form, including a double-height portico capped by a pediment. Its scale is grand, with historic floor-to-ceiling windows, most of which survive. Its detailing includes flush boarding on its front façade; wide, flat window and door surrounds; and historic wooden clapboarding. Set back from the street, the house's position on its site is also unique. From the south end of Cordis Street, 33 Cordis Street rests on its foundation like a temple, projecting dramatically from the incline of Breed's Hill.

Architecture in early nineteenth-century Charlestown

As Charlestown began to rebuild in the years following the devastating fire from the Battle of Bunker Hill, most of its new housing stock emerged first along the town's waterfront and, more slowly, through new development on the land of former estates on Breed's Hill. Many of these buildings, including some of the large houses first built along the recently built Cordis Street, were executed in the Federal Style. Of three such houses on Cordis Street, the stately, three-story, ca. 1801 house at 32 Cordis Street (across the street from the Swallow Mansion) remains extant, and it provides a superb example of this style. The sharp, simplistic, and classically inspired federal architecture visible at 32 Cordis Street was ubiquitous in early nineteenth century Boston. We can credit this in large part to the strong influence of Charles Bulfinch. As architect of many high-profile domestic and institutional buildings, including the Massachusetts State House and various Beacon Hill mansions, his work set the standard of taste in Boston during the early republic, producing many imitators. By the 1820s, however, this restrained style—which mined Roman sources and drew upon dated British architecture of the late eighteenth century, including work by Robert Adam and James Paine—grew tiresome, even in culturally conservative Boston.[46]

During this period, Americans became increasingly invested in their capacity to project a sense of aesthetic and cultural sophistication.[47] As contact with Europe increased in the 1820s, they observed the British and European interest in Romanticism: an artistic movement that emerged partly as a reaction against the highly rational classicism of the preceding century, and in response to new archaeological discoveries, as well as better access to travel. Art and architecture thus began to shift away from a rigid focus on reason and enlightenment in favor of designs that could elicit emotions, often through references to ruins, dramatic vistas, or less familiar cultures. New architectural styles soon proliferated across Europe, often referencing Greek, Gothic, and Egyptian strands of influence. Of these new and cosmopolitan styles, Greek architecture, which was simple, monumental, and laden with convenient symbolic resonances to democratic ideals, found a receptive audience in the United States.

The Advent of the Greek Revival in Boston

In Boston, Charles Bulfinch was hesitant to accept this nascent interest in Greek architecture, but when he left Massachusetts in 1817 to work on the U.S. Capitol Building, a new generation of architects, including Alexander Parris (1780-1852), Solomon Willard (1783-1861), and Isaiah Rogers (1800-1869) began to fill the void. These men realized that the scale, simplicity, and dignified character of Greek Revival architecture made it conveniently suited to a variety of large-scale

[46] Talbot Hamlin, *Greek Revival Architecture in America* (New York: Dover Publications, 1944) 91.
[47] W. Barksdale Maynard, *Architecture in the United States, 1800-1850* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002) 253.

applications. Between 1820-1850, Parris, Willard, and Rogers designed many of the most notable buildings of the period, including St. Paul's Church in Tremont Street (1819), Quincy Market (1826), and Tremont House Hotel (1828), in a robust Greek Revival style.[48] Indeed, by the 1820s the Greek Revival style had also made its way to Charlestown. In 1825, Solomon Willard's proposal for a monumental Greek Revival obelisk surrounded by a smaller temple-like entrance structure, was selected for one of the region's most significant building projects: the Bunker Hill Monument.

By the mid 1840s, the majority of Boston's Greek Revival architecture was found in large scale public buildings made from masonry. To achieve a Greek appearance in residential buildings, most house builders simply embellished what were essentially Federal-style houses with a few Grecian elements from pattern books. One of the most popular books of this type was Asher Benjamin's 1830 publication, *The Architect, or Practical House Carpenter*, which included designs for Grecian frontispieces, mantelpieces, and interior details with Greek key ornamentation, stylized honeysuckle detailing, and consoles that were often heavy and square-edged.[49] Indeed, the majority of Charlestown's Greek Revival houses, such as the workers' cottages at 9-11 Bartlett Street, developed their Grecian character by merely including a few decorative quotations from such publications. In greater Boston, it was rare to find residential buildings whose Greek Revival architecture was more than mere ornament. This makes William Bacon's decision to design the wood-framed house at 33 Cordis Street in such a thorough and exacting form of Grecian architecture, including double height columns and a pediment, quite exceptional.

The Greek Revival style on Cordis Street

We can begin to understand how a handful of builders like Bacon were able to construct such distinctive Grecian buildings by comparing 33 Cordis to its earlier, Federal style neighbors, including 32 Cordis Street, directly across the street. In plan, 32 Cordis Street is considered an "end house," as its narrow side faces the street. This house, like many similar houses of the preceding century, was oriented around a central chimney or two chimneys placed on either side of a stair hall. When designing 33 Cordis, roughly a generation later, Bacon retained the "end house" arrangement of its predecessor, but he relocated the house's main entrance from the center of its long side to the left side of its short, street-facing elevation. This creates a "side hall plan," with a parlor directly to the right of the entrance hall. Internally, the decentering of the fireplace and the staircase allows for a more open layout; while, externally, the decision to locate the house's entrance within its narrow, street-facing side created a conveniently pedimented front, onto which a columned portico could then be added. Thus, with a few deft tweaks in the plan, a much more thoroughly Greek Revival house could be built from what was essentially a Federal, or even Georgian, type. Indeed, as one approached the house from the south, 33 Cordis—which sits atop a brick foundation wall, and is conspicuously set back from the street, unlike its neighbors—appears like a veritable temple.

A closer look at 33 Cordis reveals that its ornament borrows heavily from fashionable Grecian pattern books, with a few lingering Federal style details. Its richest embellishment can be found at its entrance, where a tetrastyle portico is fronted by fluted columns with finely carved ionic capitals, all of which support a thick entablature and a pediment. Beyond this, the house's decoration is planar and simple. Its front door and window surrounds are made from wide, flat boards, while its front façade retains its original flush boarding—a very rare feature in Charlestown.[50] The use of such wide planks of wood was likely facilitated by the use of new machines that could plane large pieces of wood more easily than a generation before. The remaining sides are clad in historic clapboards, while the majority of the house's historic sash windows, which are unusually large and stretch almost from floor to ceiling on both floors, survive in most places.

[48] Hamlin, *Greek Revival Architecture*, 101.
[49] Asher Benjamin, *The Architect, or the Practical House Carpenter* (Boston: L. Coffin, 1830).
[50] Gordon, "Charlestown Survey Project Completion Report," Boston Landmarks Commission, July 1990.

Few examples of this monumental Greek Revival subtypes subtype are extant in Boston neighborhoods. Only a handful possesses columns, entablature, and attic of 33 Cordis Street's monumental scale. (e.g. 1 Dane St. in Jamaica Plain, and the Alvah Kittredge and Edward Everett Hale Houses in Roxbury). Number 28 Brighton Street in Charlestown is a somewhat smaller and narrower rendition of the Greek revival house with an Ionic columned portico. One Seminary St. and 20 Albion Place in Charlestown are the only other examples of templar types in Charlestown.

The retention of so much historic fabric at 33 Cordis is due in large part to house's relatively few owners. Even so, a few subtle changes are noticeable, each revealing how the building was adapted for evolving uses over time. The first noticeable alteration was the construction of a large ell at the rear of the house during the ownership of the Swallow family, between 1871-1875, possibly to house servants or a kitchen.[51] Then, in the twentieth century, two flanking windows were added to either side of the single sash window that was originally located in the front pediment. This change was likely completed by the Buckleys—a family of Irish immigrants who sought to make the house's attic level habitable for potential tenants. Later changes include the installation of a partition in the house's daylight basement, likely for tenants, as well as numerous changes made in 1965 by the DiDiego family, including the renovation of the kitchen and a bathroom, the removal of the basement partition, and a new concrete floor at the front porch.[52] Now bearing historical importance of their own, these alterations have only enriched the historical and architectural significance of this house. 33 Cordis Street not only bears the distinction of being one of Boston's finest, and most intact, Greek Revival homes, but the changes to its fabric are also important reminders of its role in facilitating momentous demographic changes in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

6.3 Archaeological Sensitivity

Charlestown was the site of Mishawum, a Massachusett village, around the time of European settlement. It was likely in continuous use throughout the past 12,000 years, as is demonstrated by the large quantity of Native creations identified at historic sites throughout the neighborhood.

The oldest recorded archaeological sites in Charlestown are located along the southeastern shoreline facing the Charles River and Boston beyond. These shoreline sites were documented during surveys that happened during the Central Artery/Tunnel North (Big Dig) project and include the Town Dock Pottery Site (19-SU-59) and the Chelsea Street Prehistoric Site (19-SU-48). These represent Late archaic and early woodland periods spanning 6000-2000 years before present (BP), and include occupation areas that were later flooded by rising seas. There are 3 additional undated Native archaeological sites documented in Charlestown (19-SU-101, and Mishawum 1 and 2 sites [19-SU-115 and 116]).

A Late Woodland (1000-400 BP) site that was likely in active use upon the arrival of European colonists in the early 17th century is located at what is today the Bunker Hill Community College, but was formerly a hill upon which Massachusett ancestors were buried. Native burials were removed from this area in the early 20th century.

Historically, Charlestown was a significant part of Boston's 17th-19th century past, and contains intact archaeological sites related to Boston's colonial, Revolutionary, and early Republic history, especially in yard spaces where features including cisterns and privies may remain and contain significant archaeological deposits. These sites represent the histories of Charlestown home-life, artisans, industries, enslaved people, immigrants, and Native peoples spanning multiple centuries.

[51] D.A. Sanborn, *Insurance Map of Charlestown* (New York: D.A. Sanborn, 1871); G.M. Hopkins, *Atlas of Suffolk County, Massachusetts*, vol. 6 (G.M. Hopkins & Co., 1875).
[52] City of Boston, Inspectional Services Department, Building Permit no. 96457, January 14, 1965.

The parcel proposed for designation in this study report is situated on the original peninsula of Charlestown (i.e. land that existed in 1630, not infill). The house is situated on the steep incline of Breed's Hill's southwest slope. The property at 33 Cordis Street currently has a large open yard which is likely to contain archaeological deposits and features relating to the occupants of the extant house which may include domestic middens, privies, or outbuildings ranging from the 1840s through the present day. In the late 18th century, speculative developers began laying out streets and constructing homes in the area, however, this specific parcel remained unbuilt until 1845. The Swallow Mansion was initially a single-family home for wealthy families, but later served as a multi-family home for immigrants and boarders in the twentieth century.

It is also possible that the property contains intact artifacts or features related to the pre-1775 ownership of the northernmost part of the land by Eleazer Johnson whose deed listed a house, barn, and outbuildings. Additionally, due to the property's proximity to major waterways including the Charles and Mystic Rivers, its location on Bunker Hill, and its proximity to known Native archaeological sites, it is also likely to contain archaeological evidence of the Native habitation of the area as well.

See **Section 7.4.2** for archaeological standards and criteria.

6.4 Planning Context

In 2022, the Boston Landmarks Commission voted to accept a petition to study the possible creation of a Monument Square Landmark District. As of March 2026, the Monument Square Landmark District Study Committee is drafting a study report for the proposed district. 33 Cordis Street does not fall within the original boundary proposed for the district in the petition, but the Study Committee is considering expanding the boundary based on public feedback. It remains to be seen whether 33 Cordis Street will fall within the proposed district, and whether the district will be established.

In September 2023, the Boston Planning and Development Agency Board of Directors adopted the PLAN: Charlestown initiative. According to the City of Boston's Planning Department, PLAN: Charlestown "seeks to determine how to accommodate new contextually appropriate growth along the Rutherford Avenue Corridor and in Sullivan Square while preserving the character of its existing residential areas."[53] The plan includes new mixed-use zoning to encourage housing and retail growth in industrial areas of the neighborhood, as well as urban design guidelines for future development in both the original peninsula and former industrial zones. There was both support and opposition from within the Charlestown community at various stages of development of the plan, with concerns regarding increased density, additional height, and the preservation of existing historic resources.

[53] "PLAN: Charlestown," City of Boston Planning Department, https://www.bostonplans.org/planning-zoning/planning-initiatives/plan-charlestown, accessed February 22, 2026.

7. STANDARDS AND CRITERIA

7.1 Introduction

Per sections 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8 of the enabling statute (Chapter 772 of the Acts of 1975 of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, as amended), Standards and Criteria must be adopted for each Designation that shall be applied by the Commission in evaluating proposed changes to the historic resource. The Standards and Criteria both identify and establish guidelines for those features that must be preserved and/or enhanced to maintain the viability of the Designation. The Standards and Criteria are based on the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties.[54] Before a Certificate of Design Approval or Certificate of Exemption can be issued for such changes, the changes must be reviewed by the Commission with regard to their conformance to the purpose of the statute.

The intent of these guidelines is to help local officials, designers and individual property owners to identify the characteristics that have led to designation, and thus to identify the limitation to the changes that can be made to them. It should be emphasized that conformance to the Standards and Criteria alone does not necessarily ensure approval, nor are they absolute, but any request for variance from them must demonstrate the reason for, and advantages gained by, such variance. The Commission's Certificate of Design Approval is only granted after careful review of each application and public hearing, in accordance with the statute.

Proposed alterations related to zoning, building code, accessibility, safety, or other regulatory requirements shall require the prior review and approval of the Commission.

In these standards and criteria, the verb **Should** indicates a recommended course of action; the verb **Shall** indicates those actions that are specifically required.

7.2 Levels of Review

The Commission has no desire to interfere with the normal maintenance procedures for the property. In order to provide some guidance for property owners, managers or developers, and the Commission, the activities that might be construed as causing an alteration to the physical character of the exterior have been categorized to indicate the level of review required, based on the potential impact of the proposed work.

A. Routine activities that are **not** subject to review by the Commission:

1. Activities associated with normal cleaning and routine maintenance.

a. For building maintenance, such activities might include the following: normal cleaning, non-invasive inspections, in-kind repair of caulking, in-kind repainting, staining or refinishing of wood or metal elements, lighting bulb replacements or in-kind glass repair/replacement, etc.

b. For landscape maintenance, such activities might include the following: normal cleaning of paths and sidewalks, etc., non-invasive inspections, in-kind repair of caulking, in-kind spot replacement of cracked or broken paving materials, in-kind repainting or refinishing

[54] U.S. Department of the Interior, et al. *THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR'S STANDARDS FOR THE TREATMENT OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES WITH GUIDELINES FOR PRESERVING, REHABILITATING, RESTORING & RECONSTRUCTING HISTORIC BUILDINGS*, Secretary of the Interior, 2017, www.nps.gov/tps/standards/treatment-guidelines-2017.pdf.

of site furnishings, site lighting bulb replacements or in-kind glass repair/replacement, normal plant material maintenance, such as pruning, fertilizing, mowing and mulching, and in-kind replacement of existing plant materials, etc.

2. Routine activities associated with special events or seasonal decorations that do not disturb the ground surface, are to remain in place for less than six weeks, and do not result in any permanent alteration or attached fixtures.

B. Activities that may be determined by the staff to be eligible for a Certificate of Exemption or Administrative Review, requiring an application to the Commission:

1. Maintenance and repairs involving no change in design, material, color, ground surface or outward appearance.

2. In-kind replacement or repair.

3. Phased restoration programs will require an application to the Commission and may require full Commission review of the entire project plan and specifications; subsequent detailed review of individual construction phases may be eligible for Administrative Review by BLC staff.

4. Repair projects of a repetitive nature will require an application to the Commission and may require full Commission review; subsequent review of these projects may be eligible for Administrative Review by BLC staff, where design, details, and specifications do not vary from those previously approved.

5. Temporary installations or alterations that are to remain in place for longer than six weeks.

6. Emergency repairs that require temporary tarps, board-ups, etc. may be eligible for Certificate of Exemption or Administrative Review. In the case of emergencies, BLC staff should be notified as soon as possible to assist in evaluating the damage and to help expedite repair permits as necessary.

C. Activities requiring an application and full Commission review:

Reconstruction, restoration, replacement, demolition, or alteration involving change in design, material, color, location, or outward appearance, such as: New construction of any type, removal of existing features or elements, major planting or removal of trees or shrubs, or changes in landforms.

D. Activities not explicitly listed above:

In the case of any activity not explicitly covered in these Standards and Criteria, the Landmarks staff shall determine whether an application is required and if so, whether it shall be an application for a Certificate of Design Approval or Certificate of Exemption.

E. Concurrent Jurisdiction

In some cases, issues that fall under the jurisdiction of the Landmarks Commission may also fall under the jurisdiction of other city, state and federal boards and commissions such as the Boston Art Commission, the Massachusetts Historical Commission, the National Park Service and others. All efforts will be made to

expedite the review process. Whenever possible and appropriate, a joint staff review or joint hearing will be arranged.

7.3 List of Character-defining Features

Character-defining features are the significant observable and experiential aspects of a historic resource, whether a single building, landscape, or multi-property historic district, that define its architectural power and personality. These are the features that should be identified, retained, and preserved in any restoration or rehabilitation scheme in order to protect the resource's integrity.

Character-defining elements may include, for example, the overall shape of a building and its materials, craftsmanship, decorative details and features, as well as the various aspects of its site and environment. They are critically important considerations whenever preservation work is contemplated. Inappropriate changes to historic features can undermine the historical and architectural significance of the resource, sometimes irreparably.

Below is a list that identifies the physical elements that contribute to the unique character of the historic resource. The items listed in this section should be considered important aspects of the historic resource and changes to them should be approved by the Commission only after careful consideration. The Commission acknowledges that some changes to the character-defining features may be necessary or beneficial; the standards and criteria established in this report are intended to make the changes sensitive to the historic and architectural character of the property.

The character-defining features for this historic resource include:

- Ornamentation: Greek Revival detailing, including wide pilasters at corners of building and finely carved column capitals.
- Building materials and finishes: Wood frame; lap and flush clapboard siding; exposed brick foundation walls; wide-paneled Doric pilasters as corner boards.
- Roof type, forms, and features: Front gable roof; single dormer on south side of roof, two brick chimneys.
- Cornices: A deep Greek Revival entablature surmounting the second story on the front, north, and south elevations, with a partial return on the east (rear) elevation.
- Windows: First floor windows contain tall 9/6 wood sash; second floor windows contain 6/6 sash; pediment facing street includes tripartite windows (similar to a Palladian design) with a tall square-headed center window. All windows are framed by wide planks with minimal detailing, aside from shallow cornice-headed lintel.
- Front yard: A small front yard is bound by a retaining wall; this creates a flat grassy area where one approaches the front door.
- Front entrance: The Greek Revival pilasters and cornice-topped entablature.
- Porches and/or balconies: Monumental tetrastyle front portico with fluted columns and finely carved Ionic capitals.
- Relationship of building to lot lines, sidewalks, and streets: The house has a unique siting. It is pushed back from the street to create a front yard, not often seen in Charlestown. The house also has a commanding presence when viewed from the south end of Cordis Street, as it rests on a pedestal-like platform formed by its brick basement. This has the effect of making the house look like a temple in the hillside.

7.4 Standards and Criteria

The following Standards and Criteria are based on the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties.[55] These Standards and Criteria apply to all exterior building alterations that are visible from any existing or proposed street or way that is open to public travel.

7.4.1 General Standards

Subject to review and approval under the terms of this report, the following standards shall apply:

1. The historic character of a property shall be retained and preserved. The removal of historic materials or alteration of features,spaces, and spatial relationships that characterize a property shall be avoided. See the list of Character-Defining Features in the previous section.

2. Each property shall be recognized as a physical record of its time, place and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or elements from other historic properties, shall not be undertaken.

3. The period of significance is not determined by this study report. However, proposals for alterations to the property should be presented to the Commission with a clear argument for how they acknowledge the most current understanding of the property's period or periods of significance and their impact on historic or existing fabric of the building.

4. Changes and additions to the landmark that have taken place over time are evidence of the history of the property and its context. These changes may have acquired significance in their own right; if so, that significance should be recognized and respected. (The term "later contributing features" will be used to convey this concept.)

5. Distinctive or significant historic and architectural materials, features, finishes and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property shall be preserved.

6. Deteriorated historic features should be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature should match the old in design, color, texture, and other visual qualities and, where possible, materials. If the same material is not technically or economically feasible, then compatible substitute materials may be considered on a case-by-case basis. Replacement of missing features should be substantiated by documentary and physical evidence.

7. The use of synthetic replacement materials is discouraged, except when substituted for perishable features exposed to the weather or when necessary to accommodate the effects of climate change.

8. Chemical and/or physical treatments (such as sandblasting) shall not be used in a manner that damages historic materials. The surface cleaning of structures shall be undertaken using the gentlest means possible and the results should preserve the patina that characterizes the age of the structure. Applications of paint or masonry preservative solutions will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis; painting masonry surfaces will be

[55] U.S. Department of the Interior, et al. *The Secretary Of The Interior's Standards For The Treatment Of Historic Properties with Guidelines for Preserving, Rehabilitating, Restoring & Reconstructing Historic Buildings*, Secretary of the Interior, 2017, www.nps.gov/tps/standards/treatment-guidelines-2017.pdf.

considered only when there is documentary evidence that this treatment was used at some point in the history of the property.

9. Demolition of a designated structure can be allowed only as a last resort after all practicable measures have been taken to ensure preservation, or unless required to comply with requirements certified by a duly authorized public officer to be necessary for public safety because of an unsafe or dangerous condition.

10. Creating new openings in exterior walls should be avoided when possible. Where necessary to accommodate new uses or for achieving accessibility, new openings or changes to existing openings will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

11. New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials, features, and spatial relationships that characterize a property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale and proportion, and massing to protect the integrity of a property and its environment.

12. New additions and adjacent or related new construction shall be undertaken in such a manner that, if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.

13. Original or later contributing signs, marquees, and canopies integral to the building ornamentation or architectural detailing shall be preserved, excluding references to building ownership, operations, tenants.

14. New signs, banners, marquees, canopies, and awnings shall be compatible in size, design, material, location, and number with the character of the building, allowing for contemporary expression. New signs shall not detract from the essential form of the building nor obscure its architectural features. New signs may attach to the building if approved by the Commission. The method of attachment shall be reviewed on a case-by-case basis and should cause the least damage possible to the building. (See the Masonry section for guidelines on penetrating masonry.)

15. Property owners shall take necessary precautions to prevent demolition by neglect of maintenance and repairs. Demolition of protected buildings in violation of Chapter 772 of the Acts of 1975, as amended, is subject to penalty as cited in Section 10 of Chapter 772 of the Acts of 1975, as amended.

16. Should any major restoration or construction activity be considered for a property, the Boston Landmarks Commission recommends that the proponents prepare a historic building conservation study and/or consult a materials conservator early in the planning process. The Boston Landmarks Commission specifically recommends that any work on masonry, wood, metals, or windows be executed with the guidance of a professional building materials conservator.

17. Should any major restoration or construction activity be considered for a property's landscape, the Boston Landmarks Commission recommends that the proponents prepare a historic landscape report and/or consult a landscape historian early in the planning process.

18. When reviewing an application for proposed alterations, the Commission will consider whether later addition(s) and/or alteration(s) to the building can, or should, be removed on a case-by-case basis. Since it is not possible to provide one general guideline, the following factors will be considered in determining whether a later addition(s) and/or alteration(s) can, or should, be removed include:

a. Compatibility with the existing property's integrity in scale, materials and character.
b. Historic association with the property.
c. Quality in the design and execution of the addition/alteration.
d. Functional usefulness.

7.4.2 Archaeology

1. If the property is designated as a Landmark, all proposed below-ground impacts to the landscape, temporary or permanent, shall be reviewed by the staff archaeologists of the City Archaeology Program and the City Archaeologist to determine if significant archaeological resources may or will be negatively impacted by below-ground work. If impacts may or do exist, and they can not be avoided, mitigation in the form of archaeological monitoring, excavations, or other documentation may be required based on the recommendations and consultation of the City Archaeologist.

2. Significant archaeological resources shall be protected and preserved in place. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures will be required before the proposed work can commence. All archaeological mitigation (monitoring, survey, excavation, etc.) shall be conducted under a state-issued State Archaeological Permit by an archaeologist meeting the Secretary of the Interior's Professional Qualifications Standards for Archaeology.

7.4.3 Masonry at exterior walls

1. All original or later contributing masonry materials shall be preserved.

2. Original or later contributing masonry materials, features, details, surfaces and ornamentation shall be repaired, if necessary, by patching, splicing, consolidating, or otherwise reinforcing the masonry using recognized preservation methods.

3. Deteriorated masonry materials, features, details, surfaces, and ornamentation or missing components of masonry features shall be replaced with materials and elements which match the original in material, color, texture, size, shape, profile, and detail of installation. If the same material is not technically or economically feasible, then compatible substitute materials may be considered on a case-by-case basis.

4. When replacement of existing materials or elements is necessary, it should be based on physical or documentary evidence.

5. Sound original mortar shall be retained.

6. Deteriorated mortar shall be carefully removed by hand raking the joints.

7. Use of mechanical hammers shall not be allowed. Use of mechanical saws may be allowed on a case-by-case basis.

8. Repointing mortar shall duplicate the original mortar in strength, composition, color, texture, joint size, joint profile, and method of application.

9. Sample panels of raking the joints and repointing shall be reviewed and approved by the staff of the Boston Landmarks Commission.

10. If the building is to be cleaned, the masonry shall be cleaned with the gentlest method possible.

11. A test patch of the cleaning method(s) shall be reviewed and approved on site by staff of the Boston Landmarks Commission to ensure that no damage has resulted. Test patches shall be carried out well in advance. Ideally, the test patch should be monitored over a sufficient period of time to allow long-range effects to be predicted (including exposure to all seasons if possible).

12. Sandblasting (wet or dry), wire brushing, or other similar abrasive cleaning methods shall not be permitted. Doing so can change the visual quality of the material and damage the surface of the masonry and mortar joints.

13. Waterproofing or water repellents are strongly discouraged. These treatments are generally not effective in preserving masonry and can cause permanent damage. The Commission does recognize that in extraordinary circumstances their use may be required to solve a specific problem. Samples of any proposed treatment shall be reviewed by the Commission before application.

14. In general, painting masonry surfaces shall not be allowed. Painting masonry surfaces will be considered only when there is documentary evidence that this treatment was used at some significant point in the history of the property.

15. New penetrations for attachments through masonry are strongly discouraged. When necessary, attachment details shall be located in mortar joints, rather than through masonry material; stainless steel hardware is recommended to prevent rust jacking. New attachments to cast concrete are discouraged and will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

16. Deteriorated stucco shall be repaired by removing the damaged material and patching with new stucco that duplicates the old in strength, composition, color, and texture.

17. Deteriorated concrete shall be repaired by cutting damaged concrete back to remove the source of deterioration, such as corrosion on metal reinforcement bars. The new patch shall be applied carefully so that it will bond satisfactorily with and match the historic concrete.

18. Joints in concrete shall be sealed with appropriate flexible sealants and backer rods, when necessary.

7.4.4 Wood at exterior walls

1. All original or later contributing wood materials shall be preserved.

2. Original or later contributing wood surfaces, features, details, and ornamentation shall be retained and, if necessary, repaired by patching, piecing-in, consolidating, or reinforcing the wood using recognized preservation methods.

3. Deteriorated wood materials, features, details, surfaces, and ornamentation or missing components of wood features shall be replaced with materials and elements which match the original in material, color, texture, size, shape, profile, and detail of installation. If the same material is not technically or economically feasible, then compatible substitute materials may be considered on a case-by-case basis.

4. When replacement of materials is necessary, it should be based on physical or documentary evidence.

5. Cleaning of wood elements shall use the gentlest method possible.

6. Paint removal should be considered only where there is paint surface deterioration or excessive layers of paint have coarsened profile details and as part of an overall maintenance program that involves repainting or applying other appropriate protective coatings. Coatings such as paint help protect the wood from moisture and ultraviolet light; stripping the wood bare will expose the surface to the effects of weathering.

7. Damaged or deteriorated paint should be removed to the next sound layer using the mildest method possible.

8. Propane or butane torches, sandblasting, water blasting, or other abrasive cleaning and/or paint removal methods shall not be permitted. Doing so changes the visual quality of the wood and accelerates deterioration.

9. Repainting should be based on paint seriation studies. If an adequate record does not exist, repainting shall be done with colors that are appropriate to the style and period of the building.

7.4.5 Architectural metals at exterior walls

1. All original or later contributing architectural metals shall be preserved.

2. Original or later contributing metal materials, features, details, and ornamentation shall be retained and, if necessary, repaired by patching, splicing, or reinforcing the metal using recognized preservation methods.

3. Deteriorated metal materials, features, details, surfaces, and ornamentation or missing components of metal features shall be replaced with materials and elements which match the original in material, color, texture, size, shape, profile, and detail of installation. If the same material is not technically or economically feasible, then compatible substitute materials may be considered on a case-by-case basis.

4. When replacement of materials or elements is necessary, it should be based on physical or documentary evidence.

5. Cleaning of metal elements either to remove corrosion or deteriorated paint shall use the gentlest method possible.

6. The type of metal shall be identified prior to any cleaning procedure because each metal has its own properties and may require a different treatment.

7. Non-corrosive chemical methods shall be used to clean soft metals (such as lead, tinplate, terneplate, copper, and zinc) whose finishes can be easily damaged by abrasive methods.

8. If gentler methods have proven ineffective, then abrasive cleaning methods, such as low pressure dry grit blasting, may be allowed for hard metals (such as cast iron, wrought iron, and steel) as long as it does not abrade or damage the surface.

9. A test patch of the cleaning method(s) shall be reviewed and approved on site by staff of the Boston Landmarks Commission to ensure that no damage has resulted. Test patches shall be carried out well in advance. Ideally, the test patch should be monitored over a sufficient period of time to allow long-range effects to be predicted (including exposure to all seasons if possible).

10. Cleaning to remove corrosion and paint removal should be considered only where there is deterioration and as part of an overall maintenance program that involves repainting or applying other appropriate protective coatings. Paint or other coatings help retard the

corrosion rate of the metal. Leaving the metal bare will expose the surface to accelerated corrosion.

11. Repainting should be based on paint seriation studies. If an adequate record does not exist, repainting shall be done with colors that are appropriate to the style and period of the building.

7.4.6 Windows

1. The original or later contributing arrangement of window openings shall be retained.

2. Enlarging or reducing window openings for the purpose of fitting stock (larger or smaller) window sash or air conditioners shall not be allowed.

3. Removal of window sash and the installation of permanent fixed panels to accommodate air conditioners shall not be allowed.

4. Original or later contributing window sash, elements, features (functional and decorative), details, and ornamentation shall be retained and, if necessary, repaired by patching, splicing, consolidating, or otherwise reinforcing using recognized preservation methods.

5. Deteriorated window sash, elements, features (functional and decorative), details, and ornamentation or missing components of window features should be replaced with material and elements that match the original in material, color, texture, size, shape, profile, configuration, and detail of installation. If using the same material is not technically or economically feasible, then compatible substitute materials may be considered on a case-by-case basis.

6. When replacement of sash, elements, features (functional and decorative), details, or ornamentation is necessary, it shall be reviewed on a case-by-case basis and should be based on physical or documentary evidence.

7. Exterior combination storm windows shall have a narrow perimeter framing that does not obscure the glazing of the primary window. In addition, the meeting rail of the combination storm window shall align with that of the primary window.

8. Storm window sashes and frames shall have a painted finish that matches the primary window sash and frame color.

9. Repainting of window frames, sashes, and, if appropriate, shutters, should be of a color based on paint seriation studies. If an adequate record does not exist, repainting shall be done with colors that are appropriate to the style and period of the building.

7.4.7 Entrances/Doors

1. All original or later contributing entrance elements shall be preserved.

2. The original or later contributing entrance design and arrangement of the door openings shall be retained.

3. Creating new entrance openings should be avoided when possible. Where necessary to accommodate new uses or for achieving accessibility, new entrance openings will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

4. Enlarging or reducing original or later contributing entrance/door openings for the purpose of fitting stock (larger or smaller) doors shall not be allowed.

5. Original or later contributing entrance materials, elements, details and features (functional and decorative) shall be retained and, if necessary, repaired by patching, splicing, consolidating or otherwise reinforcing using recognized preservation methods.

6. Deteriorated entrance elements, materials, features (functional and decorative), details, and ornamentation or missing components of entrance features should be replaced with material and elements that match the original in material, color, texture, size, shape, profile, configuration and detail of installation. If using the same material is not technically or economically feasible, then compatible substitute materials may be considered on a case-by-case basis.

7. When replacement is necessary, it should be based on physical or documentary evidence.

8. Original or later contributing entrance materials, elements, features (functional and decorative) and details shall not be sheathed or otherwise obscured by other materials.

9. Storm doors (aluminum or wood-framed) shall not be allowed on the primary entrance unless evidence shows that they had been used. They may be allowed on secondary entrances. Where allowed, storm doors shall be painted to match the color of the primary door.

10. Unfinished aluminum storm doors shall not be allowed.

11. Replacement door hardware should replicate the original or be appropriate to the style and period of the building.

12. Buzzers, alarms and intercom panels, where allowed, shall be flush mounted and appropriately located.

13. Entrance elements should be of a color based on paint seriation studies. If an adequate record does not exist, repainting shall be done with colors that are appropriate to the style and period of the building/entrance.

7.4.8 Porches/Stoops

1. All original or later contributing porch elements shall be preserved.

2. Original or later contributing porch and stoop materials, elements, features (functional and decorative), details, and ornamentation shall be retained if possible and, if necessary, repaired using recognized preservation methods.

3. Existing porch and stoop materials, elements, features (functional and decorative), details and ornamentation that become deteriorated or missing should be replaced with material and elements that match the original in material, color, texture, size, shape, profile, configuration and detail of installation. Alternative materials will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

4. When replacement is necessary, it should be based on physical or documentary evidence.

5. Original or later contributing porch and stoop materials, elements, features (functional and decorative), details and ornamentation shall not be sheathed or otherwise obscured by other materials.

6. Porch and stoop elements should be of a color based on paint seriation studies. If an adequate record does not exist repainting shall be done with colors that are appropriate to the style and period of the building/porch and stoop.

7.4.9 Lighting

1. Wherever integral to the building, original or later contributing lighting fixtures shall be retained and, if necessary, repaired by patching, piercing in or reinforcing the lighting fixture using recognized preservation methods.

2. Deteriorated lighting fixture materials, elements, features (functional and decorative), details, and ornamentation or missing components of lighting fixtures should be replaced with material and elements that match the original in material, color, texture, size, shape, profile, configuration, and detail of installation. If using the same material is not technically or economically feasible, then compatible substitute materials may be considered on a case-by-case basis.

3. When replacement is necessary, it should be based on physical or documentary evidence.

4. Original or later contributing lighting fixture materials, elements, features (functional and decorative), details, and ornamentation shall not be sheathed or otherwise obscured by other materials.

5. No exposed conduit shall be allowed on the building.

7.4.10 Roofs

1. The original or later contributing roof shapes and original or later contributing roof elements (visible from public ways) of the existing building shall be preserved.

2. Original or later contributing roofing materials such as slate, wood trim, elements, features (decorative and functional), details and ornamentation, such as cresting, shall be retained and, if necessary, repaired by patching or reinforcing using recognized preservation methods.

3. Deteriorated roofing materials, elements, features (functional and decorative), details and ornamentation or missing components of roof features should be replaced with material and elements that match the original in material, color, texture, size, shape, profile, configuration and detail of installation. If using the same material is not technically or economically feasible, then compatible substitute materials may be considered on a case-by-case basis.

4. When replacement is necessary, it should be based on physical or documentary evidence.

5. Original or later contributing roofing materials, elements, features (functional and decorative), details and ornamentation shall not be sheathed or otherwise obscured by other materials.

6. Unpainted mill-finished aluminum shall not be allowed for flashing, gutters and downspouts. All replacement flashing and gutters should be copper or match the original material and design (integral gutters shall not be replaced with surface-mounted).

7. External gutters and downspouts should not be allowed unless based on physical or documentary evidence.

7.4.11 Roof Projections (includes satellite dishes, antennas and other communication devices, louvers, vents, chimneys, and chimney caps)

1. New roof projections shall not be visible from the public way. (This does not apply to solar panels, which shall be reviewed on a case-by-case basis; see section on Renewable Energy Sources.)

2. New mechanical equipment should be reviewed to confirm that it is no more visible than the existing.

7.4.12 Additions (also refer to General Standards above)

1. Additions can significantly alter the historic appearance of the buildings. An exterior addition should only be considered after it has been determined that the existing building cannot meet the new space requirements.

2. New additions shall be designed so that the character-defining features of the building are not radically changed, obscured, damaged, or destroyed.

3. New additions should be designed so that they are compatible with the existing building, although they should not necessarily be imitative of an earlier style or period.

4. New additions shall not obscure the front of the building.

5. New additions shall be of a size, scale, and materials that are in harmony with the existing building.

7.4.13 Accessibility

1. Alterations to existing buildings for the purposes of providing accessibility shall provide persons with disabilities the level of physical access to historic properties that is required under applicable law, consistent with the preservation of each property's significant historical features, with the goal of providing the highest level of access with the lowest level of impact. Access modifications for persons with disabilities shall be designed and installed to least affect the character-defining features of the property; modifications should be reversible when possible and preserve as much of the original materials as possible. Modifications to some features may be allowed in providing access, once a review of options for the highest level of access has been completed.

2. A three-step approach is recommended to identify and implement accessibility modifications that will protect the integrity and historic character of the property:

    a. Review the historical significance of the property and identify character-defining features;
    b. Assess the property's existing and proposed level of accessibility;
    c. Evaluate accessibility options within a preservation context.

3. Because of the complex nature of accessibility, the Commission will review proposals on a case-by-case basis. The Commission recommends consulting with the following document, which is available from the Commission office: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Cultural Resources, Preservation Assistance Division; Preservation Brief 32 "Making Historic Properties Accessible" by Thomas C. Jester and Sharon C. Park, AIA.

7.4.14 Renewable Energy Sources

1. Renewable energy sources, including but not limited to solar energy, are encouraged for the site.

2. Proposals for new renewable energy sources shall be reviewed by the Commission on a case-by-case basis for potential physical and visual impacts on the building and site.

3. Refer to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation & Illustrated Guidelines on Sustainability for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings for general guidelines.

7.4.15 Building Site

1. The general intent is to preserve the existing historic or later-contributing site and landscape features that enhance the property.

2. It is recognized that often the environment surrounding the property has character, scale and street pattern quite different from what existed when the building was constructed. Thus, changes must frequently be made to accommodate the new condition, and the landscape treatment can be seen as a transition between the historic property and its newer surroundings.

3. All original or later contributing features of the building site that are important in defining its overall historic character shall be retained and, if necessary, repaired using recognized preservation methods. This may include but is not limited to walls, fences, steps, walkways, paths, roads, vegetation, landforms, furnishings and fixtures, decorative elements, and water features. (See the Archaeological Sensitivity section for subsurface features such as archaeological resources or burial grounds.)

4. Deteriorated or missing site features should be replaced with material and elements that match the original in material, color, texture, size, shape, profile, configuration and detail of installation. Alternative materials will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

5. When replacement is necessary, it should be based on physical or documentary evidence.

6. The existing landforms of the site shall not be altered unless shown to be necessary for maintenance of the designated property's structure or site.

7. If there are areas where the terrain is to be altered, these areas shall be surveyed and documented to determine the potential impact to important landscape features.

8. The historic relationship between buildings and the landscape shall be retained. Grade levels should not be changed if it would alter the historic appearance of the building and its relation to the site.

9. Buildings should not be relocated if it would diminish the historic character of the site.

10. When they are required by a new use, new site features (such as parking areas, driveways, or access ramps) should be as unobtrusive as possible, retain the historic relationship between the building or buildings and the landscape, and be compatible with the historic character of the property. Historic rock outcroppings like puddingstone should not be disturbed by the construction of new site features.

11. Original or later contributing layout and materials of the walks, steps, and paved areas shall be maintained. Consideration will be given to alterations if it can be shown that

better site circulation is necessary and that the alterations will improve this without altering the integrity of the designated property.

12. When they are necessary for security, protective fencing, bollards, and stanchions should be as unobtrusive as possible.

13. Existing healthy plant materials that are in keeping with the historic character of the property shall be maintained. New plant materials should be appropriate to the character of the site.

14. Maintenance of, removal of, and additions to plant materials should consider restoration of views of the designated property.

15. The Boston Landmarks Commission encourages removal of non-historic fencing as documentary evidence indicates.

16. The Boston Landmarks Commission recognizes that the designated property must continue to meet city, state, and federal goals and requirements for resiliency and safety within an ever-changing coastal flood zone and environment.

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