

8.0 Standards and Criteria

8.1 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 District Designation which shall be applied by the Commission in evaluating proposed changes to the contributing resource. The Standards and Criteria both identify and establish guidelines for those features which must be preserved and/or enhanced to maintain the viability of the District Designation. Before a Certificate of Design Approval or Certificate of Exemption can be issued for such changes, the changes must be reviewed by the Commission at a public hearing 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 to the preservation and/or enhancement of the district characteristics gained by, such variance. The Commission's Certificate of Design Approval is only granted after careful review of each application and after holding a public hearing, in accordance with the statute.

Proposed alterations related to zoning, building code, accessibility, safety, or other regulatory requirements do not supersede the Standards and Criteria for the District or take precedence over Commission decisions.

The Boston Landmarks Commission can provide District residents and property-owners with information and guidance concerning the regulatory process, historic preservation planning and protection, archaeology, sources for historical information, and technical assistance. For more information, please see boston.gov/landmarks or email blc@boston.gov.

As required by the enabling legislation of the Boston Landmarks Commission (Chapter 772 of the Acts of 1975, as amended), the Landmarks Commission has 30 days from the time when an application comes in to review and act on an application. If the application requires review by the district commission, the application will be put on an upcoming public hearing agenda. Hearings are held once a month and complete applications must be received fifteen calendar days prior to the scheduled hearing date in order to be placed on the agenda.

8.2 Levels of Review

The Commission acts in the interest of the designated characteristics and has no desire to interfere with the normal maintenance procedures for properties within the District. In order to provide instructive guidance for property owners, managers, or developers, and for the Commission's own guidance, the activities that might be construed as causing an alteration to the physical character of the exterior are categorized below to indicate the level of review required, based on the potential impact of the nature of proposed type of work. Note: the examples for each category are illustrative examples and are not intended to act as a comprehensive list; see Section 8.2.D.

A. Activities requiring an application and full Commission review:

1. **Full demolition:** the complete removal of a built structure.

2. **Partial demolition:** substantial demolition including the removal of more than 15% of an existing building (as determined by the Highland Park District Commission), the removal of a roof or more than 15% of the roof (as determined by the Highland Park District Commission), the removal of one side of a building (as determined by the Highland Park District Commission), or the removal of porches or similar ancillary structures on the building.
3. **Major architectural alteration:** changes that cause an increase or decrease in square footage or cubic volume, including additions (of more than 300 square feet gross building area), adding another story, raising the overall height of a roof, or changing the roof pitch.
4. **Major landscape alteration:** the removal of major, mature trees (but not shrubs or other landscaping); the removal or alteration of stone outcroppings; the removal or alteration of historic walls, gateposts, and boundary markers; changes in landforms or topography.

A mature tree is defined as whichever is smaller: either 8 inches in diameter at breast height (DBH), or the DBH that defines a "Significant Tree" in the Tree Canopy section of the most up-to-date version of the City of Boston Municipal Code.

5. **New construction:** site preparation for and construction of new structures. This will include design review of all new structures and additions. Each new project will be required to demonstrate through a written description and/or a presentation the manner by which it enhances and/or (more rarely) preserves the features of the district in their social, political, historical, aesthetic, or architectural dimensions.
6. Should the Commission determine that there has been an attempt to incrementally make changes that, in their aggregate, add up to something that would have required an application to the Commission under section 8.2.A, this may trigger a consultation that is to be administered by the Commission.

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

1. Activities associated with normal cleaning and routine maintenance.
2. Routine activities associated with special events or seasonal decorations which 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.
3. Maintenance and repairs, including in-kind replacement or repair. The District Commission can serve in an advisory capacity for maintenance and repairs involving changes in design, material, color, ground surface or outward appearance but **shall not** dictate such choices. The Boston Landmarks Commission can provide guidance on historical research and technical assistance.
4. Repair projects of a repetitive nature.
5. Temporary installations or alterations that are to remain in place for longer than six months. This includes tents, scaffolding, tarps, and vestibules. The District Commission can serve in an advisory capacity but shall not regulate such installations.
6. Repairs consequent to an emergency such as a fire or flood that require temporary tarps, board-ups, etc. The District Commission can serve in an advisory capacity to

assist in evaluating the damage and recommending measures for protection and repair.

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

1. 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.

D. Activities not explicitly listed above:

In the case of any activity that contravenes the intent of this District and is not explicitly covered in these Standards and Criteria, the District Commission will have the option to establish a standing subcommittee of three or more members of the Highland Park District Commission. This subcommittee will be available outside of regular hearings to 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. If the District Commission chooses not to have this subcommittee, the Landmarks Commission staff will determine whether an application is required. The Landmarks Commission staff will also serve in an advisory capacity for informational requests.

E. Concurrent Jurisdiction

In some cases, issues which 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 Planning and Development Agency, the Inspectional Services Department, Boston's Zoning Code, 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.

Proposed alterations related to zoning, building code, accessibility, safety, or other regulatory requirements do not supersede the Standards and Criteria for the District or take precedence over Commission decisions.

8.3 Standards and Criteria

A. Introduction

1. The following Standards and Criteria apply to **exterior** alterations which are visible from any existing or proposed street or way that is open to public travel.
2. In these Standards and Criteria, the verb **should** indicates a recommended course of action; the verb **shall** indicates those actions that are specifically required.
3. The District Commission **shall** provide detailed reasons for each decision they make. These reasons shall be provided verbally at a public hearing and **shall** become part of the written record of the hearing.
4. Applicants may file for a Certificate of Exemption based on financial hardship. The applicant will be required to produce evidence of substantial financial hardship as cited in Section 4.9 of the Regulations of the Boston Landmarks Commission as adopted on November 30, 1976, amended July 20, 1977, April 8, 1980, and May 27, 1986. Copies of the

Regulations are available at the offices of the Boston Landmarks Commission and online at the Highland Park district webpage, which can be found by visiting www.boston.gov/landmarks. The District Commission will review the evidence and make a finding as to whether substantial hardship would result from failure to issue a Certificate of Exemption.

B. Landscape Elements

Intent

1. The intent of the landscape standards is to preserve the overall natural and human-made landscape features that define the character of Highland Park, including trees, stone outcroppings, historic walls, historic gate posts, boundary markers, and green spaces.

Commission Review

2. Contributing trees **shall** be protected from adjacent construction activity.
3. Contributing trees **should** be retained. A contributing tree is defined as alive; culturally relevant, contextually significant, and/or environmentally significant; and not a threat to public safety. On a case-by-case basis, a report from an arborist may be required for any mature tree that is proposed to be removed.
4. When removal of a contributing tree is necessary, it **shall** be replaced with another tree that is a non-invasive or native species. Refer to the most up-to-date version of the City of Boston Tree Canopy Ordinance for further requirements.
5. Changes in landforms or topography **shall** preserve the historic relationships between buildings and landscape features.
6. Stone outcroppings or exposed ledges **shall** not be removed or altered.
7. Historic stone walls, gateposts, and boundary markers **shall** not be removed or altered except in limited cases where replacement is required. Historic stone walls **should** be restored whenever possible.
8. Modifications to historic walls may be allowed in certain cases where there is an overriding necessity for the property owner to create an access point. Stones removed from walls due to modifications **should** be retained within the property whenever possible; when this is not possible, historic stones **should** be offered to other property owners within the district.

C. Architectural Alterations

Intent

1. The intent of the architectural alterations standards is to protect the features and improvements that are important for their historic, social, cultural, architectural or aesthetic significance and contribute to the quality of life in the District.

Commission Review

2. Major alterations or additions **shall** not destroy the overall shape of a building as well as the various aspects of its site and environment that form the spatial relationships that characterize a property.
3. Major alterations or additions **should** seek to preserve or enhance a building's materials, craftsmanship, and decorative details and features.

D. Demolition

Intent

1. The intent of the demolition standards is to preserve the features and improvements that are important for their historic, social, cultural, architectural or aesthetic significance.

Commission Review

2. The character-defining features that define the overall historic character of the District (as identified in Section 8.4) **shall** be retained and preserved.
3. Full or partial demolition **shall** not destroy buildings or architectural elements which contribute to the historic character of the district.
4. Demolition of buildings **shall** be reviewed on an individual, case-by-case basis, considering the building's contribution to and enhancement of the District, and also considering the physical and/or architectural elements of what is proposed to replace the existing building, but not the proposed use.
5. Demolition **shall** only be considered as the first stage of construction.

E. New Construction

Intent

1. The intent of the new construction standards is to encourage construction that is sympathetic or compatible with the goals of the district to preserve and/or enhance the character-defining aspects of it. The purpose of the district is not to inhibit innovative design or lock new buildings into patterns that simply replicate historical forms.

Commission Review

2. Each new project **shall** be required to demonstrate through a written description and/or a presentation the manner by which it enhances and/or (more rarely) preserves the significant features of the district in their social, political, historical, aesthetic, or architectural dimensions.
3. New construction **shall** be compatible with the goals of the district to preserve and/or enhance the character-defining aspects of it. This is not to preclude different types of structures, but rather to establish that what new developments arise will support the environment that is being protected by these guidelines.
4. Generally, the height of new construction **shall** respect certain standards of scale in order to maintain the District's special qualities including overall building height and massing.
5. New construction **shall** provide setbacks and space between nearby buildings that preserves and/or enhances existing relationships in conformity with the district intentions. In most cases these will be approximately equal to the setbacks and space between buildings of similar scale, context, and type that are adjacent to it.
6. New construction that is proposed for vacant lots or open green space **shall** be reviewed by the commission, as the placement and disposition of empty lots constitutes a rhythm of spaces and buildings that is a character-defining feature of the district.
7. City-owned open green spaces **should** remain unbuilt if they contribute to the character of the district (as defined in section 8.4) or improve quality of life for local residents.
8. Current and future community gardens, urban wilds, and urban farms **shall** remain unbuilt. This includes but is not limited to the Allan Crite Garden, the Cedar Street Garden I and II, the Centre Place Garden, the Edward L. Cooper Community Garden

and Education Center (formerly known as the Highland Park 400 Survival Garden), the Highland Avenue Community Garden, the Margaret Wright Memorial Community Garden, the Thornton Street Community Garden and Urban Farm, the Viola Galvez Garden, the Cedar-Juniper Natural Area, the John Eliot Square Urban Wild, the Rockledge Street Urban Wild, and the Thwing Street Urban Wild.

F. Archaeology

Intent

1. The intent of the new construction standards is to preserve known and potential archaeological sites.

Commission Review

2. Staff archaeologists **shall** review proposed changes to a property (including open lots) that may impact known and potential archaeological sites. Archaeological surveys may be required to determine if significant archaeological deposits are present within the area of proposed work. 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. See Section 9.0 Archaeology.

8.4 List of Character-defining and Contributing Features

The significance of the Highland Park Architectural Conservation District in the city is conveyed by the historic, social, cultural, architectural, and aesthetic features and improvements that exist in the District. Together these features define the District as distinct in the City and they should be carefully considered in order to resist and restrain influences that would be adverse to the quality of its environment, specifically in respect to the manner in which its physical and architectural features and configurations produce its distinctive character that strengthens the cultural and educational life of the city and make it a more attractive and desirable place in which to live and work.

What are character-defining features?

A district is significant for the physical features and improvements that show its identity and character in observable, concrete aspects of its historical, social, cultural, architectural, and aesthetic qualities. Character-defining features are the significant observable and experiential aspects of the district, whether a single building, pattern of development, natural landform, or landscape comprising all of them. Together, these features define a district's distinctive personality.

The character of the Highland Park Architectural Conservation District is defined broadly as the shape of its present built form as well as its landscape elements. Therefore, the character of the District includes the placement of buildings, their overall massing form, their height, distance from each other and the edges of lots, and their distance from the street. The combination of built form and open space around it is an important quality of this environment; too many structures crowding the area will reduce or eliminate the quality of life that District designation seeks to protect. The character of the District, for the purposes of these protections, is the larger framework of the relative dispositions of open space to structures, the view corridors and green areas this particular density affords, and the livable streetscapes already enjoyed.

Care shall be taken to resist and restrain environmental influences that are adverse to the quality of the Highland Park Architectural Conservation District. The intention of the Highland Park ACD is not to focus entirely on architectural details. The goal is to preserve and prevent the demolition of buildings and features that create the configuration of streetscapes, buildings, and landscape that defines the District's distinctive character in the City. Therefore, the protections established by the standards and criteria for this District are not intended to regulate decorative details or historic features of the architecture except insofar as they are the *legible traces* of the historic, social, cultural, architectural, or aesthetic character-defining aspects of the neighborhood. For instance, the history of an apartment building constructed as affordable housing should continue to be legible in the building going forward, as this is important evidence of the social and architectural patterns that make this area unique; the mixture of classes is a character-defining aspect of this neighborhood. And as such a building evolves, it should retain the simplicity of materials, the plainness of approach, and the basic arrangements of its landscape, as those are the traits that are in conformity with its social history. This is to ensure the ongoing legibility of the economic and political histories that are constructed into material realities in these built forms. The existing configurations must retain their ability to be read in their outward physical features visible from the street that these are the houses owned and loved and maintained by diverse people for themselves, often against great odds of redlining and disenfranchisement. Those features that show evidence of such practices of construction and use will be the ones most crucial to designate, including, for example, the overall shape of a building and its materials, craftsmanship, decorative details and features, as well as the various aspects of the spatial organization of its site and environment. These 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 District. The items listed in this section should be considered important aspects of the District and changes to them should be approved by Commissioners only after careful consideration. Because of the variety in the District, this list is not exhaustive, and sections 1-5 of the report are to be considered additional detailed enumeration (again non-exhaustive) of the character-defining features. The goal is for future development to preserve and/or enhance these features, as envisioned by the definition of the purposes of Chapter 772 of the Acts of 1975, as amended.

Diversity of building massing and height

Highland Park contains a diverse array of scales and massing of housing; this provides the neighborhood with a range of housing options for individuals, couples, and families or housemates. Within Highland Park, there are detached single-family homes, two-family dwellings, row houses, triple deckers, and larger multi-family buildings (Figure 42).

The height and massing of buildings in Highland Park varies throughout the neighborhood. However, among this diversity of massing and height, most streets have a certain defining rhythm.

Single-family homes are distributed throughout Highland Park, but they are interspersed with a variety of other scales of housing. For example, portions of Fort Avenue, Highland Park Avenue, Linwood Square, and Kenilworth Street and other streets are characterized by 4- to 5-story row houses. A particularly distinctive series of marble-clad row houses is located on Cedar Street. Triple-deckers are found on the south side of Beech Glen Street as well as on Highland Street, Lambert Avenue, Lambert Street, Thornton Street, and others. The neighborhood also contains larger multi-family structures, such as the Marcus Garvey Gardens which is a 7-story affordable housing complex located at 44 John Eliot Square. This variety of housing scales and types is

important to the neighborhood's diversity because it accommodates a range of family sizes and provides units for the elderly and low-income residents.

With the exception of row houses, there is separation between many of the residential buildings in Highland Park that allows for a variety of side yard, driveway, and alley configurations. These spaces provide more access to light, air circulation, and views.



Figure 42: Highland Park is characterized by a variety of residential building types and scales, as seen here on Kenilworth Street.

Diversity of architectural styles and periods

Highland Park is notable for its diversity of architectural styles and periods that illustrate a cross-section of architectural history, yet it is even more notable for the way in which these styles have been freely adapted and altered to suit the purposes and lifestyles of various groups who have inhabited them. External features such as fire escapes and new entries for basement apartments are physical records of the way these structures have been changed from their original designs to suit later needs. These are the types of features that reflect the evolution of the neighborhood. The vernacular adaptations that have been made to a building over time are part of its history and should be preserved. For example, the Lettish Workingmen's Society, later the Masonic Lodge, shows the effort to make-do in a structure that survived a fire; it is physical evidence of the way of living that did not simply throw away a broken thing for some new construction, and therefore the two missing

upper levels are in fact a defining feature that could be retained in future work on the property, as it is the lack of those elements that is the physical manifestation of the choices historically manifest in how the structure is occupied.

Highland Park's rich architectural fabric contains a range of building types and styles that span from the time of the Revolutionary War until today. Single-family houses represent popular eighteenth through late nineteenth century architectural styles, including Georgian, Federal, Greek Revival, Gothic Revival, Italianate, Second Empire, Queen Anne, and Shingle Style. Multiple-family houses are generally built in popular late nineteenth through early twentieth century architectural styles like Second Empire, Queen Anne, Colonial Revival, and Classical Revival. With a few exceptions (notably the Dillaway-Thomas House, the First Church in Roxbury, and Ionic Hall), non-residential buildings in the district generally date to the last quarter of the nineteenth century and the first quarter of the twentieth century and are constructed in a variety of popular styles including Italianate, Second Empire, and Gothic Revival. In addition, the Christ Temple Church of Personal Experience on Kenilworth Street is a notable example of mid-twentieth century Modern architecture from 1967 (see Figure 24). This church represents the direct outward expression of a charismatic preacher who founded the denomination and chose this style to embody his new mission atop the foundations of the old Puritan structure that was altogether different. That this modern building operates in conjunction with a surviving wing of the original church is also a characteristic feature to be retained; the blending of styles and the way they express certain habits of creating institutions from buildings that were already at hand and required adaptive conjunction with new additions is a key feature of the district to retain.

Architectural materiality and detailing

The buildings of Highland Park that were constructed between the eighteenth and mid-twentieth centuries are generally notable for the quality of their traditional building materials and the attention to detail in their construction. Many buildings retain their original materials and details. High-quality materials commonly found in the district include brick, wood, stone, and slate. Architectural details include door and window surrounds, scrollwork, bargeboards, cornice brackets, porch balusters, shingle patterns, and brick details. These details cultivate variety and visual interest within the district and create a sense of connection to the styles and craftsmanship of the past. Just as much, however, this neighborhood is characterized by the innovative ways in which structures have been freely adapted, often without architects and in informal ways. Extra stories have been added, new windows, and often sometimes experimental structures added such as greenhouses, certain outbuildings, and the like. These are all evidence of later ways of making do with existing building stock that could be turned to new purposes, often in very individual and singular ways. Conservation of this culture of making do, or even dreaming, with these structures and their challenges - as well as the opportunities they give - is essential, and to undo all those modifications would be to erase the physical signs of a long tenure of many different people here.

Setbacks

Throughout Highland Park, few buildings have a footprint that extends to the sidewalk. Single-family and multi-family buildings are generally located near street edges, but most have at least enough setback for a front garden between the building and the sidewalk or street edge. The area of setback is typically planted with grass, shrubs, flowers, or trees, increasing the amount of green vegetation in the neighborhood (Figure 43).



Figure 43: The Marble Block has setbacks which allow for green plantings in between the buildings and the sidewalk.

Trees

Highland Park is notable for its relatively high proportion of mature trees, as well as its diversity of different tree types. Many of the private residences in the neighborhood have mature trees in their yards, and there are also numerous City-managed trees along streets and in local parks. Near the Cochituate Standpipe, there is a particularly notable group of large weeping willows in the public park. The trees of Highland Park provide greenery and shade for the neighborhood and reduce the urban heat island effect.

Fruit-bearing trees in particular have played a significant role in the history of the area. Roxbury was once widely known for its apple and pear orchards, which could thrive even in the area's rocky soil. Roxbury was the birthplace of what is generally recognized as the oldest apple variety that originated in North America: the Roxbury Russet, first cultivated in the mid-17th century.¹⁸¹ Roxbury was also the location of the first Bartlett pear trees planted in North America after they were imported in 1799.¹⁸²

¹⁸¹ "Celebrating the Roxbury Russet," Historic Boston, Inc., published December 30, 2013, <https://historicboston.org/celebrating-the-roxbury-russet/>.

¹⁸² "Bartlett," USA Pears, accessed May 18, 2021, <https://usapears.org/bartlett/>.

While there are no commercial orchards in Highland Park today, a variety of tree types continue to thrive in the neighborhood (Figure 44). These trees play a vital role in providing comfort and beauty for today's residents.



Figure 44: Trees in parks (such as Cedar Square Park, above left), along streets (such as Centre Street, above right), and in yards provide greenery, shade, and beauty for the neighborhood.

Open spaces

Highland Park has a variety of open spaces that give character to the neighborhood. The neighborhood features several parks, including the Alvah Kittredge Park to the north and Highland Park (Roxbury High Fort) to the south. These parks provide green space for recreation, relaxation, and socializing. The 1990 *Boston Urban Wilds Report* describes the value of green space in the city:

*Green spaces can cool an urban neighborhood in summer, alleviate air pollution, buffer winter winds, brighten spring days with bird song, and color the autumn without any one having to set foot into them. They are part of the atmosphere of their neighborhoods as much as the styles and colors of buildings and the width of streets.*¹⁸³

Due to the low amount of paved surface parking, Highland Park has a relatively high ratio of green space to asphalt, which helps to decrease heat absorption in the neighborhood. Some vacant lots near the center of the district, particularly along Linwood, Cedar, and Highland streets, have been turned into community gardens. The Margaret Wright Memorial Community Garden on Fort Avenue is another example of a cherished community garden space (see 8.3.E.8 for a list of other community gardens in the neighborhood). Gardens like the Cedar Street Garden show how an urban green space can be a productive site for growing fruits, vegetables, and flowers while maintaining the natural features of the site. Another notable green space in Highland Park, the Thornton Street Farm, provides produce for a local cafe along with opportunities for youth and family programming (Figure 45); many local residents have raised beds there for family use. Like many such spaces in Highland Park, the open space at 184 Highland Street behind the Hawthorne Youth and Community Center (HYCC) has multiple layers of history. The site was once occupied by a German Catholic Church and also served as a school and an orphanage before the building was destroyed and became a vacant property; the Black Jesus statue (Figure 47) is a remnant left over from the German church that was later repainted.¹⁸⁴ Once the land became City-owned, it continued to serve as a community

¹⁸³ 1990 *Boston Urban Wilds Report* (Boston, MA: Boston Natural Areas Fund, 1991), 11-12.
<https://archive.org/details/1990bostonurbanw00bost>.

¹⁸⁴ Comment from Carl F. Todisco on the draft of the study report.

space through the efforts of the HYCC.¹⁸⁵ The current open green space at 184 Highland increases accessibility and affordability of healthy food for Roxbury residents in Highland Park by allowing for gardening and nutrition education for youth, children, and adults. It also provides space for exercise, recreation, and community events.¹⁸⁶

Highland Park's green spaces are highly valued by local residents as they function not only as sites to garden, socialize, or host neighborhood events, but also enhance the quality of life by providing a green, tranquil respite in the heart of the city. Recent studies have shown that communities of color are far more likely than others to suffer from inadequate tree cover that leads to excessive summer heat and other health problems. Highland Park's open spaces provide a healthy level of green space in the neighborhood, and they contribute to the improved wellbeing of the community.



Figure 45: The Thornton Street Farm provides produce for a local cafe along with youth and family programming.

Urban wilds are another type of open space in Highland Park that provide neighborhood residents with the opportunity to connect with nature. The City of Boston owns two lots designated as urban wilds on Rockledge and Thwing Streets. The largest urban wild in the district (16,741 sf), listed by the City as the "Cedar-Juniper Natural Area" across from Cedar Square, started as a community garden in 1968, and became a part of the City of Boston's Revival Garden Program. The City established deed restrictions lasting in perpetuity and transferred the deed to the Boston Natural Area Fund that now is part of the much larger Trustees of Reservations. However, other properties are currently only protected by a temporary agreement with the City. The Highland Park Community Land Trust is seeking to become owners of many of the existing small open spaces in the neighborhood with deeds in perpetuity. (Also see section 5.3.)

¹⁸⁵ Comment from study committee member Jon Ellertson.

¹⁸⁶ Information provided by Doris Morales, HYCC.

Views

Since much of the City of Boston lies at a lower elevation, unique vistas are afforded to Highland Park due to the topography and height of the neighborhood. With a maximum height of over 150 feet above sea level, Highland Park rises above the lowlands to the north and east,¹⁸⁷ and view corridors extend in all directions. As a result, there are a number of locations in Highland Park where it is possible to see commanding views of the city beyond. For example, from the Doris Tillman Playground at the corner of Dorr Street and Lambert Avenue, one can see Dorchester Heights, an important site in the American Revolutionary War (Figure 46). From the Roxbury Heritage State Park, one can look to the northeast and see the skyline of downtown Boston. These vistas provide a visual connection between Highland Park and other neighborhoods, and they also provide perspective on how Highland Park is situated within the City of Boston.



Figure 46: Views extend from Doris Tilman Playground out to Dorchester Heights (L) and Roxbury Heritage State Park out to downtown Boston (R).

Stone features

Geological features play a strong role in defining the character of Highland Park. Highland Park lies atop a drumlin, which is a small hill of rock, sand, and gravel that was formed under moving glacier ice. Highland Park contains numerous examples of stone outcroppings throughout the neighborhood, including a tall rock face that defines the northern edge of the district on Malcolm X. Boulevard. Forty feet of rock was blasted away in 1973 to make way for this road (then called New Dudley Street), leaving behind a dramatic rock wall.¹⁸⁸

Particularly unique in character is the Roxbury Conglomerate, also known as Roxbury Puddingstone, that is so named because it contains rounded pebbles embedded in a finer-grained matrix and resembles English raisin pudding. Roxbury (formerly spelled “Rocksbury” or “Rocksberry”) was in fact named after the outcroppings of puddingstone found throughout the area (Figure 47). In Highland Park, natural stone outcroppings can be found throughout the neighborhood, including at the top of the High Fort hill, where the south side of the park has a high degree of exposed puddingstone. Puddingstone was also used to build walls in Highland Park. Some of these walls represent historic land divisions; occasionally the walls are gone but stone gate posts still remain.

¹⁸⁷ “Boston topographic map, elevation, relief,” topographicmap.com, accessed May 18, 2021, <https://en-us.topographic-map.com/maps/f02f/Boston/>.

¹⁸⁸ 1990 *Boston Urban Wilds Report* (Boston, MA: Boston Natural Areas Fund, 1991), 59. <https://archive.org/details/1990bostonurbanw00bost>.

Puddingstone was also used for the foundations of some houses, including the Alvah Kittredge House.



Figure 47: The Black Jesus statue, a local landmark, stands atop an outcropping of Roxbury puddingstone.

Another significant stone in Highland Park is the Roxbury Parting Stone, located in John Eliot Square. The Parting Stone served as a wayfinding marker at the intersection of roads leading to Boston, Dedham, and Cambridge. The main face of the Parting Stone is inscribed with “THE / PARTING / STONE / 1744 / P. Dudley,”¹⁸⁹ while the southwest side reads “DEDHAM / & RHODE / ISLAND” and the northeast side says “CAMBRIDGE / WATERTOWN.”¹⁹⁰ The Parting Stone was also the departure point for stagecoaches traveling from Roxbury to Boston.¹⁹¹ Today, the stone is located at the intersection of Roxbury, Dudley and Centre streets. There is another stone marker a few hundred yards to the southwest on Centre Street. This marker, inscribed with a date of 1729 and a distance of 3 miles, measures the distance to the Boston Town House (known today as the Old State House).¹⁹² Stone mile markers like this one helped travelers navigate what was at that time sparsely populated farmland. Today, they serve as an important record of a time period from which there are few physical remains in Highland Park.

¹⁸⁹ The stone is inscribed with the name “P. Dudley” because it and other granite markers located in and near Boston were financed by Paul Dudley (1675-1751), the Attorney General of the Province of Massachusetts Bay and later justice on its Supreme Court.

¹⁹⁰ Richard W. Hale, Jr., *1767 Milestones - National Register of Historic Places Inventory - Nomination Form* (Boston, MA: Massachusetts Historical Commission, 1971), section 7.

¹⁹¹ Yawu Miller, “Stone mile markers harken back to Roxbury’s colonial past,” *Bay State Banner*, July 30, 2014, <https://www.baystatebanner.com/2014/07/30/stone-mile-markers-harken-back-to-roxburys-colonial-past/>.

¹⁹² Earl Taylor, “Eighteenth Century GPS: Milestones and Way Markers in Boston,” *Historic Boston, Inc.*, published May 6, 2019, <https://historicboston.org/eighteenth-century-gps-milestones-and-way-markers-in-boston/>; This stone was also erected by Paul Dudley.

9.0 Archaeology

The Highland Park Architectural Conservation District contains known and potentially significant archaeological sites. All projects with work that will permanently or temporarily disturb the ground surface will be reviewed by a qualified staff archaeologist in the Landmarks Commission to determine if proposed work may impact known or potentially significant archaeological sites within the district. This work may include landscape modifications, tree plantings, utility trenches, foundation excavations, paving, and other landscape modifications. Any disturbances to known or potential archaeological sites within the district shall be avoided, minimized, or mitigated. If avoidance is not possible, the project will require archaeological mitigation by a qualified archaeologist. Any disturbance to known or potential Native archaeological sites must be mitigated in consultation with a local tribal representative. A qualified archaeologist is a person who meets the Secretary of the Interior's Professional Qualifications for Archaeology.

Refer to Section 8.3 for any additional Standards and Criteria that may apply.

10.0 Severability

The provisions of these Standards and Criteria (Design Guidelines) are severable and if any of their provisions shall be held invalid in any circumstances, such invalidity shall not affect any other provisions or circumstances.