

# Eustis Street Area

## District Study Committee Report





Report of the Eustis Street Study Committee  
on the Potential Designation of the  
EUSTIS STREET AREA  
as an Architectural Conservation District

Approved by Marcia Myers 1/6/81  
Executive Director Date

Accepted by Pauline Chesnut 1/6/81  
Chairman Date

Introduction and Summary

- 1.0 Location of the District
- 2.0 Description
- 3.0 Significance
- 4.0 Status of the Properties
- 5.0 Planning Context
- 6.0 Alternative Approaches
- 7.0 Recommendations
- 8.0 General Standards & Criteria
- 9.0 Proposed Specific Standards & Criteria
- 10.0 Bibliography

EUSTIS STREET STUDY REPORT CORRECTIONS

Eustis Street Architectural Conservation District Guidelines

Page 24, item 4

delete the sentence "No dig may be carried out in the burying ground."

Page 30, item 2

delete the sentence "Under no circumstances may brick surfaces be painted or covered."

Page 27, item 1c

delete the entire reference.

## INTRODUCTION

The Eustis Street Study Committee hereby transmits to the Boston Landmarks Commission its report on the designation of the Eustis Street area as an Architectural Conservation District. The work of this committee was initiated by a petition to the Boston Landmarks Commission, asking that the Commission consider designating the area as an Architectural Conservation District under the provisions of Chapter 772 of the Acts of 1975. The purpose of such a district is the recognition and protection of the architectural and historical characteristics which make an area unique.

As a result of the petition, and at the request of the Landmarks Commission, the Mayor appointed, and the City Council confirmed, a study committee to make recommendations to the Commission on the proposed district.

The committee, consisting of six local residents and five members of the Commission began working together in April of 1979, with the purpose of evaluating the architectural and historical significance of the area, the potential boundaries of an Architectural Conservation District, and the kinds of design guidelines which would ensure the protection of the area.

## SUMMARY

The committee has concluded that the Eustis Street Area is significant as a unique collection of sites and structures which represent a continuous history of Roxbury from its origins as a farming village through nineteenth century industrialization.

Therefore, the study committee has recommended that an area including the Old Roxbury Burying Ground, Cunningham and Doggett Houses, Eustis Street Firehouse and Nawn Factory be designated as an Architectural Conservation District and that an area surrounding that district and constituting an essential part of its environment be designated as a Protection Area.

The Committee further recommends that the Boston Landmarks Commission, rather than a district sub commission, administer the regulatory functions associated with the designations.

Design guidelines have been prepared which would serve to guide future physical changes within the Architectural Conservation District and Protection Area so that such changes would be compatible with the character of the area.

Local representatives on the Study Committee:

Byron Rushing  
Shirley Zavin  
Edward Blackman  
Thomas Welch  
William Burney  
Walter Banks

Boston Landmarks Commission representatives on the Study Committee:

Lawrence A. Bianchi  
Joan Goody  
Luix Overbea  
Margaret S. Smith (resigned)  
Carl Zellner

Note: Most of the descriptive material on the Eustis Street district including statements on the significance of the properties was excerpted from a report prepared by Ann Beha Associates and entitled: "Boston 350: A Preservation Education Strategy." A report by Marilyn Brockman entitled: "The Preservation of Buildings for Education: A Case Study in Lower Roxbury" also was used heavily without quotation. Both of these reports, in turn, relied on research conducted by Shirley Zavin, PhD.

## 1.0 LOCATION AND BOUNDARIES OF EUSTIS STREET STUDY DISTRICT

### 1.1 The Study District

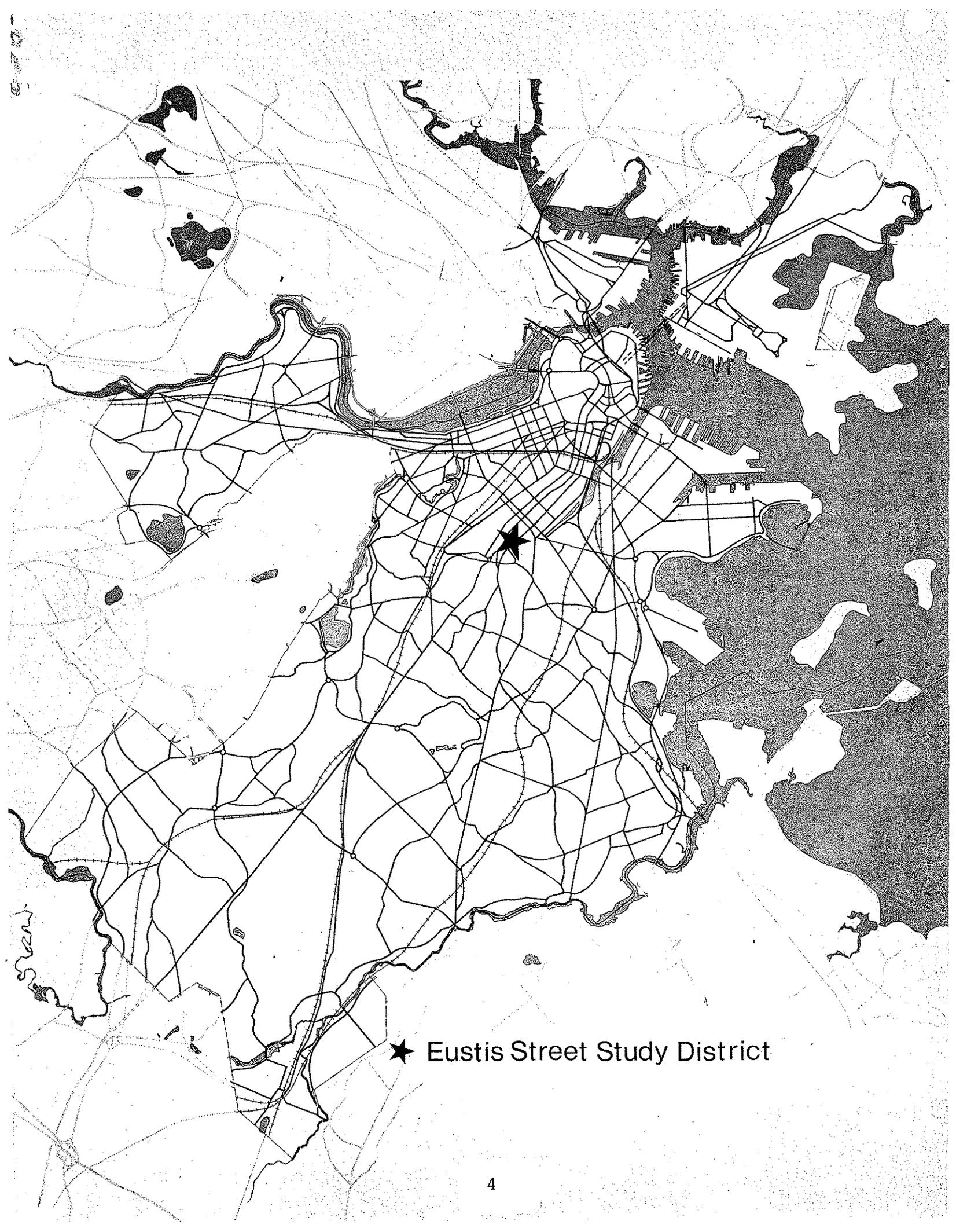
The area under consideration for designation as an architectural conservation district is located on Washington Street between Eustis Street and Melnea Cass Boulevard in the Dudley Square area of Roxbury. It is located in Wards 8 and 9.

The original petition to designate the area as an architectural conservation district pertained to five contiguous properties: the Eliot Burying Ground, the structures at 2066, 2070 and 2080 Washington Street, and the former firehouse at 20 Eustis Street. (See figure 1.1) The study committee actually considered a somewhat larger area for designation in order to determine whether it would be possible to protect remnants of the old Roxbury Canal. Thus, the boundaries of the study district as extended by the study committee are roughly Washington, Eustis, Harrison Streets and the right-of-way of the new crosstown street, Melnea Cass Boulevard.

### 1.2 Area in Which the Study District is Located

The study district is part of the northern end of the Dudley Square area of Roxbury, a commercial area dominated by Dudley Station - a major transportation stop for the MBTA elevated transit and connecting bus routes. Commercial establishments in the area include small grocery stores, specialty shops, clothing and furniture stores and real estate offices. A large housing project is located to the southeast of the district.

Dudley Square, which contains a fairly cohesive group of late 19th century commercial buildings, is potentially eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. The Eustis Street Burying Ground and Fire Station are already listed on the National Register.



★ Eustis Street Study District

## 2.0 PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

The study district comprises a collection of elements from nearly three centuries of Roxbury's history. The period from 1630 to 1890 covers, for the most part, a time in which Roxbury was a separate town.

The elements, which are identified on Figure 2.1, are, in order of age:

A. Old Roxbury Burying Ground (also known as the John Eliot Burying Ground), 1630.

The John Eliot Burying Ground, roughly a triangle with a rounded hypotenuse, lies at the corner of Washington and Eustis Streets, formerly the two main roads leading to Boston and Dorchester from Roxbury. Abutting it on the southerly tip is the former firehouse at 20 Eustis Street. The Burying Ground was once larger than its present size and extended some distance beyond the wall along its southeast side. A number of burials were discovered when the foundations were dug for the Eustis Street Firehouse. The last recorded burial occurred in 1846. The original lower Burying Ground walls were built of brick and stone, capped with wood. In 1842, a similar rear wall was built, extending from the firehouse to John Hunt's tannery, now the Nawn Factory site. In 1854, eight feet were taken from the Washington/Eustis Street grounds to provide a sidewalk. Two years later, a six-foot wall was constructed of Roxbury puddingstone with granite caps, and black wrought iron fencing and gate. This wall and fence still remains.

The cemetery contains approximately 500 grave markers and 25 underground tombs. Unlike other historic cemeteries in Boston, few of the stones were rearranged in the late 19th century's quest for symmetry and precision. The tombs are organized in two ranges, ten in the northwest half which are the oldest, and along the bordering wall twenty-seven more below-grade, of which three have large horizontal monuments over the graves. In 1882, a bronze tablet was placed on the entrance gate to commemorate famous people within.

B. & C. Josiah Cunningham House, (ca. 1784 with 1867 storefront) and Jesse Doggett House and Tavern (ca. 1788 with 1888 storefront)

These two houses front on Washington Street, at numbers 2066-2070. Oriented end to the street and separated by a five-foot passageway, the houses are placed back-to-back in the western portion of their parcel. The front elevation of the Doggett House faces north, and the Cunningham House, south.

Both houses are two-story wood-frame clapboarded Federal style structures with hip roofs. The Doggett House is slightly larger than the Cunningham House (27 x 38 feet vs. 20 x 40); however, both are modest when compared to homes constructed in the vicinity by wealthier contemporary Roxbury citizens. The houses display typical Federal style features such as rectangular shape, central entry bays flanked by lateral pairs of windows, slender clapboard sheathing, and simple corner posts and cornices. Simple window framing and more elaborate door surrounds with plain classical details are common to both structures. Pairs of chimneys protrude from each back slope of the hip roofs.



D. Eustis Street Firehouse (1859 with 1869 addition)

Designed by Roxbury architect John Roulestone Hall, the firehouse at 20 Eustis Street is a 2 ½-story brick building constructed in 1859 in the Italianate style. Contrasting granite is used in the round arched window and door surrounds with wood ornamental brackets under the wide eaves of the slate roof. The wood rear addition was constructed in a similar style in 1869 to house larger 'hook and ladder' equipment and a stable. Additional alternations were made in 1878 when the upper floor was converted to an apartment for the driver and a private "driver's staircase" attached to the south exterior of the brick building. In 1890 brick piers were placed under this wood addition.

The brick firehouse replaced a smaller 2-story wood Greek Revival firehouse (1829) which had a small (8'x9') cellar at its rear. The wood station was moved to Pike Street to be used as a residence, and the foundation was enlarged to accommodate the new structure. The cellar excavation uncovered numerous human remains, indicating that the small cellar had been built on an original portion of the Burying Ground. Prior to the wood firehouse a hearse house which served the Burial Ground had occupied the site. This too was moved to another location.

E. Owen Nawn Factory (ca. 1880)

Located at 2080 Washington Street at the northeastern edge of the Burying Ground, this large two-story brick factory was built around 1880 in the Italianate style. The simple cornice line, flat roof and simple segmentally-arched window and door surrounds lend the building a utilitarian simplicity appropriate to its commercial function. The cobblestone court which links the factory and the Cunningham and Doggett Houses was once a well used and busy place. Tenements occupied the site near the rear portion of the factory building. Josiah Cunningham's candlemaking shop and barn also fronted on the court. Maps indicate that the cobblestone passageway extended through to Harrison Avenue in the latter part of the nineteenth century and was known as Nawn Street due to the large number of buildings lining the street owned by Mr. Owen Nawn.

F. Davenport Office Building (ca. 1873)

Until recently, a small one-story brick structure was located one foot behind the rear wood addition of the firehouse. Built c. 1873, this one room building had decorative wood gable ends and large over-hanging eaves supported by decoratively incised rafters and a single large elaborate bracket at the top center of each gable end. At the time of this report, only the gable roof remains; the walls having been removed for the salvage of the brick.

G. Small Wood house at 1 Hunneman Place (ca. 1866-68)

#1 Hunneman Place is a small 2-story frame house measuring about 15' x 25' and running north-south. It has a gable roof with central stove chimney. The house was finished very plainly; its only decorative feature being the corner boards, fascia boards and 6/6 window sash. Clapboards form

the exterior wall covering. The rear shed, originally located in the north end of the west side, has been replaced by a recent, longer shed to the south, and a recent entry shed has been placed on the south part of the facade, probably covering the original doorway. Both of these modern sheds are of a temporary nature and have apparently done little damage to the house fabric. The sash, existing in four of the windows, appears to be original; there have been few exterior changes to the house.

### 3.0 SIGNIFICANCE

#### 3.1 Historic Associations

The Eustis Street district is a unique collection of sites and structures which represent a continuous post-Revolutionary history of Roxbury's commercial and industrial development. To understand that significance, it is necessary to know the historical background of the site.

Founded in 1630, before the settlement of Boston, early Roxbury developed in the eastern corner of the town where the Burying Ground District is located. Most of the territory around the District is lowland and was once part of the tidewater marsh with streams and tidal inlets that separated Boston from Roxbury, Dorchester and Brookline. Until 1786, Boston was connected with Roxbury only by the Neck, a narrow strip of land along which Roxbury Street ran (now Washington Street).

Beginning as a farming village, Roxbury's economy was dependent on its crops and artisan trade, and the lowland along the Roxbury Neck was used primarily as pasturage and hay fields until the 1800's, with some residential and commercial structures clustered along the neck road.

During the Siege of Boston (1775-1776) the Americans built major fortifications across Washington Street, just south of the Burying Ground. Roxbury suffered great damage by bombardment during the Siege, and all buildings northward along the road to Boston from the Burying Ground were destroyed.

With the growth of Boston after the Revolution, the marshland along the neck was divided and sold for development. Because of its marsh characteristics, it was not as desirable for residential use as was Roxbury Highlands and Jamaica Plain, and the area developed as a mixture of residential and industrial buildings, initially built of wood and later of brick. Textile mills, ropewalks, a piano factory, Solomon Willard's clock company, lumber and stone yards appeared between Dudley Street and the Boston Line.

Industrial development was facilitated by the development of the Roxbury Canal, begun in 1795, which provided a convenient source of transportation to and from Boston Harbor and the waterfront. The canal followed an old streambed along what is now Harrison Avenue, to the east of the Burying Ground. Mr. Doggett, who owned the Tavern and bowling alley nearby, built a wharf on the canal approximately 170 feet north of the Tavern. The "canal house" built 18 feet south of the present Eustis Street Firehouse was used as a storehouse with boats coming up to the rear of the building. Rapid changes in transportation systems and the process of landfilling made much of the Roxbury Canal obsolete by 1820, and it was filled in piecemeal over a period of sixty years. As the centers of commerce and industry shifted away from this area, there began a gradual decline at the end of the nineteenth century that has culminated in the dilapidated district surviving to the present.

In 1868, Roxbury was annexed to Boston at the initiation of its residents, who hoped that the City would be able to provide much needed public improvements - including sewers to alleviate water problems in the low-lands.

### Old Roxbury Burying Ground

The John Eliot or Old Roxbury Burying Ground represents the earliest period in Roxbury's development.

Established in 1630, it is, with the King's Chapel Burying Ground and the Phipps Street Burying Ground in Charlestown, one of the three oldest cemeteries in Boston. The three oldest headstones date from 1653. Many of Roxbury's famous early citizens, including John Eliot (1690), minister of the First Church in Roxbury, and Apostle to the Indians, are buried in the Burying Ground. Later ministers of the First Church are also buried in a common parish tomb.

The Dudley Family tomb, including Governors Thomas and Joseph Dudley (1753 and 1780), Chief Justice Paul Dudley (1758) and Colonel William Dudley (1743) is located in the Burying Ground, along with the grave of Revolutionary War hero John Groaton. Josiah Cunningham (1798) and Jesse Doggett (1813), whose houses were built nearby, were also interred here.

A great many of the early grave markers are intact and represent the evolution of funerary art from the Puritan images of death and immortality, depicted by death's heads and angels, to classical motifs used in the Federal era and later.

### Cunningham and Doggett Houses

The Josiah Cunningham House, and the Jesse Doggett Tavern/House provide a visual record of Roxbury from the late 18th century to the 20th.

The land on which the houses stand was used for pasturage by its original owner, Deacon George Alcott, ancestor of A. Bronson and Lousia May Alcott. Horses were still grazing there when it was bought in 1784 by Josiah Cunningham, a housewright of rather modest means. The Cunningham "mansion house" appears to have been built soon after that. In 1787 an identically sized plot north of the Cunningham land was acquired by Jesse Doggett, a captain of the militia and perhaps a fireman; (his will contained 2 fire buckets). The architectural similarities between the two houses suggest that the Doggett house was built by his housewright neighbor. No other known extant examples of Cunningham's commissions have been found. As samples of the popular Federal style of the most modest and reduced sort, exhibiting basic elements of size, shape, and fenestration pattern and detail, the houses provide fine examples of artisan-class dwellings and offer an instructive contrast to the more sumptuous 18th century residences constructed by Roxbury gentry in "Roxbury Highlands" - in the vicinity of John Eliot Square.

Doggett's building originally served as his home and was also a tavern and bowling alley known by the sign of "The Ball and Pin." Its location on the well-travelled road between Boston and points south must have insured a steady supply of thirsty travelers, and the proprietors of the Roxbury Canal are said to have frequented the tavern regularly. That Doggett was well prepared to receive them is indicated by the "58 gallons of spirits" listed in an inventory made of his property at the time of his death in 1813. The bowling alley attached to the house was a very early example of an indoor alley, for the sport was at that time more often played outdoors. Doggett was apparently an enthusiastic promoter of the game for he installed additional bowling alleys in the buildings constructed by the owners of the Roxbury Canal on the east side of the Eustis Street Firehouse. On the north side of the property Doggett also constructed a wharf which was probably connected by a smaller waterway to the Roxbury Canal.

As this section of Roxbury shifted from an agricultural to an industrial area, the Cunningham House was sold to Jesse Brown who used it for his bakery (1821). The south half of the Cunningham lot had been acquired by Luther Morse, a soap-boiler in 1815; it was later sold to John Hunt, a morocco leather dresser, tanning being one of Roxbury's major 19th-century industries. The Doggett House remained in the possession of his heirs until 1866 when it was sold to Owen Nawn, a builder who also constructed the extant brick factory on the Cunningham lands about 1880. Numerous shed and commercial structures were placed on the original land holdings during the last quarter of the 19th century, and storefronts were added to the Cunningham and Doggett houses.

#### Eustis Street Firehouse

Dating from the middle of the nineteenth century, the firehouse reflects the urbanization of Roxbury and the increased role of the public sector in providing services. It also reflects changes in fire fighting methodology during the 19th century.

The firehouse is reputed to be the oldest standing firehouse (1859) in Boston. It served as the home of the famous W.C. Hunneman hand-engine "Torrent 6" that was familiarly called "Graveyard." Hunneman began as an apprentice to Paul Revere and later established his factory on Hunneman Street, where the Crosstown Street is currently located. The Hunneman Company was a world famous manufacturer of firefighting equipment; close to 750 engines were sent to all parts of the country and abroad before the company went out of business in 1883.

During the Great Fire of 1872 in Boston, the company from the Eustis Street Firehouse was called and served in the four day battle to control the fire. One member of the fire company apparently died in the effort.

The 1869 wooden addition to the firehouse coincides with the introduction of horse drawn equipment and hook and ladder apparatus. A part of this building served as a stable, and still retains hay doors and hay loft.

When, in 1878, the Boston Fire Department inaugurated the practice of maintaining a permanent residence in the City's firehouses, an apartment was installed on the second floor of the structure and an outside staircase was added to provide access to it.

The firehouse continued in use until 1916 when the Boston Fire Department's conversion to larger motorized equipment forced its closing. From 1926-1954 the firehouse was used as a meeting place by several Spanish-American War Veteran groups. They made a number of alterations in the interior, but the exterior remains relatively unchanged. In 1969 the Boston Parks and Recreation Department submitted a proposal to demolish the building. Opposition to the demolition was vigorous, and the Firehouse and John Eliot Burying Ground are now included in the National Register of Historic Places.

### Owen Nawn Factory

The factory building represents the completion of the transition of this section of Roxbury from a rural to an industrial area.

The site itself has had a long history of commercial use. By 1815 the Cunningham family had sold the land to Luther Morse, for a soap factory. Later, a large 2½-story wood factory with a gable roof was built on the site and occupied by John Hunt, a tanner or "morocco dresser," which at that time was one of Roxbury's most important industries. During the late 1860's, Owen Nawn, a building contractor and developer, acquired a number of properties in the area, including the factory site. He also bought land and constructed many houses in Roxbury and Jamaica Plain during the last quarter of the 19th century, thus contributing to the creation of what have been called "the streetcar suburbs." The Nawn Company was also one of the sub-contractors for the elevated railway begun at Dudley Station in 1901. The factory at 2080 Washington provides a strong edge and backdrop to the Burying Ground.

### 1 Hunneman Place

The small wood house at 1 Hunneman Place is the northernmost, and sole survivor of three wood houses which once stood on this short street. All three houses were located on Owen Nawn's property and were probably built by him for worker's housing between 1866, when he purchased the property, and 1868, when the houses first appear on the Sanborn Insurance Atlas.

The house is important as a rare surviving example of the modest wood-frame worker's housing typical of mid-nineteenth century Lower Roxbury. While dilapidated in appearance, it is in relatively stable condition for its age and building type, and retains most of its original features.

## 3.2 Conclusions

Each of the buildings and sites in the study district has its own individual identity and speaks in a unique way to the development of Roxbury. Coincidentally, the buildings and the cemetery they frame form a visually

cohesive whole, a distinct entity in the Dudley Square area. There are also some interesting thematic connections between them, such as Jesse Doggett having been a fireman and being buried in the cemetery near his house. But it is as a collection of artifacts from the various periods of growth at the Roxbury neck that the district is most significant. To be sure, this section of Roxbury was always a modest area, plagued by flooding and later by uncontrolled industrial growth. But the history is no less important than the history of more prosperous areas. And these historic resources, which tell an important story in Boston's history deserve the recognition usually afforded to more monumental structures.

#### 4.0 STATUS OF THE PROPERTIES

At the present time, the Eustis Street Firehouse and the Eliot Burying Ground are owned by the City of Boston, with the cemetery being under the care and control of the Parks & Recreation Department of the City. The Nawn Factory and the Cunningham and Doggett Houses are owned by the Department of Public Works of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

All of the properties are tax-exempt, and none are producing rental income.

The condition of the principal structures in the district is one of substantial deterioration. The Cunningham and Doggett Houses show more visible dilapidation than the other structures. However, a February, 1979 report prepared by the architectural firm of Ann M. Beha Associates described the condition of each property as of that date and concluded that "despite appearances, all of the buildings can be repaired, made safe, and fruitfully re-used" using conventional construction methods.

In addition to deterioration resulting from lack of maintenance, the properties in the study district are subject to two types of vandalism. One type is the kind of random destruction which is carried out, principally by juveniles, for the sheer excitement of it. Fortunately, this activity has been minimal in the study district except that some paint has appeared on the retaining walls of the cemetery.

The second type of vandalism is, in fact, thievery -- where scavengers steal building materials for their resale or reuse value. Within the year preceding the completion of this report, the Davenport Office Building, a small 1873 brick structure, has been demolished and the brick stolen. Only the roof remains.

Vandalism of each type is possible because of the easy access which vandals have had to the site. Without additional security measures, it can be expected that in time at least the wooden buildings will be destroyed by vandal-induced fire.

Several youth-oriented programs have taken place at the Eustis Street District in recent years. From May 1978 through August 1978, high school students from Boston Trade High School, Jamaica Plain High School and Dorchester High School employed by Y.E.S. participated in cleaning out the Cunningham and Doggett Houses and participated in an archaeological program behind these two houses. These activities were sponsored by a private non-profit organization known as BOSTON 350, Inc., with a grant from the Mabel Louise Riley Foundation. Supervision and training was supplied by the Museum of Afro American History. At the same time, students employed by the Youth Conservation Corps cleaned and mapped the Roxbury Burying Ground.

During the summer of 1979, BOSTON 350, Inc., sponsored another program with students employed by Y.E.S. in which the burying ground wall was repointed. The south wall of the Nawn Factory was also repointed. This program was funded by the State Department of Vocational Education.

An important element in the status of the Burying Ground is the condition of various stones and markers and the related issue of stone conservation. Besides willful vandalism, accidental damage from maintenance equipment does occur intermittently. The damage done by environmental factors is constant, but is more severe with some stone materials than is with others.

All of these cause the need for stone conservation. There are numerous conservation techniques and measures developed with varying degrees of success. Cities and towns in the region have undertaken cemetery restoration projects ranging from removal, reproduction and replacement of grave markers to very conservative projects in which certain types of stones have been treated in a long-term trial and observation project. In any cemetery restoration project, a city or town must accept Section 73A of Chapter 272 of the General Laws. This permits "community-sponsored, educationally-oriented, and professional-directed repair teams" to undertake restoration without the criminal violations otherwise in effect for removals of markers (Chapter 272, Section 73).

## 5.0 PLANNING CONTEXT

### 5.1 Background

The Town of Roxbury was founded in 1630 and annexed to Boston in 1868. Roxbury village lay at the edge of the hilly farmland connected to Boston by a narrow neck stretching between Back Bay and South Cove. In the early 1800's, summer houses and country estates were built in the highlands by Boston's wealthy families.

The first major development was from 1840 to 1870 when less expensive versions of Boston townhouses and detached single- and two-family houses were constructed along Dudley Street. The majority of residential development, however, took place between 1870 and 1900 as streetcar service was extended to the area and the bays between Roxbury and Boston were filled. The steeper central highlands area, between Washington Street and Blue Hill Avenue, was developed less densely and became the home of the more affluent families. Houses increased in size as they approached Franklin Park. The surrounding areas were developed with more moderately-priced housing, such as three-deckers, especially around the turn of the century.

While Roxbury Highlands remained primarily an affluent residential district during the 19th century, Lower (northern) Roxbury became the site for light industrial uses and a residential district for the lower-middle income population, expanding into Roxbury. Jewish families moved into the southern area replacing earlier residents who were predominantly Yankees. At about the same time, black families first moved into the northern area.

During the 1940's and '50's, there was a significant migration of lower-income blacks from the South. In ten years, Roxbury completely reversed its racial composition from 80% white to 80% non-white. Today the composition remains relatively the same with increasing numbers of Spanish-speaking, Cape Verdean and West Indian families as well as black and white professionals. The influx of non-whites has had a significant effect on businesses with many now owned by minorities.

In the 1950's housing deterioration became evident in large sections of the district, although many areas, notably in Upper (southern) Roxbury, remained in good condition. By 1970, community leaders began work on a revitalization process for Washington Park and in 1963 Washington Park became the first residential rehabilitation project undertaken by the Boston Redevelopment Authority.

Although there is a dynamic middle-class group residing in Roxbury today, some sections remain severely affected by abandoned buildings, vacant lots and crime. The future of Roxbury can be portrayed as promising with a multiplicity of public and private groups and individuals working hard to preserve and maintain one of Boston's most diversified and exciting neighborhoods.

The section of Roxbury in which the proposed district is located is an area with diverse land uses: residential, industrial, commercial and recreational. The area's strength lies in the Dudley terminal area which is Roxbury's central business area. Other strengths include new housing developed by the Lower Roxbury Community Corporation, Campus High School, the new Occupational Resource Center, and the vast amount of vacant land in the Southwest Corridor where an industrial park is being developed by the City. The first tenant of this industrial park is the Digital Equipment Corporation, a nationally-known and growing data processing firm.

In spite of a current emphasis on industrial development in the area, there is a stable residential neighborhood on Williams Street to the west of Washington Street from the proposed district, and the former Berger Factory has recently been converted to housing units.

## 5.2 Specific Planning Issues

Several issues related to the resurgence of the Roxbury community will have direct effect on the proposed Eustis Street architectural conservation district. These are:

- o transportation -- crosstown street and replacement public transit service;
- o new development opportunities;
- o nearby vacant lots; and
- o vandalism.

### Transportation

The transportation-related issue most directly related to the Eustis Street district is the potential impact on the historic structures of the new crosstown street known as Melnea Cass Boulevard and located at the northeast border of the study district. The crosstown street was planned and built as part of the Southwest Corridor project, which will relocate the Orange Line of the MBTA along the right-of-way of the Penn Central railroad, and develop a new radial, arterial street as well.

The purpose of the crosstown street, which occupies the right-of-way of the cancelled "Inner Belt" or circumferential expressway, is to connect the Southwest Corridor to the Central Artery. It will also serve as a perimeter roadway to divert traffic from the south End, particularly Tremont Street and Columbus Avenue and Massachusetts Avenue.

The crosstown street, which includes two-way traffic in four lanes, is considered to be a major, general traffic street --meaning it is intended to carry both automobile and truck traffic. Because of the proximity to the new industrial park in the area, the street may turn out to be a major truck route.

In any case, the new street brings with it the potential for damage to the historic resources caused by vibration and exhaust emissions. These impacts on the properties should be monitored, and measures taken, if necessary, to protect these resources.

Relocation of the Orange Line rapid transit service from the elevated structure on Washington Street, adjacent to the proposed architectural conservation district, will reduce the effect of vibrations on the historic resources.

#### Development Opportunities; Zoning

Construction of the crosstown street has increased the development potential of a number of vacant sites which are in public ownership and adjacent to the new street. Development of these sites is being coordinated by the Southwest Corridor project. One site, located immediately to the west of the proposed district has been proposed for development of a supermarket. Other sites are being developed for industrial use. Current zoning for the study district itself is general manufacturing (M-1 and M-2). Across Washington Street from the study district the properties are zoned L-1 for local business; across Eustis Street the zoning is B-2 for general business.

The location of the Eustis Street district at a major intersection of Washington Street and Melnea Cass Boulevard and its prominence as a gateway to the Dudley Square area make it a pivotal site in planning for this section of Roxbury.

## 6.0 ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES

The study committee has considered a range of alternatives for designation of the study district. These alternatives are:

1. designation of the study area as an Architectural Conservation District, plus designation of portions of the surrounding properties as a Protection Area;
2. designation of the study area as an Architectural Conservation District, but with no Protection Area designation;
3. designation of the Old Roxbury Burying Ground, the Eustis Street Fire Station, or both as Landmarks and the rest of the study area as a Protection Area; and
4. no action.

Also, the Committee can recommend renomination of the Cunningham and Doggett properties to the National Register of Historic Places, either individually or as an expansion of the existing National Register Listing for the Burying Ground and Fire Station.

Effects of the different designation approaches to the study area and surrounding are as follows:

### 1. District Plus Protection Area

With such designation, all exterior changes visible from a public way to the properties in the Architectural Conservation District are subject to prior review by the Landmarks Commission. In addition, any changes within the Protection Area are subject to review as well, but in regard to only a few areas: demolition, land coverage, height of structures, landscape, and topography. Changes to buildings' details are not subject to review in a Protection Area.

Such a designation would protect not only the district proper, but its light, air, and views toward it from outside the district. This alternative presents the most comprehensive preservation mechanism, helping to guide new development along the new Crosstown Street so as to be reasonably compatible with the historic properties in siting and general massing.

### 2. District Only

A less comprehensive designation, this approach would protect the district itself but not its environment. By not involving owners of adjacent properties it might be a more politically expedient approach.

### 3. Two Landmarks Plus Protection Area

Individual designations are merited by one, or possibly two, of the elements in the study area: the Burying Ground and perhaps the Fire Station. The reason is that a landmark must be significant "to the City

and the Commonwealth, the New England Region or the Nation". Only those two elements appear to meet the criteria for landmark designation.

Designation of a Protection Area consisting of the remainder of the study area would provide protection in the form of review of demolition and new construction, but would not require review of modifications to the Nawn Factory or Cunningham and Doggett houses.

4. No Designation

While the study committee has never seriously considered this alternative, the Boston Landmarks Commission has the option of not designating the properties.

The effect of expanding the National Register Listing would be to require environmental review of Federally-sponsored actions that might effect the additional properties listed. This process, under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, does not affect state, city or private projects that do not involve the use of Federal funds or licensing.

If the district is designated by the Landmarks Commission in the form described in alternatives 1 or 2, above, the Southwest Corridor project, which is being carried out by a state agency, would be subject to design review under the Landmarks Commission act. Thus, expansion of the National Register Listing would probably not in itself provide any further protection beyond an architectural conservation district designation. Also, since two elements of the study area are already listed, "106 Review" already is required for much of the district.

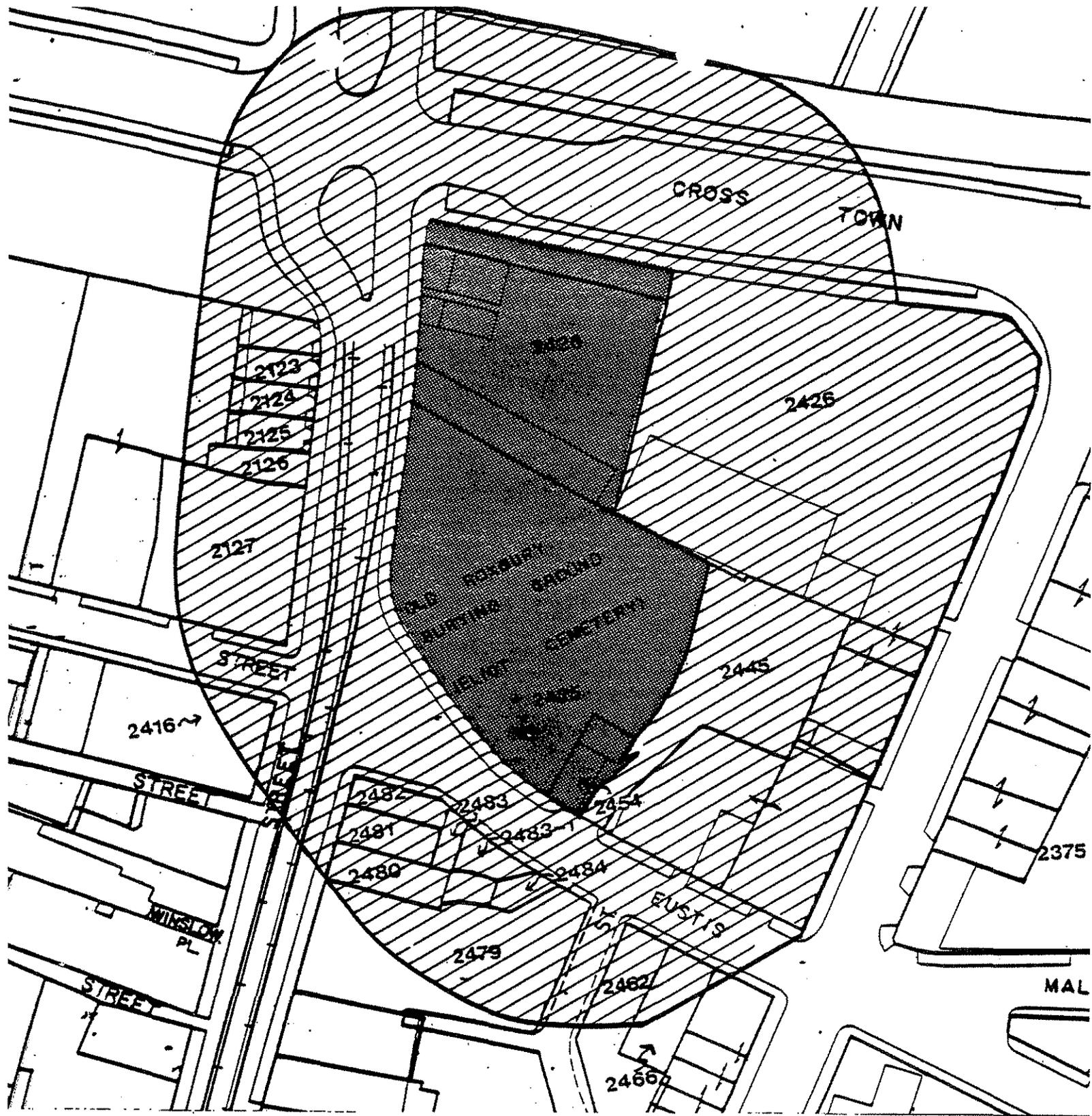
## 7.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

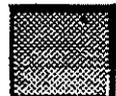
The Eustis Street district study committee recommends that an area encompassing the Old Roxbury or John Eliot Burying Ground, the Eustis Street Firehouse, the Josiah Cunningham and Jessee Doggett Houses, the Nawn Factory and 1 Hunneman Place be designated as an Architectural Conservation District. These properties are located at 2066-2080 Washington Street, the northeast corner of Eustis Street, and number 16-20 Eustis Street. They represent assessors parcel numbers 2425, 2454 and roughly half of 2426 (21,022 sq.ft.)

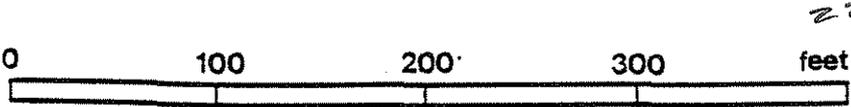
Additionally, the study committee recommends that an area surrounding the Architectural Conservation District be designated as a Protection Area. This Protection Area would consist of the remaining parcels in the block bounded by Washington Street, Eustis Street, Harrison Avenue and Melnea Cass Boulevard (which are assessor's parcel 2445 and the rest of parcel 2426); and all property existing within 150 feet of the Architectural Conservation District. See the attached map for clarification.

Recommended standards and criteria for administering the districts are also attached.

Because by statute, a district sub-commission's local representatives must be owners or residents within the district, and for this district there are no private owners or residents, a district sub-commission may not legally be appointed. Thus, the study committee recommends that the full Boston Landmarks Commission administer design review for both districts.



-  Eustis Street Architectural Conservation District
-  Eustis Street Protection Area



## 8.0 GENERAL STANDARDS FOR PROPERTIES IN DISTRICTS DESIGNATED BY THE BOSTON LANDMARKS COMMISSION

The intent of the Standards and Criteria is to preserve the existing qualities that brought about the designation of the district.

As intended by the statute, a wide variety of districts are eligible for designation, and an equally wide range exists in the latitude allowed for change. Some districts of truly exceptional architectural and/or historical value that are designated as Landmark Districts will permit only minor modifications, while for some other areas, designated as Architectural Conservation Districts, the Commission encourages changes and additions with a contemporary approach, consistent with existing features.

In all cases, the design approach to a proposed change in a district should begin with an understanding of the fact that the overall character of a district is greater than the sum of its parts, and that a pattern exists within a district, which is made up of each building, each landscape element and each detail. It is this aggregate character which is most important.

Additions and new construction should not disrupt the essential form and integrity of an individual building or of the district. The size, scale, color, material and character of this work should be compatible with the character of the existing buildings and their environment. The design should be contemporary and not imitative of an earlier style or period of architecture.

In the design of alterations, which may have a less significant impact than additions or new construction, one should, whenever possible, retain or repair existing materials and features, rather than remove and replace them.

When it is necessary to replace such materials or features, replacement should, whenever possible, be based on physical evidence, or evidence contained in documents such as plans and photographs indicating the appearance and other characteristics of the materials or features being replaced. New materials used in replacement should, if possible, match the materials being replaced in physical properties, design, color, texture and other visual qualities.

Careful evaluation should be made as to the nature of changes which have occurred over time to a building or the district as a whole. These changes are a part of the history of the area and may be significant in their own right.

In general, proposed changes which are easily reversed are far less serious than those which are irrevocable.

9.1

## Eustis Street Architectural Conservation District

### GENERAL STANDARDS

The principal goal of the Eustis Street Architectural Conservation District is to conserve a section of Roxbury's physical fabric for its potential as an educational medium. The burying ground and adjacent buildings constitute a tangible example of the transition of the built environment from the 17th to the 19th century in Roxbury... all within less than one square block. Already this area has been used to introduce young people to architectural history, historic archaeology and historic building maintenance. The Museum of Afro American History and the Roxbury Historical Society are enthusiastic about developing this area for its pedagogical opportunities.

Therefore, the following general standards are recommended for administering the district:

1. In general, it is the intent of the designation to encourage the restoration of the exterior of the buildings in the Architectural Conservation District.
2. Demolition of structures and/or the removal of original architectural fabric will not generally be allowed unless advanced deterioration makes a structure or its elements unusable. If permitted, demolition or removal must be done for educational purposes and as recorded dismantling, the documentation of which must be according to the standards of the Historic American Building Survey, and the plan of which must be approved by the Boston Landmarks Commission.
3. In general, archaeological research may be carried out if conducted by the Museum of Afro American History or such other qualified institution as the Commission deems appropriate.
4. On all portions of the district except the burying ground, archaeological research must be performed prior to any disturbance of the district. No dig may be carried out in the burying ground.
5. New construction is not prohibited in district, but will be carefully reviewed to ensure that the design of such construction is compatible with the size, scale, color, material and character of existing structures. Modern design is preferable to attempt at historic reproduction.

6. New construction is not allowed:
  - a. in the burying ground;
  - b. anywhere, if an archaeological investigation is not performed prior to construction.
7. Any new lighting planned for the district must be pedestrian in scale, and use white light, not red-orange or other vapor lighting. Fixtures may be modern and unobtrusive in design, but an accurate historical reproduction of light fixtures will be considered for possible approval. Gaslight fixtures not using gas lights are not allowed.
8. Sidewalk reconstruction must use brick as a surface on Washington and Eustis Street, set in sand and not mortar. Driveways and other vehicle access restored or added must use cobblestones or Belgian Blocks. The existing cobblestone passageway must be retained, existing cobblestones uncovered and gaps filled with stones to match.
9. Access for disabled persons to all elements of the district must be carefully designed to minimize effect on the historic elements of the district, within standards for handicapped access as provided from time to time by governmental bodies.
10. Systems for alternate energy collection or use must be carefully designed to minimize effect on historic elements of the district.
11. Under no circumstances will abrasive cleaning methods be allowed for any element portion of the district.

## SPECIFIC STANDARDS

### OLD ROXBURY BURYING GROUND

1. In general, the appearance of the burying ground should reflect the 18th century, the period of its greatest use.
2. Headstones, Markers, Tombs
  - a. Headstones may not be relocated.
  - b. Repair or restoration of headstones will be allowed only if the specifications for repairs are approved by the Boston Landmarks Commission.
  - c. Partially buried headstones may have the turf around them removed only if the specifications for work to be done are approved by the Commission.
  - d. Gravestone rubbing is discouraged but as an activity is not subject to review by the Commission.

3. Ground Cover And Topography

- a. Except for uncovering headstones, no change in topography in the burying ground will be allowed.
- b. Existing trees may be removed only if diseased beyond cure.
- c. Material for all path work shall be gravel.
- d. Planting of new trees will be subject to review by the Commission.

4. Wall and Fences

- a. The existing iron fence must be retained in its entirety. The only acceptable paint color is black.
- b. Repairs and pointing of the stone wall must use materials and mortar matching the original mortar and puddingstone. Use of mortar with Portland Cement or other modern materials is not permissible.
- c. When repairs are necessary to the stone wall fronting Eustis and Washington Streets, such repairs must follow specifications approved by the Commission to avoid drainage problems and other possible causes of the structural damage.
- d. The bronze plaque at the entrance gate must be retained. If for any reason the plaque is irretrievably lost, any new plaque should, if possible, match the original in design and color.

5. Lighting

- a. Illumination should be adequate so that it contributes to the safety of the cemetery.
- b. Lighting fixtures should be selected with the approval of the Commission.

6. Miscellaneous

- a. Any decoration of graves for national holidays or other reasons should respect the 18th century character of the cemetery, but is not subject to review by the Commission.
- b. Cutting of grass must not damage headstones or other historic elements. The use of power mowers, which have damaged the stones in the past, is discouraged, and the use of nylon line grass cutters is encouraged.
- c. No construction or addition of any elements, except as specified above, is permitted.

## EUSTIS STREET FIRE STATION

### 1. Form

- a. In general, the form of the building as it existed after the 1869 wood addition must be retained.
- b. The wood addition may be removed only if it is determined that it is too deteriorated to be repaired. Removal must follow standards provided in the General Standards & Criteria, Section 1.
- c. The side staircase may be retained if desired, or removed.

### 2. Facades

- a. The brick of the original building must be retained. Any necessary repair or pointing must use materials exactly matching the original. The joint profile should relate well to the nineteenth century character of the building. An attempt will be made to match the original mortar as found on the building.
- b. Abrasive cleaning techniques are not permitted under any circumstances. Waterproofing or water repellent coatings to the above-ground masonry are not allowed unless a particular problem requires their use; in this event, the Commission must review the specifications.
- c. The masonry walls may not be painted.
- d. Paint colors for trim and wooden additions will be subject to review by the Commission.

### 3. Roof

- a. The shape of the original roof must be retained. If necessary, the stair penthouse on the wood addition may be removed.
- b. The original roof covering may be changed as necessary to provide a permanent weather-tight seal. New slate must match the slate as closely as possible.
- c. All cornices, brackets and other decorative elements must be retained. New brackets must exactly match the existing brackets in shape and material.
- d. Gutters may be repaired or replaced as necessary. Replacement gutters may be made of wood or another acceptable material.

### 4. Doors and Windows

- a. The original main entrance to the fire station in any rehabilitation to the building's front facade, must be re-designed to respect the original door opening.

- b. Bricks blocking part of the entrance may be removed. A new door must be carefully designed to match, as closely as possible, original or period fire station doors. A smaller door for normal use may be inset within the larger fire house door.
- c. The existing fenestration must be retained. Window openings may not be changed in size. Existing sash shall be repaired and retained, unless deterioration is advanced. In such a case, wood replacement sash matching the original must be used. Storm windows are allowable as reversible change. Their installation will be reviewed for color selection. The use of interior storm windows may be considered.

5. Other Exterior Architectural Features

- a. The exterior staircase on the fire station's south facade should be retained, or be re-designed to approximate the designs shown in documentary photographs.
- b. Any new signs must be reviewed by the Commission.
- c. The existing Veteran's sign may be removed.

JOSIAH CUNNINGHAM HOUSE - JESSEE DOGGETT HOUSE AND TAVERN

These structures with their similar styles and alterations, should, if possible, be treated similarly. The general effect of changes to these buildings should be restorative to mid-19th century or earlier appearance.

Demolition is allowed for those structures only in the case of advanced deterioration and in conjunction with a program of education and documentation. Any demolition must meet the standards in the General Standards & Criteria. Unusual architectural features and representative samples of original fabric should be conserved for educational purposes.

Any new materials used in restoration must match original materials as closely as possible. Deteriorated material or architectural features should be repaired rather than replaced or removed, in order to maximize the amount of original fabric to be retained.

Additions, such as the storefronts, are evidence of the history of the buildings. These changes have developed significance in their own right, and this significance must be recognized and respected.

Paint colors, if not determined by scientific paint analysis, must be selected from a carefully researched palette of colors appropriate to the buildings.

1. Form

- a. The general form of the buildings must be retained.

- b. The storefront additions shall be retained, unless a plan for historical interpretation on the site requires their removal. Demolition must meet the Standards in the General Standards & Criteria.

2. Facades

Repair to the wood clapboards must match the original existing clapboards as closely as possible.

3. Roofs

- a. The integrity of the original roof line of both the houses and storefronts must be retained.
- b. To the extent possible, shingles, flashing, and drainage should be retained and repaired using materials that match the original as closely as possible. If no evidence exists of original material, new materials to be used must be appropriate, based on thorough research and documentation.

4. Windows and Doors

- a. Existing windows and doors must be used in any rehabilitation, if salvagable.
- b. Replacements for deteriorated windows and doors must match original in sash and pane configuration, panel configuration, and materials.
- c. Storm windows and storm doors must be unobtrusive and of a design sympathetic to the design of the buildings.

5. Signs

- a. Signs will be subject to review by the Commission.
- b. Signage on the storefronts must conform to style and size of historically-documented signs previously on the storefronts.
- c. Free standing signs will be considered.

OWEN NAWN FACTORY

The general approach for this building is to protect its integrity as currently existing, reflecting the period of the building's construction and early period of use.

1. Form

The general form of the building must be retained.

2. Facades

The brick facades must be preserved. Repointing and other masonry repair must use bricks and mortar matching original fabric as closely as possible. Under no circumstances may brick surfaces be painted or covered. Abrasive cleaning methods are not permitted.

3. Roofs

The general shape of the existing roofs must be retained. Additions may be considered if they enhance the educational function of the building and do not result in irreversible changes. Repair to the roof must use, where visible, materials matching original fabric closely as possible.

4. Windows

- a. Window openings shall not be enlarged or framed down, nor permanently closed except for special circumstances - in which case the treatment will be reviewed by the Commission.
- b. Sash should be retained and repaired, if salvageable. New sash and storm windows will be considered by the Commission.

Signs

Signs will be subject to review by the Commission.

9.2

## Eustis Street Protection Area

### GENERAL STANDARDS

As provided in Section 4, St. 1975 c.772, the only areas subject to Design Review in a Protection Area are:

Demolition;  
Land Coverage;  
Height of Structures;  
Landscape; and  
Topography.

The goal of the Protection Area is threefold: to protect views of the district, to ensure that new development adjacent to the district is architecturally compatible in massing and height and to protect light and air circulation within the district. The study committee is also concerned that development within the Protection Area should not pose a physical threat to historic resources; for example, through emissions and vibrations.

### SPECIFIC STANDARDS AND CRITERIA

1. Demolition

- a. In general, demolition of structures in the Protection Area is allowed.
- b. Prior to any demolition the Boston Landmarks Commission should determine whether the buildings must be recorded in a manner to meet professional architectural survey standards as the Commission may from time to time establish.

2. Topography

No changes in topography are allowed within the Protection Area.

3. Landscape

In general, landscape changes within the Protection Area must not obstruct views of the elements of the attached Architectural Conservation District from any public ways within the Protection Area.

4. New Construction

Ground disturbance in the Protection Area will be subject to an impact study for effects on archaeological resources. If such resources are found, a plan will be developed to mitigate adverse effects.

New construction or additions to existing buildings may not increase shadows within the architectural conservation district nor block vistas to the district along public ways within the Protection Area.

New buildings may be no higher than 60 feet - except that additions or penthouses higher than this level that are not visible from the district or do not block sunlight to the district are allowed.

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Owen Nawn Factory





Cunningham & Doggett Houses  
2066 & 2070 Washington Street



Eustis Street Firehouse  
20 Eustis Street

*June 8, 1979*





McCoy

RAY  
COLEMAN  
FOR  
Representative

SHIPPING &  
RECEIVING  
←  
CUSTOMER  
PARKING