

To: Boston Landmarks Commission
From: Ellen Lipsey
Date: June 14, 2010, revised August 26, 2014
Re: Policy for Changing Survey Ratings for Particular Properties

The conversion to a National Register-based rating system brings Boston's historic architectural survey ratings into alignment with the rating system for all other Massachusetts cities and towns. The new system will utilize National Register of Historic Places (NR) Criteria Statements in place of numerical ratings. The Massachusetts Historical Commission required this rating system change in its funding of the FY 2008 Phase I Update for the Central Business District Survey. The NR-based rating system will be utilized for future survey work as well as for rating upgrades.

The Criteria Statements will indicate whether a property or district may qualify for listing in the National Register of Historic Places at the national, state, or local level. The suggestion of "further study" in the Criteria Statement will indicate that a building, site, structure, or object may be Contributing within a National Register district given additional information on its significance.

Individual Boston Landmarks and Landmark districts must have significance to the city **and** to the state, the New England region, or the nation. Properties and districts which qualify for Boston Landmark designation will have National Significance or State Significance noted in their respective Criteria Statements.

The Boston Landmarks Commission will accept petitions for potential Landmark designation for properties whose Criteria Statements indicate National Significance, State Significance, or Local Significance with "further study" indicating that additional information may raise the level of significance.

- Petitions may be accepted for buildings rated as National Significance, State Significance, or Local Significance-further study needed for potentially higher significance (formerly I, II and III-FS -Further Study), following a preliminary hearing.
- Petitions for buildings rated Local Significance, Contributing to a Historic District or May Contribute to a Historic District Pending Further Study, and Non-Contributing (formerly III, IV, V and VI or unrated) shall not be accepted. If a rating has not yet been assigned to a building, staff will draft a National Register of Historic Places Criteria Statement form and will assign a rating within 30 days of receiving a written request.
- In lieu of accepting petitions for buildings rated Local Significance and lower, the Boston Landmarks Commission shall invite petitioners or other parties to submit a letter requesting the Boston Landmarks Commission to review the rating and consider changing it. It shall be the obligation of anyone requesting a rating change to submit information that will assist the staff and the commission with its review.
- Changes to ratings shall be made according to the memo regarding "Framework for Changing Survey Categories" dated December 20, 1983, copy attached. Please note the memo states:
 1. The new evidence is evaluated by the Survey Director (Architectural Historian) against criteria of ranking (rating) groups; evaluation will be based on the evidence presented (documentary or in situ), and on a repeat field check of the survey sub-area,

and on comparison of survey data of buildings of similar type, style, date, etc. in relevant ranking groups from the city-wide survey;

2. If promotion is warranted, recommendation is made to the BLC. This recommendation will be expressed in the preparation of a National Register Criteria Statement for a particular property or area that delineates the level of significance;
 3. If the BLC accepts recommendation, change in rank (rating) is made;
 4. The report of change is sent to Preservation Alliance, Society of Architectural Historians, MHC, Chamber of Commerce, Real Estate Board, and BRA (the original survey review participants); if any of these formally objects in writing to the BLC within 45 days, the BLC will consider objections but will not be obliged to reverse its decision;
 5. Final report of change will be sent to above organizations and to archival institutions that own the survey so that survey data can be used effectively for up-to-date planning.
- Denial without prejudice of a request for a survey rating change shall not preclude a later submittal of a request for a rating change, provided it is accompanied by additional information.
 - Petitions may be accepted for buildings with ratings changed to National Significance, State/Regional Significance, Local Significance with further study needed for higher significance, pending a preliminary hearing.
 - If approved by the BLC this policy shall be effective as of the approval date.

Original policy adopted by the Boston Landmarks Commission June 22, 2010. Revised policy adopted by the Boston Landmarks Commission August 26, 2014.