

National Register -Based Survey Rating Categories Boston Landmarks Commission

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.

National Significance (formerly I. Highest Significance)

Buildings, sites, structures or objects are considered to have *National Significance*

- As resources associated with aspects of Boston history of demonstrated national significance,
- As nationally known examples of the work of Boston architects, designers, engineers or craftsmen,
- As examples of particular styles or types of buildings, sites, structures and objects which became prototypes for similar resources throughout the nation or which are rare throughout the nation.

A property with National Significance helps us understand the history of the nation by illustrating the nationwide impact of events or persons associated with the property, its architectural type or style, or information potential. It must be of exceptional value in representing or illustrating an important theme in the history of the nation.

All buildings, sites, structures and objects of National Significance are considered to meet the criteria for individual listing in the National Register of Historic Places. Resources of National Significance meet the criteria for designation as Boston Landmarks. Historic districts may similarly be considered to have National Significance.

Listing in the National Register provides a property or district with limited protection against demolition or adverse impact from Federal action and allows owners to take advantage of Federal income tax incentives for rehabilitation. Listing in the State Register provides similar protections from State action, and carries incentives for preservation of municipally- or non-profit-owned properties or districts.

Designation as a Boston Landmark provides protection against demolition and requires design review for proposed exterior alterations. Outstanding interior spaces, accessible to the public, may also be designated as Boston Landmarks.

State Significance (formerly II. Major Significance)

Buildings, sites, structures and objects of *State Significance* are considered to have highest significance to the city of Boston, and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts

- As the city's most outstanding examples of their style or type, distinguished for high architectural or design quality and high degree of intactness (integrity), as evaluated within a statewide context,
- As early or rare examples of the work of major Boston architects, designers, engineers or craftsmen, who may have worked in a statewide context.

Properties or districts are evaluated in a State context when they represent an aspect of the history of the Commonwealth as a whole. A property whose historic associations or information potential appear to extend beyond a local area might be significant at the State level.

Buildings of State Significance are considered to meet the criteria for individual listing in the National Register of Historic Places and for designation as Boston Landmarks. Potential historic districts may similarly be considered to have State Significance.

For the purpose of designation as a Boston Landmark, the category of State Significance additionally includes properties and districts considered to have significance to the New England region. Resources eligible for Landmark designation may be of outstanding historical significance to the city of Boston or may possess outstanding urban design value to the city of Boston.

Local Significance (formerly III. Significant)

Buildings, sites, structures and objects of *Local Significance* are considered to be of significance to the city of Boston in a local context

- As fine examples of the work of Boston architects, designers, engineers or craftsmen,
- As buildings, sites, structures or objects which make an important contribution to the character of a street or area,
- As buildings, sites, structures or objects with strong historical associations with major Boston industries, organizations, institutions, events or local figures, or
- As fine examples of a particular style or building type.

A local historic context represents an aspect of the history of the city, county, or cultural area, or any portion thereof. Local Significance is defined by the importance of the property to the local context.

All properties of Local Significance are considered eligible for individual listing and/or contributing to a district in the National Register of Historic Places.

There are a large number of properties of Local Significance. Some may meet the criteria for designation as Boston Landmarks pending further study as indicated on the Criteria Statement. If finding after further study that properties are significant to the nation or the Commonwealth, or the New England region as well as to the city of Boston, they may be designated as Boston Landmarks.

Contributing to a Historic District and May Contribute to a Historic District (formerly IV. Notable and V. Minor)

Buildings, Sites, Structures, or Objects *Contributing to a Historic District* are considered important to the character of an area. Contributing resources in a district may be important

- As part of a visually cohesive streetscape or element within a district,
- As resources with some individual architectural or design distinction, whether because of their materials, craftsmanship or detailing,
- As the best examples in their area of a particular style or type,
- As resources with some local historical significance.

Contributing resources may also be important as an ensemble, in relation to one another, even if undistinguished individually. Some properties may be potentially eligible for the National Register of Historic Places individually but also stand within an area distinguished as a district and thus more appropriately be listed as within a district.

Contributing properties located within a National Register District qualify for the same protection and incentives as buildings listed individually in the National or State Register.

Properties Contributing to a Historic District are not considered significant enough to be designated as individual Boston Landmarks. Districts with local significance may be designated as local Architectural Conservation Districts under Chapter 772 of the Acts of 1975, the BLC's enabling legislation.

Properties *May Contribute to a historic district* pending further study

- As buildings, sites, structures or objects which are compatible with surrounding structures in scale, style, materials or fenestration patterns, or
- As buildings with some architectural interest or integrity.

Properties which May Contribute to a Historic District Pending Further Study are not considered eligible for designation as Boston Landmarks or for individual listing on the National Register of Historic Places.

Non -Contributing (formerly VI. Non-Contributing)

Non-Contributing resources do not add to the historic associations or historic architectural qualities for which a property or district is significant. They may be of relatively recent construction (generally less than 50 years) or may be historic resources so altered that they no longer retain integrity.

Non-contributing properties are not considered eligible for designation as Boston Landmarks or for individual listing in the National Register of Historic Places. Non-contributing properties may lack Criteria Statements.

Adopted by the Boston Landmarks Commission June 22, 2010.