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## More Structures within Boston's Beacon Hill Neighborhood Now Qualify for Federal Preservation Programs and Incentives

*Many properties built or altered between 1920 and 1955 now are recognized as contributing to the historic district ...and available for federal programs to assist in preservation*

**April 4, 2007 ... Boston, MA ...**On April 4, 2007, the Secretary of the Interior acted to increase the number of qualified properties in the Beacon Hill Historic District. Specifically, many structures built or altered between 1920 and 1955 are now included in the National Historic Landmark designation and eligible for federal protections.

“This is great news for all Americans who are committed to the preservation of our nation’s finest and least altered early urban environments,” said Steven McClain, President of the National Architectural Trust. “Beacon Hill constitutes one of the finest and best preserved examples of a large early republic or federal period urban area in the United States. We commend the National Park Service for recognizing the national historic significance of Beacon Hill by including more properties in the area that contribute to the neighborhood’s proud heritage.”

The National Architectural Trust sponsored the detailed study and application to revise the definition of the Beacon Hill National Historic Landmark and include architecturally significant structures built or altered between 1920 and 1955, when the Historic Beacon Hill District was created. The Trust and local architectural historians worked with the guidance and support of the Massachusetts Historical Commission. Due to the significance of Beacon Hill as a National Historic Landmark all proposed changes required expensive review, including final approval by the Secretary of the Interior.

Beacon Hill, the first local Historic District to be created outside the South, was designated a National Historic Landmark in 1966. At that time, only structures built by 1835 were considered as contributing to the historic district, and Beacon Hill was described as a well-preserved “Early Republic or Federal Period Urban Area.” In the 1980s, the period of significance was extended to 1920 to include the Victorian, Colonial Revival and Neo-Federal styles, allowing buildings such as the Lincolnshire Hotel and Charles River Square to be designated as contributing to the historical significance of the district. In addition, the growing understanding of the significant role that the African Meeting House and the African American community around it had played during the abolition movement was also recognized as a nationally significant aspect of the district.



“It was a pleasure to be a catalyst in a process that resulted in a more accurate, complete recognition of the architectural heritage of Beacon Hill, which is a focal point of American history,” said Pauline Chase-Harrell, a former Boston Landmarks Commission Chairwoman and current President of Boston Affiliates, the consulting firm contracted by the National Architectural Trust to conduct the study and submit the detailed application to the National Park Service. “What was missing in the Beacon Hill designation up until now was recognition of the significance of its architecture and urban planning that extends well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century, when it played a key role in both the development of the Colonial and Federal Revival styles and the creation of the historic preservation movement in the United States. The designation also now includes recognition of the way in which social reforms and literature have been found to contribute to the national significance of the area. The combination of the original areas of architecture and urban design along with the newly documented 20<sup>th</sup> century reinterpretation of that architectural heritage and the historic preservation movement gives the Beacon Hill Historic District its multilayered national significance.”

Impacts on the properties now included in the Beacon Hill National Historic Landmark will be considered during planning for federal, federally-licensed or federally-assisted projects because of the updated designation. In addition, property owners in the district may be eligible for federal tax benefits, and properties in the district may qualify for federal historic preservation grants when funds are available.

“Today’s development is great news for property owners in Beacon Hill,” said Edward Gordon, a Boston-based independent architectural historian who worked with Boston Affiliates on the study and application. “In addition to better understanding the Hill’s unique heritage, more people now will be able to participate in preserving the fabric of this great community. While none of the properties newly considered significant will be subject to additional restrictions under the Beacon Hill Architectural Commission, they will now be eligible for additional federal benefits such as tax incentives for rehabilitation of commercial buildings or for the donation of preservation restrictions.”

“Up until now, perhaps 10-15 percent of the property owners in this great historic district were forced to bear the costs if they felt committed to preserving their historic property, as government programs designed to help defray such costs were unavailable to them,” said Mory Bahar, the National Architectural Trust’s area manager in Boston. “But now they can take advantage of all the government tools created to assist and provide incentive for their work as voluntary guardians.”

#### **About the National Architectural Trust**

The National Architectural Trust advocates voluntary preservation through its support of the Federal Historic Preservation Tax Incentive Program. As the one of the largest not-for-profit organizations in the nation committed to this Program and the acceptance of historic preservation easements, the Trust is dedicated to championing preservation efforts that protect America's architectural heritage for future generations.

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