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KEITH HOUSE

BOSTON LANDMARKS COMMISSION

STUDY REPORT



Petition #286.22
Boston Landmarks Commission
City of Boston

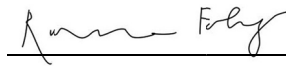
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Report on the Potential Designation of

The Keith House
1911 Centre St., West Roxbury, Massachusetts

As a Landmark under Chapter 772 of the Acts of 1975, as amended

Approved by:



Rosanne Foley, Executive Director

July 19, 2022

Date

Approved by:



Lynn Smiledge, Chair

July 19, 2022

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Draft report posted on July 19, 2022.

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INTRODUCTION

The designation of the Keith House was initiated in 2022 after a petition was submitted by registered voters to the Boston Landmarks Commission asking that the Commission designate the property under the provisions of Chapter 772 of the Acts of 1975, as amended. The purpose of such a designation is to recognize and protect a physical feature or improvement which in whole or part has historical, cultural, social, architectural, or aesthetic significance.

Summary

The Keith House at 1911 Centre St., West Roxbury, Mass., was built ca. 1839. It was the home of William S. Keith (b. 1810/d. 1888), West Roxbury's second U.S. postmaster, who served the community in that capacity for 52 years. Besides living at 1911 Centre, Keith also used the property to conduct U.S. Postal Service business. As such, the Keith House may be one of the oldest locations remaining in New England that was used as a postal facility. The oldest extant single-family structure in the Centre Street business corridor of West Roxbury, the Keith House is an example of Greek Revival architecture, a style that was popular in the United States from about 1825 to 1860. Besides his position as postmaster, Keith was a well-known businessman, operating as a groceries purveyor and serving as station master of the Boston & Providence Railroad's West Roxbury branch when it opened in 1850.

It is sometimes called the Keith-Welsh House because of the only other family to have owned it and resided there. Osborne S. Welsh, a furniture upholsterer, rented the premises from the Keith estate for his young family in about 1910, then purchased it in 1918 or 1919. The Welsh estate owned 1911 Centre St. until 1995.

This study report contains Standards and Criteria which have been prepared to guide future physical changes to the property in order to protect its integrity and character.

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The activity that is the subject of this Study Report has been financed in part with Federal funds from the National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, through the Massachusetts Historical Commission, Secretary of the Commonwealth William Francis Galvin, Chairman. However, the contents and opinions do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the Department of the Interior, or the Massachusetts Historical Commission.

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1.0 LOCATION

1.1 Address

According to the City of Boston's Assessing Department, the Keith House is located at 1911 Centre Street, West Roxbury (Boston), Massachusetts, 02132.

1.2 Assessor's Parcel Number

2006550000.

1.3 Area in which Property is Located

The Keith House is located in the Highland section of West Roxbury. Boston's most suburban neighborhood, West Roxbury is located in the southwestern corner of the city, bordered on the northeast by the neighborhood of Roslindale, north by the town of Brookline, northwest by the city of Newton, and southwest by the town of Dedham. The Keith House is situated on the main artery of Centre Street, which runs through the heart of West Roxbury's Main Streets commercial district. The side streets intersecting this commercial corridor are residential with a predominance of single-family homes constructed during the late 19th and throughout the 20th century.

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1.4 Map Showing Location

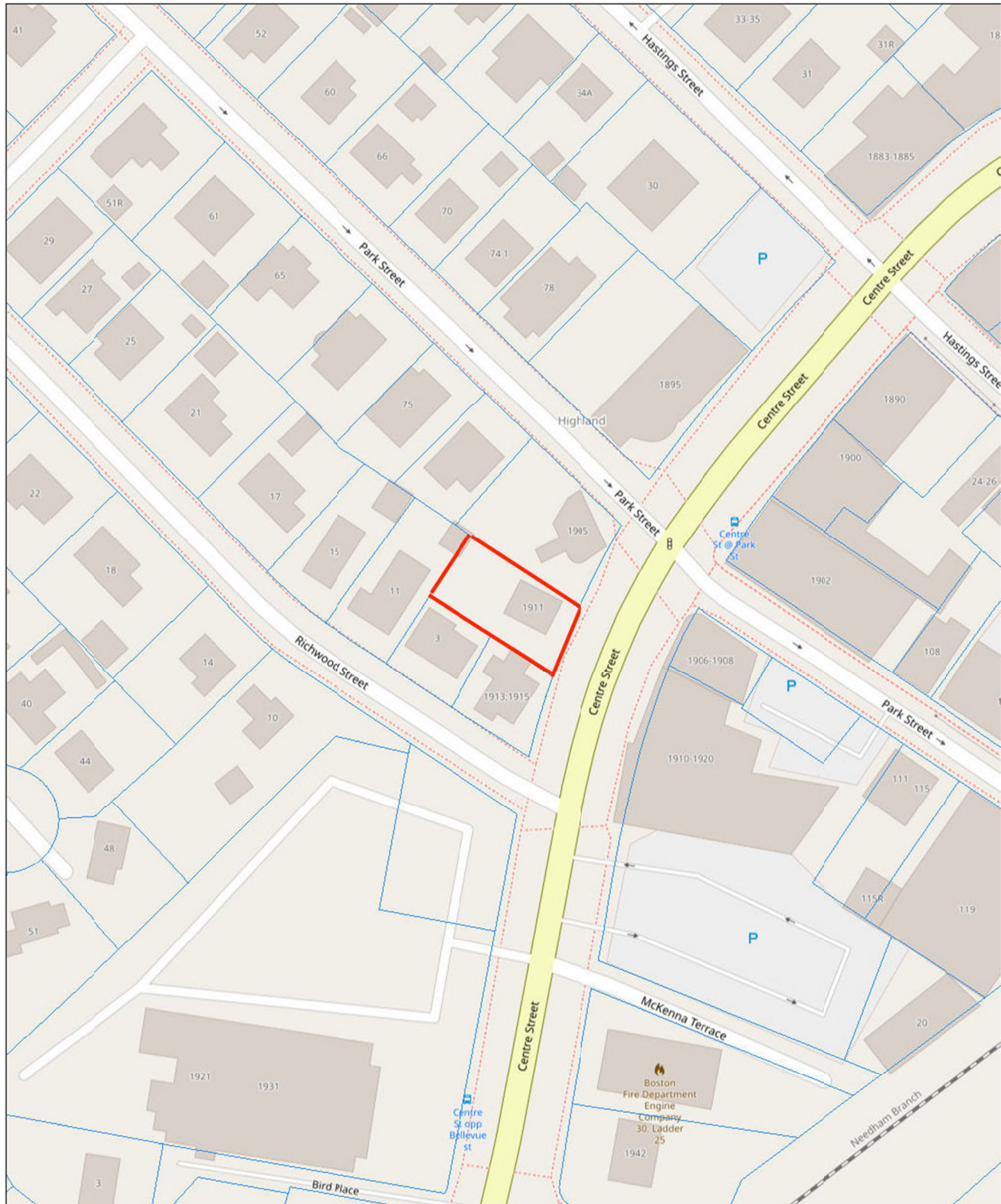


Figure 1. Boston Assessor's map showing the boundaries of the Keith House lot (parcel #2006550000), 1911 Centre St., West Roxbury, Mass.

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2.0 DESCRIPTION

2.1 Type and Use

The William Keith House was built ca. 1839 as a single-family dwelling. It is named after William S. Keith, a grocer, the postmaster of West Roxbury, and a station manager for the West Roxbury branch of the Boston and Providence Railroad. Appointed postmaster by President Andrew Jackson on March 14, 1836, Keith was West Roxbury's second postmaster; he held the position until his death on May 9, 1888. He used his 1911 Centre St. property to conduct his postal service duties as well as his other business.

In 1997, the property was rezoned and modified for use as a real estate office on the first floor and a one-family residence on the second floor. In 1999, the premises was reclassified as a commercial property (Code 0343-Commercial Property/Office 1-2 story) and continued to house a real estate business. The house and the adjacent Brutalist structure, a former bank, are owned by the same developer and have been slated to be demolished and replaced with a four-story residential building with some ground-floor office space. The property is currently vacant.

2.2 Physical Description of the Resource

The house at 1911 Centre St. has two stories plus a half-story attic and a rear ell. Situated on a 5,600-square-foot lot, it is the centerpiece on a small, three-building block bounded by Park Street to the north and Richwood Street to the south. The dwelling stands between two mid-20th-century buildings: a 1970 Brutalist-style former bank at 1905 Centre St. on the corner of Park Street and a single-story red brick structure housing an insurance agency (a onetime gas/auto service station) at 1913-1915 Centre St. on the corner of Richwood Street.

West Roxbury is the most suburban section of Boston, with a predominance of single-family homes. A major thoroughfare, Centre Street runs through the heart of West Roxbury's "Main Streets" commercial district. This section of Centre Street primarily contains single-story shops, restaurants, and office space, with some two- and three-story structures. Among the larger structures in the area are the West Roxbury branch of the Boston Public Library at 1961 Centre St. and Theodore Parker Church, located at 1859 Centre on the corner of Corey Street. There are also a few newly constructed apartment/condominium buildings.

The wood-frame dwelling at 1911 Centre Street sits on a foundation of uncut stone, and has a three-bay façade with a one-window gable, simple eave returns, a frieze, and wide corner boards. An interior brick chimney rises above the south side of the pitched, asphalt-shingled roof. According to a building permit issued on November 19, 1917, the original wood shingles on the roof of the house as well as the ell were replaced with asbestos shingles. However, the asbestos roofing had been replaced with asphalt shingles (date unknown), according to information provided on a permit granted on September 18, 1941, to clad the exterior of the house with asbestos shingles. That material was recently removed, revealing clapboards that are possibly from the original construction as well as evidence of the presence of window shutters, a typical feature of Greek Revival

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architecture. Photographs of the house taken in 2014 and 2019 (Figures 24-25) show asbestos shingles on the exterior walls.

The porch runs the width of the façade and originally featured four Doric columns (the left column is missing and piece of unfinished lumber supports the flat roof over the porch), and a wide frieze bearing the remnants of the business name “Gilmore Realty, Inc.” The end-bay entrance on the right side of the porch has a six-panel door and is complimented by full-length, five-pane sidelights and a five-pane transom. There are two façade windows at the first level—now boarded with plywood—which are full porch height. Except where sash is missing, all windows have low-relief molded surrounds and outside-mounted, double-track aluminum storm windows. The second-floor of the façade has 6/1 sash; the gable-end sash is missing and the opening is loosely covered from the interior with construction housewrap. On the south elevation there are eight replacement windows with varying sash. On the first floor, the two sash nearest the façade are 1/1 while the two toward the rear of the house are 6/1. On the second floor, all four sash are 6/6. The north elevation contains four windows, however the two forward windows on the first and second floors are filled in with siding. The two replacement sash toward the rear of the structure are 6/6 on the first floor and 1/1 on the second floor. The back of the house (west elevation) has a gable-end window. The sash is missing and the opening is loosely covered at the inside with construction housewrap.

There is a small back porch off the first floor with a wide frieze and an asphalt-shingled roof. A single turned post supports the exterior west corner of the porch, which is partially enclosed by a wood railing. A metal stair rail is installed on the left side of the three steps leading up to the porch. The two doors on the porch, one leading into the house, the other into the ell, are obscured by plywood.

The one-story, one-room ell sits on wood sills. In addition to an entrance at the porch, the ell has entryways at the south and west façades, which are boarded with plywood. The ell porch-level window is also boarded and obscured from view. This small structure has a pitched roof with asphalt shingles. The south elevation is clad in asbestos shingles while the west and north elevations are clad in asbestos shingles. The gable-end window has low-relief molded surrounds and is fitted with an outside-mounted, double-track aluminum storm window. The 6/6 sash is the property's only window that appears to have wood muntins; thus it may have been installed during an earlier period. The sash for the half-size window at the north elevation is missing and the opening is covered at the interior with construction housewrap.

A driveway on the south side of the property affords access to the back porch and the rear of the parcel. The driveway entrance is composed of several feet of concrete while the majority of it is asphalt, which extends into a part of the backyard. Both materials have deteriorated, showing cracks and breaks, with general unevenness and bare areas showing either patches of dirt or grass. A concrete walkway leads to the back porch, which is accessed by two concrete steps. The overgrown back lawn is strewn with building debris.

As indicated by historic maps, the 5,600-square-foot parcel today is smaller than it was when the house was built and there are no extant outbuildings. Early maps and tax records give the size of the lot as 21,780 square feet. The change in property lines is partially the result of the city's street improvement project in 1919-1920 to expand Centre Street, which required moving the house

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further back on the lot. The move was planned in two phases. According to a building permit granted on September 2, 1919, the carpenter’s shop—a one-story structure that was 16 feet long, 18 feet wide, and 10 feet high with a flat roof—was to be moved 32 feet west and temporarily placed on brick piers on stone settings. Another structure, a shed, was to be razed and rebuilt once phase two was completed: situating the house in its new location. A September 5, 1919, building permit called for moving the house “16 feet to the rear and 10 feet east and set on a new stone foundation and put new sills under ell.” The one-story shed—16 feet long, 18 feet wide, and 10 feet high with a flat roof—was rebuilt 32 feet to the west of its original location and set on 12-by-12-foot brick piers.

2.3 Contemporary Images



Figure 2. View of façade taken from opposite side (east) of Centre Street, April 22, 2022.

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Figure 3. Frontage retaining wall, taken from the southerly end of the property looking north on Centre Street, June 2, 2022.

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Figure 4. Façade close-up, April 22, 2022.

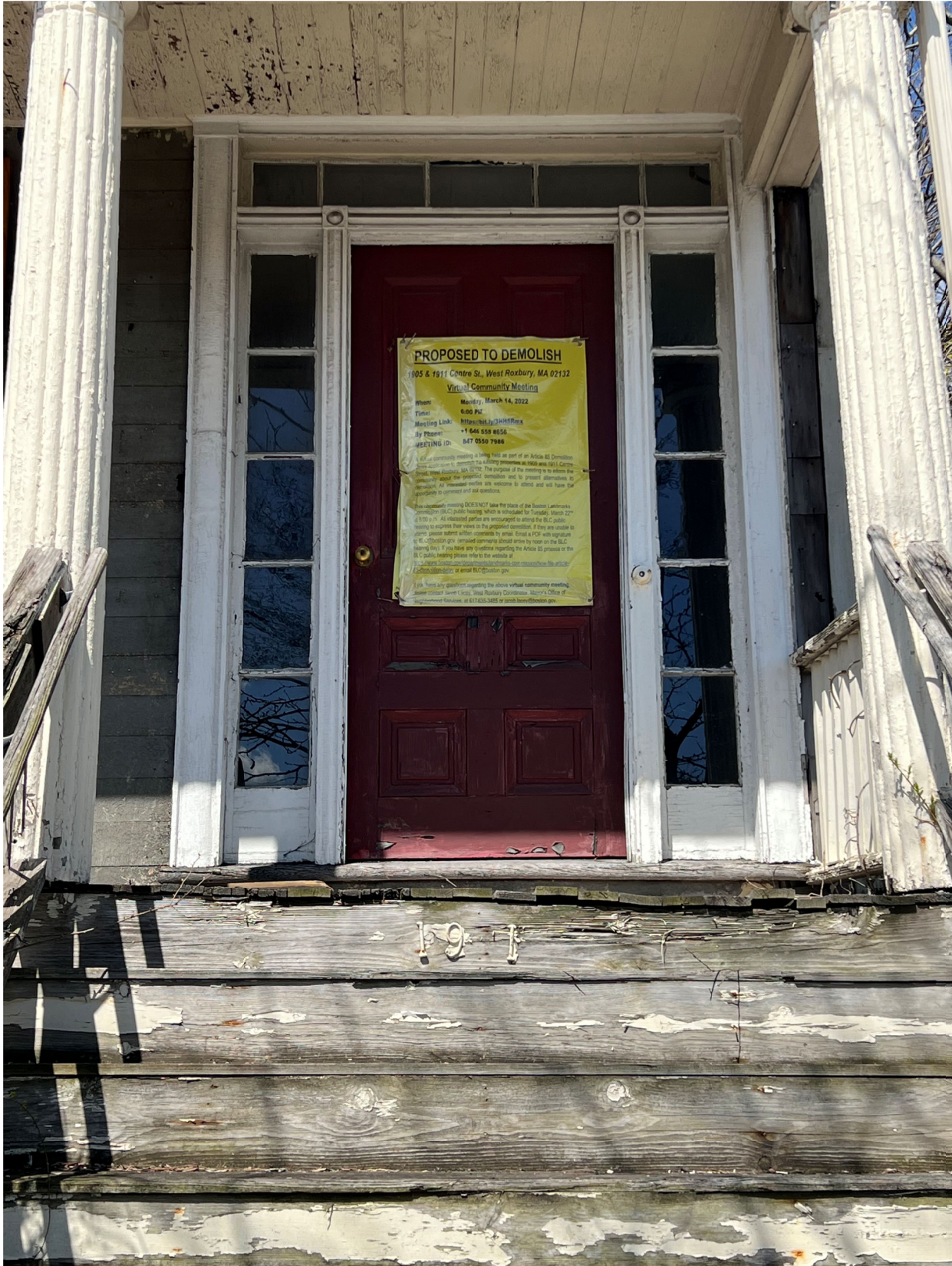


Figure 4. End-bay entrance at façade, April 22, 2022.

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Figure 5. North elevation showing concrete boundary wall of abutting property at 1905 Centre St., June 2, 2022.

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Figure 6. Side view of façade porch, taken at south elevation, April 22, 2022.

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Figure 7. South elevation, April 22, 2022.

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Figure 8. South elevation showing concrete and asphalt driveway, April 22, 2022

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Figure 9. Rear entry, west elevation, April 22, 2022.

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Figure 10. Back porch and side of ell, south elevation, April 22, 2022.

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Figure 11. West elevation (rear) showing ell and back porch, April 22, 2022.

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Figure 12. West elevation, asbestos-shingled ell with boarded entrance.

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Figure 13. Ell window with 6/6 sash. Muntins indicate the possibility of sash from an earlier period. Taken June 2, 2020.

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Figure 14. North elevation with first- and second-floor windows removed and covered with siding. Taken June 2, 2022.

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Figure 15. Two windows on north elevation toward rear of the house, taken on June 2, 2022. The missing window on the side of the ell is partially visible.

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Figure 16. Closeup of ell window, north elevation, taken June 2, 2022.

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Figure 17. South elevation showing roof, taken from second-floor deck of abutting property at 3 Richwood Street, June 2, 2022.

2.4 Historic Maps and Images

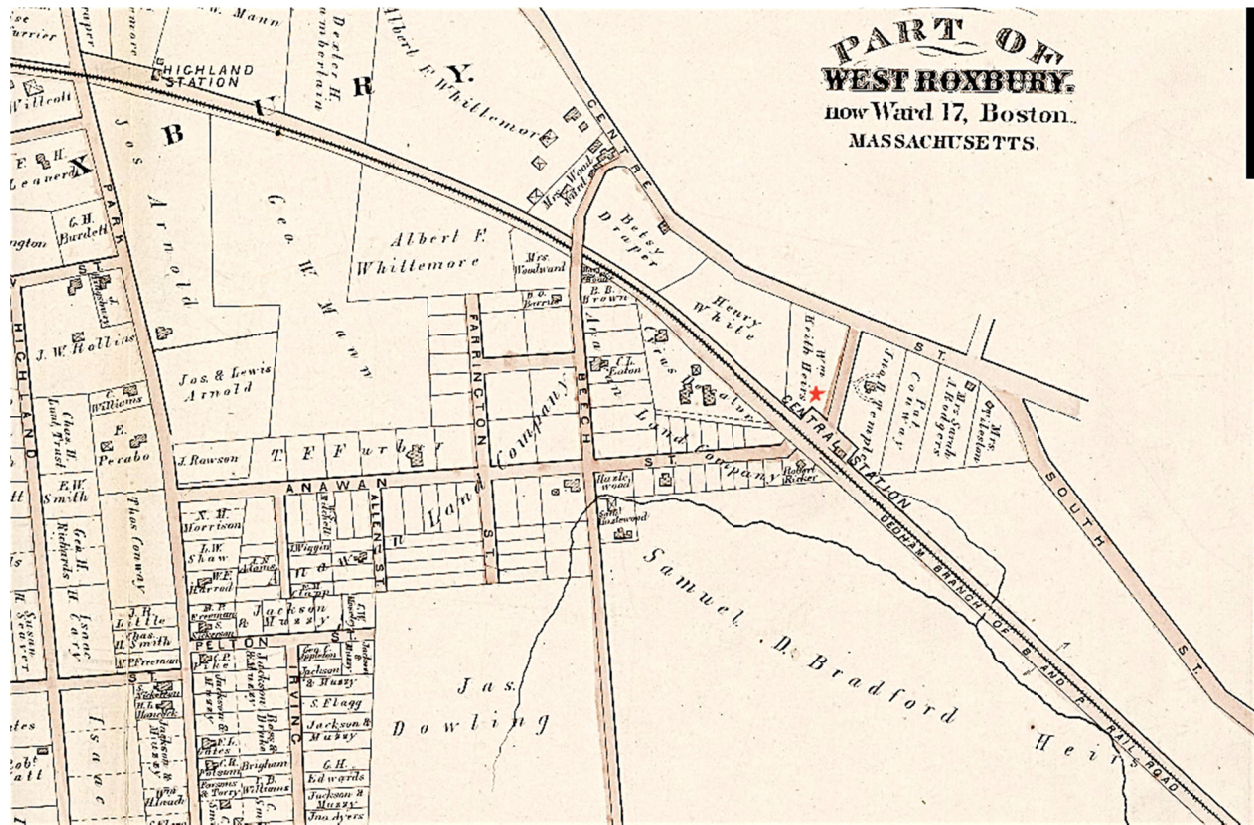


Figure 18. Plate M of the 1874 Hopkins Suffolk County atlas shows the lot at 1911 Centre St. (marked by a red star) and lists “Wm. Keith Heirs” as the owner. Central Station on the Dedham Branch of the Boston and Providence Railroad, where William S. Keith was station manager, is located just southwest of the property.

Source: Hopkins, Griffith Morgan, Jr., Busch, Edward (Engraver), and G. M. Hopkins & Co. “Atlas of the county of Suffolk, Massachusetts: vol. 5th, West Roxbury, now ward 17, Boston.” Map. Philadelphia: G. M. Hopkins & Co., 1874. Norman B. Leventhal Map & Education Center, <https://collections.leventhalmap.org/search/commonwealth:tt44pv398> (accessed June 24, 2022).



Figure 19. This section of Plate Q from the 1874 Hopkins atlas shows four structures on the Keith lot and the abbreviation “P.O.” This indicates that Keith operated the post office on the property. Boston tax records for 1879 note that the property featured a house, barn, and a store on his 21,780-square-foot lot. The records identify Keith as a grocer and list among his personal property one horse, which he probably used to make grocery and mail deliveries.¹

Source: Hopkins, Griffith Morgan, Jr., Busch, Edward (Engraver), and G. M. Hopkins & Co. “Atlas of the county of Suffolk, Massachusetts: vol. 5th, West Roxbury, now ward 17, Boston.” Map. Philadelphia: G. M. Hopkins & Co., 1874. Norman B. Leventhal Map & Education Center, <https://collections.leventhalmap.org/search/commonwealth:tt44pv398> (accessed June 24, 2022).

¹ “Massachusetts, Boston Tax Records, 1822-1918,” database with images, <i>FamilySearch</i> (https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3QSQ-G9L6-LWJF?cc=2125599&wc=9BRY-VZQ%3A1017717701%2C1292556106 : 23 December 2021), Tax records > Valuation books, 1879, Ward 23, pt. 1 > image 207 of 279; City of Boston Archives, West Roxbury.

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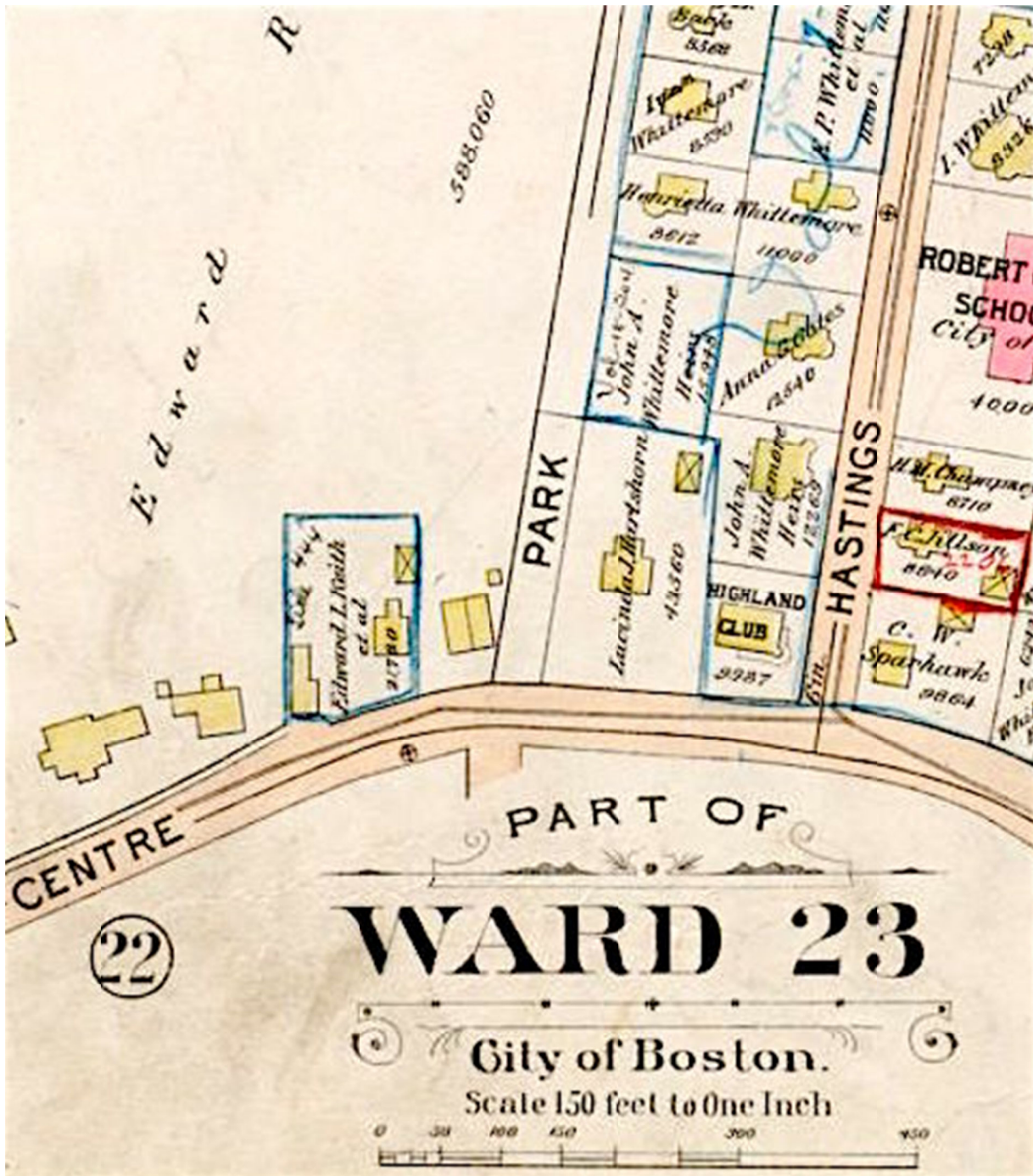


Figure 20. This enlarged area of Plate 21 of the 1896 Bromley map shows that by this time, 1911 Centre St. (to the left of Park Street) was owned by Keith’s heirs, his son Edward heading the list. The map records the Keith lot as being 21,780 square feet.

Source: Bromley, George Washington, and Walter Scott Bromley. “Atlas of the city of Boston : volume 6: West Roxbury.” Map. Philadelphia: G. W. Bromley & Co., 1896. Norman B. Leventhal Map & Education Center, <https://collections.leventhalmap.org/search/commonwealth:tt44pv86n> (accessed June 24, 2022).

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Figure 21. Issued in 1914, Plate 21 of this Bromley atlas shows William’s son Edward, a clerk, leading the list of Keith descendants who owned the property. While the size of the lot is still 21,780 square feet, it bears two street numbers 1915 and 1911. These two Centre Street addresses also appear on Plate 21 of the Bromley atlas published in the 1905.

Source: Bromley, George Washington, Bromley, Walter Scott, and G. W. Bromley & Co. “Atlas of the city of Boston: West Roxbury.” Map. Philadelphia: G.W. Bromley and Co., 1914. Norman B. Leventhal Map & Education Center, <https://collections.leventhalmap.org/search/commonwealth:tt44pv975> (accessed June 24, 2022).

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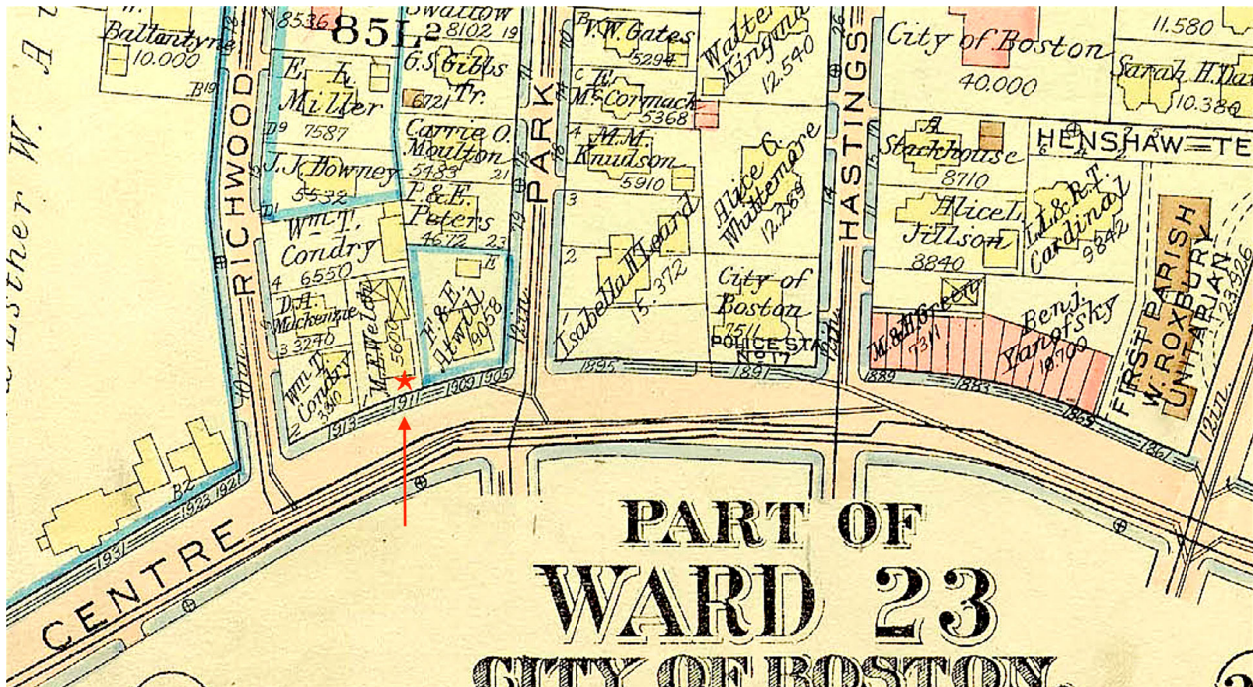


Figure 22. Plate 21 of the 1924 Bromley atlas shows some of Centre Street’s substantial change in the early 20th century, which included a street widening project and the subdivision of many of its once large farms and elegant estates for real estate development. The former Keith lot, reduced to just over a quarter of its original size at 5,600 square feet, was owned by Osborne S. Welsh.

Source: Bromley, George Washington, and Walter Scott Bromley. “Atlas of the city of Boston: West Roxbury.” Map. Philadelphia: G. W. Bromley & Co., 1924. Digital Commonwealth, <https://ark.digitalcommonwealth.org/ark:/50959/tt44pw23k> (accessed May 28, 2022).

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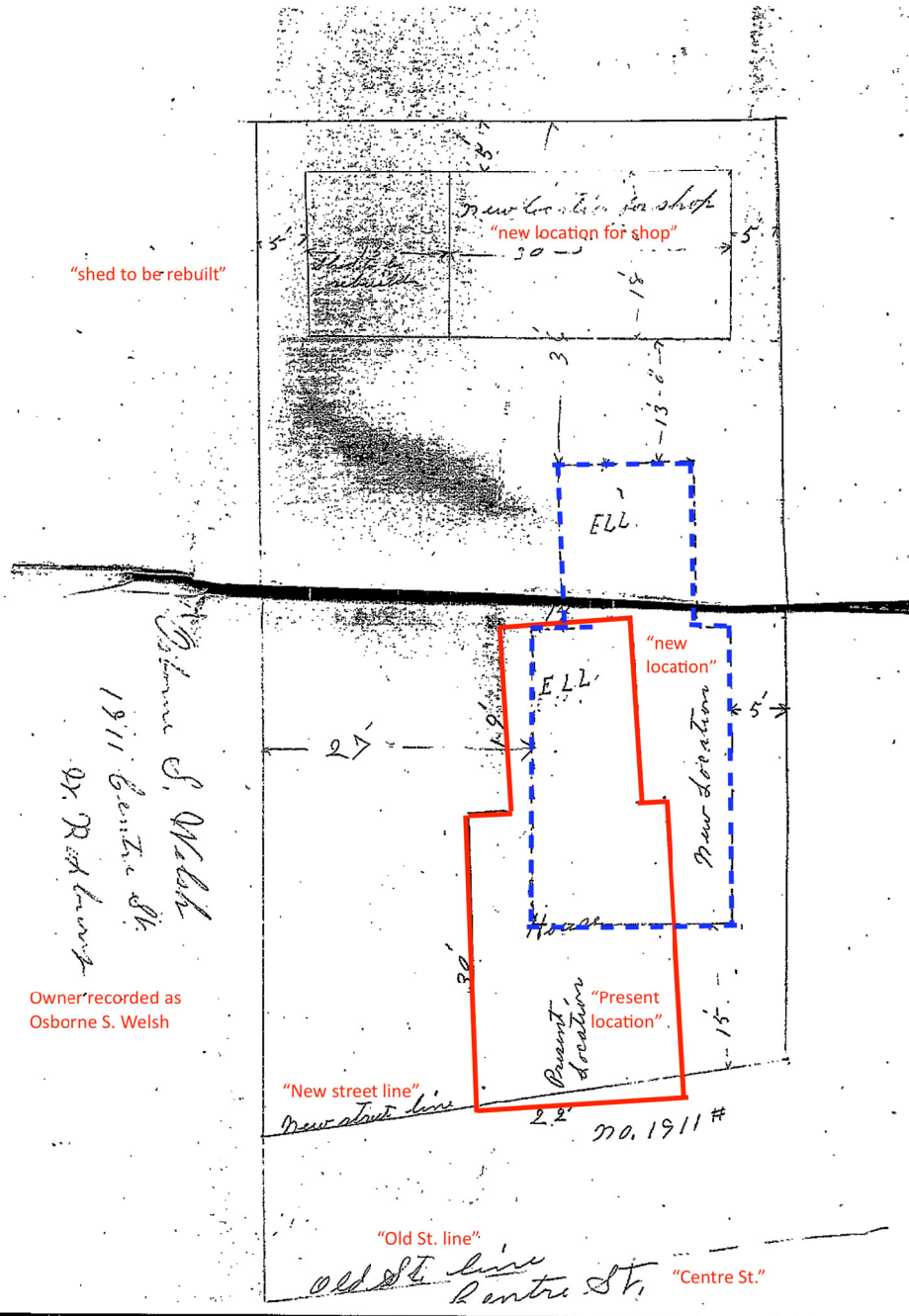


Figure 23. A rough drawing made in 1919 indicating how the structures at 1911 Centre St. would be moved for the street widening plan. The move was completed by January 1920. The owner recorded on the document is Osborne S. Welsh.

Source: City of Boston Inspectional Services Department Records: Building Permits, 1911 Centre Street. Record ID 670490; Address ID 17699.

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Figure 24. Undated image of the William Keith House posted to Boston Landmarks Commission Twitter page on December 26, 2019. At this time, the house was clad in asbestos shingles.

Source: Boston Landmarks Twitter page, (@BostonLandmarks)
<https://twitter.com/BostonLandmarks/status/1210294720913694722>

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Figure 25. William Keith House as it appeared in June 2014.

Source: https://www.bing.com/maps?where=1911+Centre+St+West+Roxbury+02132+MA+US&trk=org-locations_url

3.0 SIGNIFICANCE

3.1 Historic Significance

From about 1857 to 1888, the property at 1911 Centre St. served as the site of U.S. Postal Service operations in West Roxbury. This was the home of William S. Keith, whose tenure as postmaster began with his appointment in 1836 by President Andrew Jackson and ended 52 years later upon his death. As postmaster, Keith was responsible for handling all mail sent and received by West Roxbury's inhabitants, including residents and business proprietors. Among those who relied upon Keith's efforts are a number of historically noteworthy personages who include religious figures, educators, active and retired Boston merchants (including the postmaster's wealthy father, William Keith, Esq.²), writers, intellectuals, social reformers, and abolitionists. Keith would have handled all their correspondence.³ Prior to his postmaster appointment, Keith had built a business as a grocer. In the course of doing business as a grocer, Keith would often combine grocery and mail deliveries to West Roxbury addresses. He continued to operate in this capacity as West Roxbury expanded in size and changed in character from a rural section of the vast town of Roxbury during the colonial and New Republic periods, briefly establishing itself as a separate municipality in the mid-19th century, and finally in the late 19th century annexing to the city of Boston and becoming one of its "streetcar suburbs."

Additionally, when the Boston & Providence Railroad established a branch line from Forest Hills to Dedham in 1850, Keith was appointed a station master. It is not known how long he served in this capacity but the 1886 Boston city directory, Keith is listed as station master of the Central (later renamed Highland) depot as well as chief clerk of West Roxbury Post Office and a grocer, based at his home at 1911 Centre St. Fulfilling those roles, he no doubt was a prominent individual in West Roxbury. His obituary in *The Boston Globe* on May 12, 1888, stated, "No man has been better known in the old town during the past 50 years. As postmaster for the 'old town,' his name and face were known to both old and young, and no man was more respected."

In 1857, Keith acquired 1911 Centre St., a lot "containing one half of an acre with the buildings thereon" from Michael Whittemore Jr.; Keith and Whittemore's daughter Harriet were married.⁴ Whittemore, identified in the deed as a yeoman, regularly conducted property sales and purchases. He had purchased this particular lot, "a perfect pararellogram" located in the westerly section of the city of Roxbury (of which West Roxbury was then a part) with buildings on it, from housewright James W. Wason in April 1848. Wason acquired the land, apparently with no structures on it, in March 1839 from Edward Richards. Being a housewright, it is likely that Wason constructed the Greek Revival dwelling as well as two outbuildings included on historical real estate atlases. This suggests that the Keith House could have been built as early as 1839.

² There is no indication that the elder William Keith was a lawyer, though he was a Roxbury alderman; thus the title was most likely borrowed from the British and referred to his high social status among the landed gentry

³ Boston City Council, *A Catalogue of the City Councils of Boston, 1822-1908, Roxbury, 1846-1867, Charlestown, 1847-1873 and of the Selectmen of Boston, 1634-1822 : Also of Various Other Town and Municipal Officers.*

⁴ Norfolk County Registry of Deeds, Book 255, Page 284.

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The Development of West Roxbury

The town of Roxbury, with its westerly section that by the 18th century would colloquially be called Spring Street or Jamaica End because it included Jamaica Plain, was settled in 1630 by Puritan immigrants as part of the Massachusetts Bay Colony. It was established in the same year as the neighboring town of Boston. The Massachusetts people inhabited the land the colonists claimed for Roxbury. The settlers first called the town Rockberry because of the bedrock formation characterizing much of the area. The bedrock would come to be known as Roxbury puddingstone (formally Roxbury Conglomerate) and became an important construction material, used to build foundations and walls of houses and other structures. With its distinctiveness and its prevalence, in 1983 Roxbury puddingstone was designated the official stone of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

Through the 17th, 18th, and the early 19th centuries the area now known as West Roxbury retained its rural character as a bucolic community dominated by farming, even as other sections of Roxbury became increasingly industrial, urban, and more populated. Early on, Centre Street was established as an important route through the town, laid out in 1662 as the main road connecting Boston and Hartford, Connecticut. It was a major “highway” of approximately 7 miles, running from the section of Boston known today as Roxbury’s Elliot Square, through Jamaica Plain, and West Roxbury to the Dedham town line. It was called the Dedham Road, and sometimes colloquially referred to as “the old stage road.”⁵ As such, Centre Street became West Roxbury’s village core. Residents established churches, opened businesses, and conducted civic matters to provide the spiritual and material sustenance they needed as they bought and sold the plentiful land that was available, built and maintained their dwellings, and tended their farms. Though not mentioned by name, this vignette in a survey of who lived and worked on Centre Street could be about Keith’s property: “Next we come to the village store, Post office, West India goods, and loafing place, with dwelling house adjoining.”⁶

West Roxbury was an appealing environment with its farms and country estates. It drew the prosperous who acquired many and/or vast tracts of land (such as the Welds, Drapers, and Atwills), which they sold, farmed, or otherwise developed. The community also attracted notable persons. Among them was the Rev. Theodore Parker, pastor of Second Church of Roxbury from 1837 to 1846, who was an abolitionist and a Transcendentalist. The congregation he headed still exists, worshipping today at the Unitarian Universalist Theodore Parker Church located on Centre at the corner of Corey Street.

Brook Farm/Camp Andrew

Parker wasn’t the only noteworthy Transcendentalist who chose the pastoral West Roxbury setting for an extended stay. In 1841 Rev. George Ripley, former pastor of Purchase Street Unitarian Church in Boston, and his wife, feminist Sophia Willard Ripley, launched a utopian communal living movement in West Roxbury. Ripley and his fellow trustees – fiction writer Nathaniel Hawthorne among them – of the Brook Farm Institute of Agriculture and Education bought a dairy farm of about 170 acres from Charles and Maria M. Ellis for \$10,500, according to a deed dated October 14.

⁵ Charles G. Mackintosh, *Some Recollections of the Pastors and People of the Second Church of Old Roxbury, Afterwards First Church, West Roxbury ...* (United States: Newcomb & Gauss, 1901), 63.

⁶ Mackintosh, 66.

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The Ripleys had stayed at the farm in the summer of 1840. They decided that the property was ideally suited to advance their philosophy and mission of social equity and enlightenment. Brook Farm gained fame during its operation, counting among its visitors Bronson Alcott, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Margaret Fuller, Rev. Theodore Parker, Elizabeth Peabody, and Henry David Thoreau. However, the Brook Farm promise did not reach fulfillment. Financial failure forced its closure in 1847. The farm trustees sold the property to the city of Roxbury in 1848, which used the site as a “poor farm.” Later, from May to July 1861, the former Brook Farm was used as Camp Andrew, a temporary Civil War training camp for the 2nd Massachusetts Infantry. Keith’s post office handled the approximately 1,000 letters that the soldiers would mail every Monday.⁷ Among the letter writers was Robert Gould Shaw, an infantry lieutenant. Shaw, a West Roxbury native, had frequented Brook Farm as a child with his father. Shaw gained posthumous fame as commander of the 54th Massachusetts Infantry Regiment, the second African American force mustered to fight for the Union. Shaw and many of the Black soldiers he commanded were killed on July 18, 1863, in battle at Fort Wagner on Morris Island in South Carolina.

For a brief period West Roxbury existed as an independent municipality, having split in 1851 from Roxbury in a move designed to retain its rural character. This new Norfolk County town of West Roxbury included Roslindale and Jamaica Plain. However, the secession only slowed its inevitable change from rural countryside to modern community with suburban features. The establishment of railroad service in 1850 helped advance the change; the Boston and Providence Railroad opened a West Roxbury branch on its Dedham line, with stops at Central (Bellevue) Street, West Roxbury Village, and Spring Street. The railroad made West Roxbury easier to access and had the effect of expanding the town’s population, spurring residential and commercial development. West Roxbury became even more accessible in 1857 with the addition of horse-drawn streetcars. Incorporated by a legislative act in 1856, the West Roxbury Railroad Company was authorized to lay tracks on any of the town’s streets to the line separating it from the city of Roxbury. Stipulating the use of horse power only, the legislation provided for agreed-upon connections with the Metropolitan Railroad Company, which had been established in 1853 to provide transportation between the cities of Roxbury and Boston.

William S. Keith

With such development, West Roxbury was poised for annexation to Boston, which occurred in 1874. William S. Keith was a longtime witness to much of West Roxbury’s transformation, including the annexation to Boston (which moved West Roxbury from Norfolk County to Suffolk County). The oldest of eight children, he was born in Boston on April 21, 1810, to Sarah Champney Polley and William Keith, a prosperous merchant and a substantial landholder. In 1826 the family moved to West Roxbury where the elder Keith had purchased a farm estate located at 1889 Centre at the corner of Hastings Street. Young William worked at farming for several years with his father. At the age of 20, he married Harriet Whittemore.

A few years after marrying, Keith went into business as a grocer. He was engaged in politics and when he attained voting age he declared his allegiance to the Jacksonian Democratic Party; he would be known as an adherent to that ideology for the rest of his life. His political activities caught

⁷ “Increased Postal Facilities: West Roxbury and Roslindale Are Now Full-Fledged Substations of Boston Postoffice.” (*The Boston Globe*, July 29, 1899), 6.

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the attention of U.S. President Andrew Jackson, who in 1836 appointed Keith postmaster of the West Roxbury Post Office. He probably operated his grocer business and conducted postal service duties out of a Centre Street shop but the location is as yet unknown. However, Keith would eventually conduct business for just over 30 years from the site of his home at 1911 Centre St.

“In consideration of one dollar . . . and in consideration of the love and affection I have for my daughter,” Keith’s father-in-law, Michael Whittemore Jr., granted him the property in 1857 (an additional consideration stated in the deed was that Keith had paid off a \$1,600 mortgage for his father-in-law).⁸ Whittemore had purchased the one-acre lot with buildings on it, one of them no doubt a dwelling with an ell, from housewright James W. Wason in 1848. Wason had owned the property since March 1839, having purchased it from Edward Richards. The Richards/Wason deed indicates that there were no structures on the lot. That document as well as the Wason/Whittemore deed describe the lot as “a perfect parallelogram.”⁹

Various city directories give Keith’s occupation as grocer, chief postal clerk, and railroad station master, showing his residence and place of work at 1911 Centre St. Historic real estate maps (see section 2.4) from the late 19th century depict 1911 Centre as having a dwelling, two shed structures, and an unidentified building at the south edge of the property. Some maps, such as the one in the 1874 Hopkins Suffolk County atlas, mark this parcel as “P.O.” (Figure 19), which is an abbreviation for Post Office. It appears that by 1899, Keith’s heirs had subdivided the lot in such a way that the small building at the south edge of the property became a separate lot numbered 1915 Centre St., owned by H. F. Mason et al. The post office is indicated across the street at 1808 Centre. The 1914 Bromley atlas (Figure 21) shows the owners of 1911 and 1915 Centre St. as Edward Keith et al. Edward Keith was the son of William S. Keith. But by 1924 the lot had become smaller; the Bromley atlas measuring it at 5,600 square feet. Another change noted by this atlas is the name of the owner—Welch. This is no doubt a misspelling of Osborne Welsh, who is listed as the owner on a building permit granted on September 2, 1919. This indicates that the Keith estate owned 1911 Centre St. until 1918 or 1919.

The Welsh Family

Osborne S. Welsh (b. 1870/d. 1966) immigrated from the town of Digby, Nova Scotia, in 1894. His wife, born Mary Cornwall (b. 1879/d. unknown), also from Digby, immigrated in 1896. The couple wed in Boston in 1898. The Welshes resided at 484 Massachusetts Ave. in Boston’s South End though by 1900, they had moved to West Roxbury. There, they were boarders at 22 Bellevue St. as boarders. According to the 1910 federal census, the Welshes and their two daughters, ages nine and eight, lived at 1911 Centre St. as renters. Osborne Welsh was a self-employed upholsterer with his own shop. As of January 1920 when the 14th U.S. Census was enumerated, Welsh owned 1911 Centre St. and carried a mortgage on the property.

Building permits issued by the city of Boston indicate that the Keith estate owned the property in December 1917 and that the Welshes owned it by August 1919. The property was passed down in the Welsh family until it was sold by Osborne Welsh’s grandson, Allan Wiswall, in 1995 to James F. and Karen S. Gilmore. The house was used as the offices of Gilmore Realty, Inc.

⁸ Norfolk County Registry of Deeds, Book 255, Page 284.

⁹ Norfolk County Registry of Deeds, Book 122, Page 226; Book 179, Page 118

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3.2 Architectural (or Other) Significance

The William Keith House is a modestly designed example of Greek Revival vernacular architecture, erected in what grew to be the central business district of West Roxbury. It was built as a single-family dwelling with an ell most likely by housewright James W. Wason, who purchased the lot as vacant land in 1839 and possibly constructed it during that year. No other structures from this time period remain in this area of Centre Street. The Keith House is distinguished by a three-bay façade with a porch supported by four columns, three of which are Doric design; the leftmost one is missing and the porch roof is propped up by a column of plain lumber. There are two porch-height windows and an end-bay entrance on the right of the porch. The entrance is surrounded by full-length, five-pane sidelights and a five-pane transom, an arrangement that is typical of Greek Revival design. The two-and-a-half story building has gable-end windows. Much of the structure is clad with clapboards that are possibly original to the construction; this material was revealed as a result of the recent removal of asbestos-shingle siding that had been installed in 1941.

As a grocer, postmaster, and station master on the West Roxbury branch of the Boston & Providence Railroad—positions he largely held concurrently—William S. Keith was no doubt a well-known member of the West Roxbury community for more than five decades.

3.3 Archaeological Sensitivity

West Roxbury is archaeologically sensitive for ancient Native American and historical archaeological sites. The proximity of the neighborhood to natural resources including river and upland areas make it suitable for Massachusetts Native habitation and use. Open spaces, especially yards and parks, in close proximity to water are especially sensitive for ancient Native sites. The neighborhood may have historically significant archaeological deposits related to 19th and 20th century immigrant communities, industrial operations, and community spaces, including the Brook Farm transcendentalist utopian community.

3.4 Relationship to Criteria for Designation

The William Keith House meets the following criteria for designation as a Boston Landmark as established in Section 4 of Chapter 772 of the Acts of 1975, as amended:

B. Structures, sites, objects, man-made or natural, at which events occurred that have made an outstanding contribution to, and are identified prominently with, or which best represent some important aspect of the cultural, political, economic, military, or social history of the city, the commonwealth, the New England region or the nation.

The Keith House satisfies this criterion due to its strong association with the history and development of West Roxbury from an early agrarian village to a separate burgeoning town served by several railroad stations, and also with its accompanying commercial development and its connections with the development of regional postal service. The property at 1911 Centre Street is significant for the role it played in the U.S. Post Office system, ensuring mail delivery in the community of West Roxbury during the mid-19th century. For much of his 52-

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year tenure as postmaster, Keith performed his duties from his property at 1911 Centre St. It is likely that he did so from his house, and thus the Keith House is likely one of the oldest surviving buildings that functioned as a post office in the New England region. As such, the Keith House played a significant role in the development of the West Roxbury village becoming a separate town which was then later annexed to Boston as a neighborhood of the Commonwealth's seat of government.

C. Structures, sites, objects, man-made or natural, associated significantly with the lives of outstanding historical personages.

The 1911 Centre Street postal facility processed mail to and from locally and nationally well-known individuals, including Rev. Theodore Parker of the Unitarian Church, authors and intellectuals associated with the Brook Farm Transcendentalist movement, and Robert Gould, an infantry lieutenant stationed at Camp Andrew (the former Brook Farm) during the Civil War who went on to command the all-Black 54th Massachusetts Infantry Regiment and was killed in battle.

The Keith House is also significant for its association with William S. Keith, who was West Roxbury's postmaster from 1839 to his death in 1888. He was also station master at the Boston and Providence Railroad branch that opened in 1850. Keith and his father were important figures in the commercial and social fabric of the West Roxbury community.

D. Structures, sites, objects, man-made or natural, representative of elements of architectural or landscape design or craftsmanship which embody distinctive characteristics of a type inherently valuable for study of a period, style or method of construction or development, or a notable work of an architect, landscape architect, designer, or builder whose work influenced the development of the city, the commonwealth, the New England region, or the nation.

The Keith House, constructed ca. 1839, is a rare surviving building from the pre-Civil War period in West Roxbury and the only remaining example of Greek Revival vernacular architecture in West Roxbury's central business district of Centre Street, where most structures date from the late 19th century through the present day.

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4.0 ECONOMIC STATUS

4.1 Current Assessed Value

According to the City of Boston's Assessor's Records, the property at 1911 Centre St., West Roxbury (parcel #2006550000), where the William Keith House is located has a total assessed value of \$350,000, with the land valued at \$200,800 and the building valued at \$149,200.00 for fiscal year 2021.

4.2 Current Ownership

The City of Boston's Assessor's Records list the property owner as C.A.D. Builders LLC, with a mailing address at 201 Revere St., c/o CAD Builders LLC, Canton, MA 02021.

5.0 PLANNING CONTEXT

5.1 Background

Additional research is necessary to determine the residents of 1911 Centre St. prior to 1857, the year that William S. Keith acquired the property from his father-in-law, Michael Whittemore Jr. From 1857 to 1995, the house was used primarily as a residence and owned by just two families. The Keith estate sold the property in 1917-1918 to the Osborne family. In 1995, an Osborne heir sold it to James F. and Karen S. Gilmore, after which it housed Gilmore Realty, Inc. Subsequently, 1911 Centre St. was owned by Jamaica Realty, LLC (2016-2019); Centre AMA Realty Ventures (2019); and C.A.D. Builders LLC (2019-present).

5.2 Zoning

Parcel number #2006550000 is located in the West Roxbury Neighborhood District and a Neighborhood Shopping Subdistrict.

5.3 Planning Issues

The current owners of 1911 Centre Street submitted an Article 85 application on December 26, 2019, for the demolition of the Keith House at 1911 Centre Street, West Roxbury. At a demolition delay hearing on March 22, 2022, the Boston Landmarks Commission found the property to be significant and imposed a 90-day demolition delay under Article 85 of the Boston Zoning Code until June 20, 2022.

On April 29, 2022, a complete petition to Landmark the Keith House at 1911 Centre Street was accepted by the Boston Landmarks Commission. At a public hearing on May 24, 2022, the Boston Landmarks Commission voted to accept the Keith House for further study.

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6.0 ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES

6.1 Alternatives available to the Boston Landmarks Commission

A. Designation

The Commission retains the option of designating the William S. Keith House as a Landmark. Designation shall correspond to Assessor's parcel 2006550000 and shall address the following exterior elements hereinafter referred to as the "Specified Features":

- The exterior envelope of the building.
- Certain landscape elements including: the stone retaining walls.

B. Denial of Designation

The Commission retains the option of not designating any or all of the Specified Features.

C. National Register Listing

The Commission could recommend that the property be listed on the National Register of Historic Places, if it is not already.

D. Preservation Plan

The Commission could recommend development and implementation of a preservation plan for the property.

E. Site Interpretation

The Commission could recommend that the owner develop and install historical interpretive materials at the site.

6.2 Impact of alternatives

A. Designation

Designation under Chapter 772 would require review of physical changes to the William S. Keith House in accordance with the Standards and Criteria adopted as part of the designation.

B. Denial of Designation

Without designation, the City would be unable to offer protection to the Specified Features, or extend guidance to the owners under chapter 772.

C. National Register Listing

The William S. Keith House could be listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Listing on the National Register provides an honorary designation and limited protection from federal, federally funded or federally assisted activities. It creates incentives for preservation, notably the federal investment tax credits and grants through the Massachusetts 19 Preservation Projects Fund (MPPF) from the Massachusetts Historical Commission. National Register listing provides listing on the State Register affording parallel

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protection for projects with state involvement and also the availability of state tax credits. National Register listing does not provide any design review for changes undertaken by private owners at their own expense.

D. Preservation Plan

A preservation plan allows an owner to work with interested parties to investigate various adaptive use scenarios, analyze investment costs and rates of return, and provide recommendations for subsequent development. It does not carry regulatory oversight.

E. Site Interpretation

A comprehensive interpretation of the history and significance of the William Keith House could be introduced at the site.

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7.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

The staff of the Boston Landmarks Commission makes the following recommendations:

1. That the William Keith House be designated by the Boston Landmarks Commission as a Landmark under Chapter 772 of the Acts of 1975, as amended (see Section 3.4 of this report for Relationship to Criteria for Designation);
2. That the boundaries corresponding to Assessor's parcel 2006550000 be adopted without modification;
3. And that the Standards and Criteria recommended by the staff of the Boston Landmarks Commission be accepted.

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8.0 STANDARDS AND CRITERIA, WITH LIST OF CHARACTER-DEFINING FEATURES

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 Designation which shall be applied by the Commission in evaluating proposed changes to the historic 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 Designation. The Standards and Criteria are based on the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties.¹⁰ Before a Certificate of Design Approval or Certificate of Exemption can be issued for such changes, the changes must be reviewed by the Commission 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 gained by, such variance. The Commission's Certificate of Design Approval is only granted after careful review of each application and 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 or take precedence over Commission decisions.

In these standards and criteria, the verb **Should** indicates a recommended course of action; the verb **Shall** indicates those actions which are specifically required.

8.2 Levels of Review

The Commission has no desire to interfere with the normal maintenance procedures for the property. In order to provide some guidance for property owners, managers or developers, and the Commission, the activities which might be construed as causing an alteration to the physical character of the exterior have been categorized to indicate the level of review required, based on the potential impact of the proposed work. Note: the examples for each category are not intended to act as a comprehensive list; see Section 8.2.D.

- A. Routine activities which are not subject to review by the Commission:

¹⁰ U.S. Department of the Interior, et al. *THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR'S STANDARDS FOR THE TREATMENT OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES WITH GUIDELINES FOR PRESERVING, REHABILITATING, RESTORING & RECONSTRUCTING HISTORIC BUILDINGS*, Secretary of the Interior, 2017, www.nps.gov/tps/standards/treatment-guidelines-2017.pdf.

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1. Activities associated with normal cleaning and routine maintenance.
 - a. For building maintenance, such activities might include the following: normal cleaning (no power washing above 700 PSI, no chemical or abrasive cleaning), non-invasive inspections, in-kind repair of caulking, in-kind repainting, staining or refinishing of wood or metal elements, lighting bulb replacements or in-kind glass repair/replacement, etc.
 - b. For landscape maintenance, such activities might include the following: normal cleaning of paths and sidewalks, etc. (no power washing above 700 PSI, no chemical or abrasive cleaning), non-invasive inspections, in-kind repair of caulking, in-kind spot replacement of cracked or broken paving materials, in-kind repainting or refinishing of site furnishings, site lighting bulb replacements or in-kind glass repair/replacement, normal plant material maintenance, such as pruning, fertilizing, mowing and mulching, and in-kind replacement of existing plant materials, etc.
 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.
- B. 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. Maintenance and repairs involving no change in design, material, color, ground surface or outward appearance.
 2. In-kind replacement or repair.
 3. 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.
 4. Repair projects of a repetitive nature will require an application to the Commission and may require full Commission review; subsequent review of these projects may be eligible for Administrative Review by BLC staff, where design, details, and specifications do not vary from those previously approved.
 5. Temporary installations or alterations that are to remain in place for longer than six weeks.
 6. Emergency repairs that require temporary tarps, board-ups, etc. may be eligible for Certificate of Exemption or Administrative Review; permanent repairs will require review as outlined in Section 8.2. In the case of

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emergencies, BLC staff should be notified as soon as possible to assist in evaluating the damage and to help expedite repair permits as necessary.

C. Activities requiring an application and full Commission review:

Reconstruction, restoration, replacement, demolition, or alteration involving change in design, material, color, location, or outward appearance, such as: New construction of any type, removal of existing features or elements, major planting or removal of trees or shrubs, or changes in landforms.

D. Activities not explicitly listed above:

In the case of any activity not explicitly covered in these Standards and Criteria, the Landmarks staff shall 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.

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 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.

8.3 Standards and Criteria

The following Standards and Criteria are based on the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties.¹¹ These Standards and Criteria apply to all exterior building alterations that are visible from any existing or proposed street or way that is open to public travel.

8.3.1 General Standards

1. Items under Commission review include but are not limited to the following: exterior walls (masonry, wood, and architectural metals); windows; entrances/doors; porches/stoops; lighting; storefronts; curtain walls; roofs; roof projections; additions; accessibility; site work and landscaping; demolition; and archaeology. Items not anticipated in the Standards and Criteria may be subject to review, refer to Section 8.2 and Section 9.
2. The historic character of a property shall be retained and preserved. The removal of distinctive materials or alterations of features, spaces and spatial relationships that

¹¹ U.S. Department of the Interior, et al. *THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR'S STANDARDS FOR THE TREATMENT OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES WITH GUIDELINES FOR PRESERVING, REHABILITATING, RESTORING & RECONSTRUCTING HISTORIC BUILDINGS*, Secretary of the Interior, 2017, www.nps.gov/tps/standards/treatment-guidelines-2017.pdf.

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characterize a property shall be avoided. See Section 8.4, List of Character-defining Features.

3. Each property shall be recognized as a physical record of its time, place and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or elements from other historic properties, shall not be undertaken.
4. Changes to a property that have acquired historic significance in their own right shall be retained and preserved. (The term “later contributing features” will be used to convey this concept.)
5. Distinctive materials, features, finishes and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property shall be preserved.
6. Deteriorated historic features shall be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new material shall match the old in design, color, texture and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features will be substantiated by documentary and physical evidence.
7. Chemical or physical treatments, if appropriate, shall be undertaken using the gentlest means possible. Treatments that cause damage to historic materials shall not be used.
8. Staff archaeologists shall review proposed changes to a property 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.
9. New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials, features, and spatial relationships that characterize a property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale and proportion, and massing to protect the integrity of a property and its environment.
10. New additions and adjacent or related new construction shall be undertaken in such a manner that, if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.
11. Original or later contributing signs, marquees, and canopies integral to the building ornamentation or architectural detailing shall be preserved.
12. New signs, banners, marquees, canopies, and awnings shall be compatible in size, design, material, location, and number with the character of the building, allowing for contemporary expression. New signs shall not detract from the essential form of the building nor obscure its architectural features.
13. Property owners shall take necessary precautions to prevent demolition by neglect of maintenance and repairs. Demolition of protected buildings in violation of Chapter 772 of

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the Acts of 1975, as amended, is subject to penalty as cited in Section 10 of Chapter 772 of the Acts of 1975, as amended.

8.3.2 Masonry at exterior walls (including but not limited to stone, brick, terra cotta, concrete, adobe, stucco, and mortar)

1. All original or later contributing masonry materials shall be preserved.
2. Original or later contributing masonry materials, features, details, surfaces and ornamentation shall be repaired, if necessary, by patching, splicing, consolidating, or otherwise reinforcing the masonry using recognized preservation methods.
3. Deteriorated or missing masonry materials, features, details, surfaces, and ornamentation shall be replaced with materials and elements which match the original in material, color, texture, size, shape, profile, and detail of installation.
4. When replacement of materials or elements is necessary, it should be based on physical or documentary evidence.
5. If the same material is not technically or economically feasible, then compatible substitute materials may be considered.
6. Sound original mortar shall be retained.
7. Deteriorated mortar shall be carefully removed by hand raking the joints.
8. Use of mechanical hammers shall not be allowed. Use of mechanical saws may be allowed on a case-by-case basis.
9. Repointing mortar shall duplicate the original mortar in strength, composition, color, texture, joint size, joint profile, and method of application.
10. Sample panels of raking the joints and repointing shall be reviewed and approved by the staff of the Boston Landmarks Commission.
11. Cleaning of masonry is discouraged and should only be performed when necessary to halt deterioration.
12. If the building is to be cleaned, the masonry shall be cleaned with the gentlest method possible.
13. A test patch of the cleaning method(s) shall be reviewed and approved on site by staff of the Boston Landmarks Commission to ensure that no damage has resulted. Test patches shall be carried out well in advance. Ideally, the test patch should be monitored over a sufficient period of time to allow long-range effects to be predicted (including exposure to all seasons if possible).
14. Sandblasting (wet or dry), wire brushing, or other similar abrasive cleaning methods shall not be permitted. Doing so can change the visual quality of the material and damage the surface of the masonry and mortar joints.

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15. Waterproofing or water repellents are strongly discouraged. These treatments are generally not effective in preserving masonry and can cause permanent damage. The Commission does recognize that in extraordinary circumstances their use may be required to solve a specific problem. Samples of any proposed treatment shall be reviewed by the Commission before application.
16. In general, painting masonry surfaces shall not be allowed. Painting masonry surfaces will be considered only when there is documentary evidence that this treatment was used at some significant point in the history of the property.
17. New penetrations for attachments through masonry are strongly discouraged. When necessary, attachment details shall be located in mortar joints, rather than through masonry material; stainless steel hardware is recommended to prevent rust jacking. New attachments to cast concrete are discouraged and will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.
18. Deteriorated stucco shall be repaired by removing the damaged material and patching with new stucco that duplicates the old in strength, composition, color, and texture.
19. Deteriorated adobe shall be repaired by using mud plaster or a compatible lime-plaster adobe render, when appropriate.
20. Deteriorated concrete shall be repaired by cutting damaged concrete back to remove the source of deterioration, such as corrosion on metal reinforcement bars. The new patch shall be applied carefully so that it will bond satisfactorily with and match the historic concrete.
21. Joints in concrete shall be sealed with appropriate flexible sealants and backer rods, when necessary.

8.3.3 Wood at exterior walls

1. All original or later contributing wood materials shall be preserved.
2. Original or later contributing wood surfaces, features, details, and ornamentation shall be retained and, if necessary, repaired by patching, piecing-in, consolidating, or reinforcing the wood using recognized preservation methods.
3. Deteriorated or missing wood surfaces, features, details, and ornamentation shall be replaced with material and elements which match the original in material, color, texture, size, shape, profile, and detail or installation.
4. When replacement of materials is necessary, it should be based on physical or documentary evidence.
5. If using the same material is not technically or economically feasible, then compatible substitute materials may be considered.
6. Cleaning of wood elements shall use the gentlest method possible.

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7. Paint removal should be considered only where there is paint surface deterioration or excessive layers of paint have coarsened profile details and as part of an overall maintenance program which involves repainting or applying other appropriate protective coatings. Coatings such as paint help protect the wood from moisture and ultraviolet light; stripping the wood bare will expose the surface to the effects of weathering.
8. Damaged or deteriorated paint should be removed to the next sound layer using the mildest method possible.
9. Propane or butane torches, sandblasting, water blasting, or other abrasive cleaning and/or paint removal methods shall not be permitted. Doing so changes the visual quality of the wood and accelerates deterioration.
10. Repainting should be based on paint seriation studies. If an adequate record does not exist, repainting shall be done with colors that are appropriate to the style and period of the building.

8.3.4 Architectural metals at exterior walls (including but not limited to wrought and cast iron, steel, pressed metal, terneplate, copper, aluminum, and zinc)

1. All original or later contributing architectural metals shall be preserved.
2. Original or later contributing metal materials, features, details, and ornamentation shall be retained and, if necessary, repaired by patching, splicing, or reinforcing the metal using recognized preservation methods.
3. Deteriorated or missing metal materials, features, details, and ornamentation shall be replaced with material and elements which match the original in material, color, texture, size, shape, profile, and detail or installation.
4. When replacement of materials or elements is necessary, it should be based on physical or documentary evidence.
5. If using the same material is not technically or economically feasible, then compatible substitute materials may be considered.
6. Cleaning of metal elements either to remove corrosion or deteriorated paint shall use the gentlest method possible.
7. The type of metal shall be identified prior to any cleaning procedure because each metal has its own properties and may require a different treatment.
8. Non-corrosive chemical methods shall be used to clean soft metals (such as lead, tinplate, terneplate, copper, and zinc) whose finishes can be easily damaged by abrasive methods.

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9. If gentler methods have proven ineffective, then abrasive cleaning methods, such as low pressure dry grit blasting, may be allowed for hard metals (such as cast iron, wrought iron, and steel) as long as it does not abrade or damage the surface.
10. A test patch of the cleaning method(s) shall be reviewed and approved on site by staff of the Boston Landmarks Commission to ensure that no damage has resulted. Test patches shall be carried out well in advance. Ideally, the test patch should be monitored over a sufficient period of time to allow long-range effects to be predicted (including exposure to all seasons if possible).
11. Cleaning to remove corrosion and paint removal should be considered only where there is deterioration and as part of an overall maintenance program which involves repainting or applying other appropriate protective coatings. Paint or other coatings help retard the corrosion rate of the metal. Leaving the metal bare will expose the surface to accelerated corrosion.
12. Repainting should be based on paint seriation studies. If an adequate record does not exist, repainting shall be done with colors that are appropriate to the style and period of the building.

8.3.5 Windows (also refer to Masonry, Wood, and Architectural Metals)

1. The original or later contributing arrangement of window openings shall be retained.
2. Enlarging or reducing window openings for the purpose of fitting stock (larger or smaller) window sash or air conditioners shall not be allowed.
3. Removal of window sash and the installation of permanent fixed panels to accommodate air conditioners shall not be allowed.
4. Original or later contributing window elements, features (functional and decorative), details, and ornamentation shall be retained and, if necessary, repaired by patching, splicing, consolidating, or otherwise reinforcing using recognized preservation methods.
5. Deteriorated or missing window elements, features (functional and decorative), details, and ornamentation shall be replaced with material and elements which match the original in material, color, texture, size, shape, profile, configuration, and detail of installation.
6. When replacement is necessary, it should be based on physical or documentary evidence.
7. Replacement sash for divided-light windows should have through-glass muntins or simulated divided lights with dark anodized spacer bars the same width as the muntins.
8. Tinted or reflective-coated glass shall not be allowed.
9. Metal or vinyl panning of the wood frame and molding shall not be allowed.

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10. Exterior combination storm windows shall have a narrow perimeter framing that does not obscure the glazing of the primary window. In addition, the meeting rail of the combination storm window shall align with that of the primary window.
11. Storm window sashes and frames shall have a painted finish that matches the primary window sash and frame color.
12. Clear or mill finished aluminum frames shall not be allowed.
13. Window frames, sashes, and, if appropriate, shutters, should be of a color based on paint seriation studies. If an adequate record does not exist, repainting shall be done with colors that are appropriate to the style and period of the building.

8.3.6 Entrances/Doors (also refer to Masonry, Wood, Architectural Metals, and Porches/Stoops)

1. All original or later contributing entrance elements shall be preserved.
2. The original or later contributing entrance design and arrangement of the door openings shall be retained.
3. Enlarging or reducing entrance/door openings for the purpose of fitting stock (larger or smaller) doors shall not be allowed.
4. Original or later contributing entrance materials, elements, details and features (functional and decorative) shall be retained and, if necessary, repaired by patching, splicing, consolidating or otherwise reinforcing using recognized preservation methods.
5. Deteriorated or missing entrance elements, materials, features (function and decorative) and details shall be replaced with material and elements which match the original in material, color, texture, size, shape, profile, configuration and detail of installation.
6. When replacement is necessary, it should be based on physical or documentary evidence.
7. If using the same material is not technically or economically feasible, then compatible substitute materials may be considered.
8. Original or later contributing entrance materials, elements, features (functional and decorative) and details shall not be sheathed or otherwise obscured by other materials.
9. Storm doors (aluminum or wood-framed) shall not be allowed on the primary entrance unless evidence shows that they had been used. They may be allowed on secondary entrances. Where allowed, storm doors shall be painted to match the color of the primary door.
10. Unfinished aluminum storm doors shall not be allowed.
11. Replacement door hardware should replicate the original or be appropriate to the style and period of the building.

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12. Buzzers, alarms and intercom panels, where allowed, shall be flush mounted and appropriately located.
13. Entrance elements should be of a color based on paint seriation studies. If an adequate record does not exist, repainting shall be done with colors that are appropriate to the style and period of the building/entrance.

8.3.7 Porches/Stoops (also refer to Masonry, Wood, Architectural Metals, Entrances/Doors, Roofs, and Accessibility)

1. All original or later contributing porch elements shall be preserved.
2. Original or later contributing porch and stoop materials, elements, features (functional and decorative), details and ornamentation shall be retained if possible and, if necessary, repaired using recognized preservation methods.
3. Deteriorated or missing porch and stoop materials, elements, features (functional and decorative), details and ornamentation shall be replaced with material and elements which match the original in material, color, texture, size, shape, profile, configuration and detail of installation.
4. When replacement is necessary, it should be based on physical or documentary evidence.
5. If using the same material is not technically or economically feasible, then compatible substitute material may be considered.
6. Original or later contributing porch and stoop materials, elements, features (functional and decorative), details and ornamentation shall not be sheathed or otherwise obscured by other materials.
7. Porch and stoop elements should be of a color based on paint seriation studies. If an adequate record does not exist repainting shall be done with colors that are appropriate to the style and period of the building/porch and stoop.

8.3.8 Lighting

1. There are several aspects of lighting related to the exterior of the building and landscape:
 - a. Lighting fixtures as appurtenances to the building or elements of architectural ornamentation.
 - b. Quality of illumination on building exterior.
 - c. Security lighting.
2. Wherever integral to the building, original or later contributing lighting fixtures shall be retained and, if necessary, repaired by patching, piercing in or reinforcing the lighting fixture using recognized preservation methods.

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3. Deteriorated or missing lighting fixtures materials, elements, features (functional and decorative), details, and ornamentation shall be replaced with material and elements which match the original in material, color, texture, size, shape, profile, configuration, and detail of installation.
4. When replacement is necessary, it should be based on physical or documentary evidence.
5. If using the same material is not technically or economically feasible, then compatible substitute materials may be considered.
6. Original or later contributing lighting fixture materials, elements, features (functional and decorative), details, and ornamentation shall not be sheathed or otherwise obscured by other materials.
7. Supplementary illumination may be added where appropriate to the current use of the building.
8. New lighting shall conform to any of the following approaches as appropriate to the building and to the current or projected use:
 - a. Reproductions of original or later contributing fixtures, based on physical or documentary evidence.
 - b. Accurate representation of the original period, based on physical or documentary evidence.
 - c. Retention or restoration of fixtures which date from an interim installation and which are considered to be appropriate to the building and use.
 - d. New lighting fixtures which are differentiated from the original or later contributing fixture in design and which illuminate the exterior of the building in a way which renders it visible at night and compatible with its environment.
9. The location of new exterior lighting shall fulfill the functional intent of the current use without obscuring the building form or architectural detailing.
10. No exposed conduit shall be allowed on the building.
11. Architectural night lighting is encouraged, provided the lighting installations minimize night sky light pollution. High efficiency fixtures, lamps and automatic timers are recommended.
12. On-site mock-ups of proposed architectural night lighting may be required.

8.3.9 Storefronts (also refer to Masonry, Wood, Architectural Metals, Windows, Entrances/Doors, Porches/Stoops, Lighting, and Accessibility)

1. Refer to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings (Storefront section).

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8.3.10 Curtain Walls (also refer to Masonry, Wood, Architectural Metals, Windows, and Entrances/Doors)

1. Refer to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings (Curtain Walls section).

8.3.11 Roofs (also refer to Masonry, Wood, Architectural Metals, and Roof Projections)

1. The roof shapes and original or later contributing roof material of the existing building shall be preserved.
2. Original or later contributing roofing materials such as slate, wood trim, elements, features (decorative and functional), details and ornamentation, such as cresting, shall be retained and, if necessary, repaired by patching or reinforcing using recognized preservation methods.
3. Deteriorated or missing roofing materials, elements, features (functional and decorative), details and ornamentation shall be replaced with material and elements which match the original in material, color, texture, size, shape, profile, configuration and detail of installation.
4. When replacement is necessary, it should be based on physical or documentary evidence.
5. If using the same material is not technically or economically feasible, then compatible substitute material may be considered.
6. Original or later contributing roofing materials, elements, features (functional and decorative), details and ornamentation shall not be sheathed or otherwise obscured by other materials.
7. Unpainted mill-finished aluminum shall not be allowed for flashing, gutters and downspouts. All replacement flashing and gutters should be copper or match the original material and design (integral gutters shall not be replaced with surface-mounted).
8. External gutters and downspouts should not be allowed unless it is based on physical or documentary evidence.

8.3.12 Roof Projections (includes satellite dishes, antennas and other communication devices, louvers, vents, chimneys, and chimney caps; also refer to Masonry, Wood, Architectural Metals, and Roofs)

1. New roof projections shall not be visible from the public way.
2. New mechanical equipment should be reviewed to confirm that it is no more visible than the existing.

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8.3.13 Additions

1. Additions can significantly alter the historic appearance of the buildings. An exterior addition should only be considered after it has been determined that the existing building cannot meet the new space requirements.
2. New additions shall be designed so that the character-defining features of the building are not radically changed, obscured, damaged or destroyed.
3. New additions should be designed so that they are compatible with the existing building, although they should not necessarily be imitative of an earlier style or period.
4. New additions shall not obscure the front of the building.
5. New additions shall be of a size, scale, and materials that are in harmony with the existing building.

8.3.14 Accessibility

1. Alterations to existing buildings for the purposes of providing accessibility shall provide persons with disabilities the level of physical access to historic properties that is required under applicable law, consistent with the preservation of each property's significant historical features, with the goal of providing the highest level of access with the lowest level of impact. Access modifications for persons with disabilities shall be designed and installed to least affect the character-defining features of the property. Modifications to some features may be allowed in providing access, once a review of options for the highest level of access has been completed.
2. A three-step approach is recommended to identify and implement accessibility modifications that will protect the integrity and historic character of the property:
 - a. Review the historical significance of the property and identify character-defining features;
 - b. Assess the property's existing and proposed level of accessibility;
 - c. Evaluate accessibility options within a preservation context.
3. Because of the complex nature of accessibility, the Commission will review proposals on a case-by-case basis. The Commission recommends consulting with the following document which is available from the Commission office: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Cultural Resources, Preservation Assistance Division; Preservation Brief 32 "Making Historic Properties Accessible" by Thomas C. Jester and Sharon C. Park, AIA.

8.3.15 Renewable Energy Sources

1. Renewable energy sources, including but not limited to solar energy, are encouraged for the site.

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2. Before proposing renewable energy sources, the building's performance shall be assessed and measures to correct any deficiencies shall be taken. The emphasis shall be on improvements that do not result in a loss of historic fabric. A report on this work shall be included in any proposal for renewable energy sources.
3. Proposals for new renewable energy sources shall be reviewed by the Commission on a case-by-case basis for potential physical and visual impacts on the building and site.
4. Refer to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation & Illustrated Guidelines on Sustainability for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings for general guidelines.

8.3.16 Building Site

1. The general intent is to preserve the existing or later contributing site and landscape features that enhance the property.
2. It is recognized that often the environment surrounding the property has character, scale and street pattern quite different from what existed when the building was constructed. Thus, changes must frequently be made to accommodate the new condition, and the landscape treatment can be seen as a transition between the historic property and its newer surroundings.
3. All original or later contributing features of the building site that are important in defining its overall historic character shall be retained and, if necessary, repaired using recognized preservation methods. This may include but is not limited to walls, fences, steps, walkways, paths, roads, vegetation, landforms, furnishings and fixtures, decorative elements, and water features. (See section 9.0 for subsurface features such as archaeological resources or burial grounds.)
4. Deteriorated or missing site features shall be replaced with material and elements which match the original in material, color, texture, size, shape, profile, configuration and detail of installation.
5. When replacement is necessary, it should be based on physical or documentary evidence.
6. If using the same material is not technically or economically feasible, then compatible substitute material may be considered.
7. The existing landforms of the site shall not be altered unless shown to be necessary for maintenance of the designated property's structure or site.
8. If there are areas where the terrain is to be altered, these areas shall be surveyed and documented to determine the potential impact to important landscape features.
9. The historic relationship between buildings and the landscape shall be retained. Grade levels should not be changed if it would alter the historic appearance of the building and its relation to the site.

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10. Buildings should not be relocated if it would diminish the historic character of the site.
11. When they are required by a new use, new site features (such as parking areas, driveways, or access ramps) should be as unobtrusive as possible, retain the historic relationship between the building or buildings and the landscape, and be compatible with the historic character of the property. Historic rock outcroppings like puddingstone should not be disturbed by the construction of new site features.
12. Original or later contributing layout and materials of the walks, steps, and paved areas shall be maintained. Consideration will be given to alterations if it can be shown that better site circulation is necessary and that the alterations will improve this without altering the integrity of the designated property.
13. When they are necessary for security, protective fencing, bollards, and stanchions should be as unobtrusive as possible.
14. Existing healthy plant materials which are in keeping with the historic character of the property shall be maintained. New plant materials should be appropriate to the character of the site.
15. Maintenance of, removal of, and additions to plant materials should consider restoration of views of the designated property.
16. The Boston Landmarks Commission encourages removal of non-historic fencing as documentary evidence indicates.
17. The Boston Landmarks Commission recognizes that the designated property must continue to meet city, state, and federal goals and requirements for resiliency and safety within an ever-changing coastal flood zone and environment.

8.3.17 Guidelines

The following are additional Guidelines for the treatment of the historic property:

1. Should any major restoration or construction activity be considered for a property, the Boston Landmarks Commission recommends that the proponents prepare a historic building conservation study and/or consult a materials conservator early in the planning process.
 - a. The Boston Landmarks Commission specifically recommends that any work on masonry, wood, metals, or windows be executed with the guidance of a professional building materials conservator.
2. Should any major restoration or construction activity be considered for a property's landscape, the Boston Landmarks Commission recommends that the proponents prepare a historic landscape report and/or consult a landscape historian early in the planning process.

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3. The Commission will consider whether later addition(s) and/or alteration(s) can, or should, be removed. Since it is not possible to provide one general guideline, the following factors will be considered in determining whether a later addition(s) and/or alteration(s) can, or should, be removed include:
 - a. Compatibility with the original property's integrity in scale, materials and character.
 - b. Historic association with the property.
 - c. Quality in the design and execution of the addition/alteration.
 - d. Functional usefulness.

8.4 List of Character-defining Features

Character-defining features are the significant observable and experiential aspects of a historic resource, whether a single building, landscape, or multi-property historic district, that define its architectural power and personality. These are the features that should be identified, retained, and preserved in any restoration or rehabilitation scheme in order to protect the resource's integrity.

Character-defining elements include, for example, the overall shape of a building and its materials, craftsmanship, decorative details and features, as well as the various aspects of its site and environment. They 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 historic resource. The items listed in this section should be considered important aspects of the historic resource and changes to them should be approved by commissioners only after careful consideration.

The character-defining features for this historic resource include:

1. Greek Revival architectural style.
2. Massing and roofline: The gable of the Keith House faces the street and reads like the pediment of a classical temple due to the eave returns and horizontal cornice, which emphasize its triangular shape. This is typical of the Greek Revival style, which was popular in the U.S. from 1825-1860.
3. The front porch is another element of Greek Revival style exemplified by the Keith House. The porch runs the width of the façade and originally featured four fluted Doric columns (the original left column is now missing and piece of unfinished lumber supports the porch roof), and a wide frieze.
4. Clapboard siding.
5. Full-length porch windows.
6. Stone retaining walls at east (façade) and west elevations.
7. Low-relief molded window surrounds.
8. End-bay entry with five-pane transom, full-length five-pane sidelights.

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9.0 ARCHAEOLOGY

All below-ground work within the property shall be reviewed by the Boston Landmarks Commission and City Archaeologist to determine if work may impact known or potential archaeological resources. An archaeological survey shall be conducted if archaeological sensitivity exists and if impacts to known or potential archaeological resources cannot be mitigated after consultation with the City Archaeologist. All archaeological mitigation (monitoring, survey, excavation, etc.) shall be conducted by a professional archaeologist. The professional archaeologist should meet the Secretary of the Interior's Professional Qualifications Standards for Archaeology.

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

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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.

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