



Office of the City Clerk

ALEX GEOURNTAS
City Clerk

March 6, 2023

TO THE CITY COUNCIL,

Submitted herewith for your consideration, please find the designation of The First Church in Roxbury, 160 Roxbury Street, Boston, MA, as a Landmark.

The foregoing designation was approved by the Boston Landmarks Commission on February 28, 2023 and having been presented to the Mayor was returned signed on March 6, 2023.

In accordance with the provisions of Chapter 772 of the Acts of 1975, as amended, if not acted upon within thirty days (April 5, 2023), the designation shall be deemed as if approved.

Alex Geourntas
City Clerk

cc Rosanne Foley, Executive Director
Boston Landmarks Commission

**VOTE OF DESIGNATION BY THE
BOSTON LANDMARKS COMMISSION**

PROPERTY: The First Church in Roxbury, 160 Roxbury Street, Roxbury (Boston), MA

STANDARDS AND CRITERIA TO BE APPLIED:

As described in the section entitled: "8.0 Standards and Criteria," included in the study report for the subject property.

APPROVED BY THE BOSTON LANDMARKS COMMISSION:

Date approved: **2/28/2023**

Attest:


(Secretary to the Commission)

PRESENTED TO THE MAYOR:

MAR 01 2023

(Date)

APPROVED BY THE MAYOR:

Date approved:

3/6/23

Signature:



(Mayor)

PRESENTED TO THE CITY COUNCIL:

MAR 15 2023

(Date)

APPROVED BY CITY COUNCIL:

Date approved: _____

Signature: _____

(City Clerk)

**VOTE OF DESIGNATION BY THE
BOSTON LANDMARKS COMMISSION**

PROPERTY: The First Church in Roxbury, 160 Roxbury Street, Roxbury (Boston), MA

VOTED: That on February 28, 2023, the Boston Landmarks Commission designates the First Church in Roxbury at 160 Roxbury Street as a Boston Landmark under Chapter 772 of the Acts of 1975, as amended.

VOTING IN FAVOR:

David Berarducci
John Freeman
Christopher Hart

Kirsten Hoffman
Felicia Jacques
Lindsey Mac Jones

Justine Orlando
Lynn Smiledge
Brad Walker

VOTING IN OPPOSITION:

None.

GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SITE:

The Meetinghouse building of the First Church in Roxbury is the oldest wood frame church in Boston. The Meetinghouse is a paragon of the Federal/Adamesque style in the Boston area and New England, displaying a monumental scale, sophisticated composition and detailing, and a remarkable, 100-foot high steeple. Its historic building fabric has been preserved to a remarkable degree; it is probably the most intact Federal church building in Boston. It is notable also for its extraordinarily spacious, hilltop site with a panoramic view of Boston. More modestly scaled, Putnam Chapel is a lively example of ecclesiastical architecture in the Eastlake style. The property's architectural and landscape features remain substantially intact, presenting a striking reminder of Roxbury's transformation from an agricultural community to a densely populated urban center, and the role of religious societies in the development of the Roxbury community. Today, the Unitarian Universalist Urban Ministry is an active and integral part of the community. The church campus hosts community events and is an important gathering place for the majority Black population in Roxbury.

GENERAL BOUNDARIES OF THE SITE:

The boundaries of the designated property are limited to the following address and parcel number: 160 Roxbury Street, Roxbury, parcel number 0903294000.



The Honorable Michelle Wu
Mayor of the City of Boston
Boston City Hall
Boston, MA 02201

March 1, 2023

RE: Petition #122.87 – The First Church in Roxbury

Dear Mayor Wu:

On February 28, 2023, the Boston Landmarks Commission unanimously voted to designate the First Church in Roxbury as a Landmark under the provisions of Chapter 772 of the Acts of 1975, as amended.

The historical significance of the First Church in Roxbury spans across centuries. Two archaeological surveys in 2003 and 2019 at the First Church in Roxbury have documented that multiple intact ancient Native Massachusetts sites exist on the First Church property. In the 17th and 18th centuries, when Roxbury was a largely agricultural area, parishioners included some of its most substantial farmers, as well as both enslaved and free people of African and Indigenous descent. As Boston's economy changed to manufacturing and trade in the early 19th century, the congregation was characterized by prominent merchants and professionals who built country estates. Today, the Unitarian Universalist Urban Ministry is an active and integral part of the community. The church campus hosts community events and is an important gathering place for the majority Black population in Roxbury.

The First Church in Roxbury is architecturally significant at the local and state levels as an outstanding example of ecclesiastical architecture in the early nineteenth century; for the visually stunning integrity of its architectural and landscape features; and for its associations with a nationally-renowned proponent of professional architectural design, Asher Benjamin.

The Boston Landmarks Commission asks that you give full consideration to the designation of the First Church in Roxbury as a Boston Landmark. Please don't hesitate to call me at (617) 635-2510 if you have any questions.

Best Regards,



Rosanne Foley
Executive Director
Boston Landmarks Commission



City of Boston
Historic Preservation



City of Boston
Mayor Michelle Wu

Alex Geourntas
City Clerk, City of Boston
Boston City Hall - Room 601
Boston, MA 02201

March 1, 2023

RE: Petition #122.87 – The First Church in Roxbury

Dear Mr. Geourntas,

On February 28, 2023, the Boston Landmarks Commission unanimously voted to designate the First Church in Roxbury as a Landmark under the provisions of Chapter 772 of the Acts of 1975, as amended.

According to the Landmarks Commission's statute, a designation approved by the Commission is presented to the Mayor for signing. If the Mayor disapproves the designation, they file the designation form with the City Clerk with objections noted in writing. If no mayoral action is taken on a designation, it is deemed approved by the Mayor after fifteen days.

The statute states that within thirty days following mayoral approval, the City Council can override a designation by a two-thirds vote. In the absence of City Council action, the designation is approved after the thirty-first day.

I appreciate your supervision of this approval process. Please call me at (617) 635-2510 if you have any questions.

Best Regards,



Rosanne Foley
Executive Director
Boston Landmarks Commission



Office of the City Clerk

ALEX GEOURNTAS
City Clerk

RECEIVED FROM THE CITY CLERK FOR PRESENTATION TO THE
MAYOR, VIZ:

Designation as a Landmark - Petition #122.87, The First Church in
Roxbury, 160 Roxbury Street, Boston, MA