



BOSTON CITY COUNCIL

Committee on Planning, Development, and Transportation
Sharon Durkan, Chair

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REPORT OF COMMITTEE CHAIR

April 6, 2026

Dear Councilors,

The Committee on Planning, Development, and Transportation was referred the following docket for consideration:

Docket #0630, Communication was received by the City Clerk from the Boston Landmarks Commission for City Council action on the designation of the Petition #228.07 - The Bussey House, 1203-1205 Adams Street, Dorchester, MA 02124 (in effect after April 22, 2026 if not acted upon).

This matter was sponsored by Mayor Michelle Wu, and was referred to the Committee on March 25, 2026.

Summary of Legislation

Docket #0630 authorizes the City Council to take action on the Landmark designation of Petition #228.07 - The Bussey House, 1203-1205 Adams Street, Dorchester, MA 02124.

As stated in Chapter 772 of the Acts of 1975: “Within thirty days of the mayor's approval of a designation, amendment or rescission of designation of a landmark, landmark district, architectural conservation district or protection area pursuant to this section, the city council may override such designation, amendment or rescission of designation of such landmark, landmark district, architectural conservation district or protection area by a two-thirds vote of the council. In the absence of such override or express approval thereof, any such designation, amendment or rescission of designation of any such landmark, landmark district, architectural conservation district or protection area shall be deemed approved by the council after the thirty-first day following such action by the mayor pursuant to this section.”

Information Received at Hearing

The Committee held a hearing on Friday, April 3, 2026 to discuss Docket #0630. The Committee heard testimony from panelists which included Elizabeth Sherva, Deputy Director of Historic Preservation, Office of Historic Preservation; and Jennifer Gaugler, Architectural Historian, Boston Landmarks Commission.

The panelists stated that The Bussey House is located in the historic Lower Mills area of Dorchester and was approved by the Boston Landmarks Commission on March 10, 2026. The house was constructed in 1792, making it one of Boston's 50 oldest surviving buildings (now ranked 46th by recent research). Captain John Bussey, second owner from 1795, was a Revolutionary War artillery officer and later a sea captain. The house remained in the Bussey family for about 95 years before being sold to the Walter Baker Chocolate Company in 1890. Between 1905-1909, the company added a Classical Revival storefront reading room for employees, architecturally significant in its own right. Subsequent owners included notable local entrepreneur Ethel Kiley, who ran a catering business there for 28 years, a notable example of a successful businesswoman operating despite historic financing barriers. Currently, the



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building is occupied by the BrightBridge Credit Union. It was threatened with demolition in 2007 but was preserved after community opposition and commitment by the then owner. The designation process is community-driven, reflecting strong local advocacy and historic preservation principles.

The Committee also heard public testimony from Molly Donahue of the Boston Preservation Alliance who spoke in favor of designating The Bussey House as a Landmark.

Committee Chair Recommended Action

As Chair of the Committee on Planning, Development, and Transportation, I recommend moving the listed docket from the Committee to the full Council for discussion and formal action. At this time, my recommendation to the full Council will be that this matter **OUGHT TO BE APPROVED**.

Sharon Durkan, Chair
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