



# Foundation Document Overview

## Boston National Historical Park

### Massachusetts



#### Contact Information

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## Purpose



Bunker Hill with Prescott Statue

*In partnership with others, BOSTON NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK preserves, protects, promotes, and interprets for the benefit and inspiration of all people, certain historic sites, structures, and artifacts of outstanding national significance located in Boston and associated with the American Revolution and the founding and growth of the United States.*

## Significance

Significance statements express why Boston National Historical Park resources and values are important enough to merit national park unit designation. Statements of significance describe why an area is important within a global, national, regional, and systemwide context. These statements are linked to the purpose of the park unit, and are supported by data, research, and consensus. Significance statements describe the distinctive nature of the park and inform management decisions, focusing efforts on preserving and protecting the most important resources and values of the park unit.

- At Faneuil Hall, the Paul Revere House, the Old North Church, the Old State House, the Old South Meeting House, Dorchester Heights, and Bunker Hill, key events associated with the outbreak of the American Revolution occurred and citizens and patriots first debated and struggled for the cause of American liberty. Collectively, these sites represent continuing struggles to define freedom and an American national identity.
- The oldest commissioned warship afloat in the world and one of the first ships authorized by Congress, USS *Constitution's* brilliant naval career established it as a symbol of American maritime strength.
- As one of the six original United States navy yards, the Charlestown Navy Yard symbolizes two centuries of the nation's commitment to defend the republic and assert American power and autonomy and is one of few surviving examples of a major historic maritime industrial site that is accessible to the visiting public.



Charlestown Navy Yard Pier 1 Aerial 1950

## Fundamental Resources and Values

Fundamental resources and values are those features, systems, processes, experiences, stories, scenes, sounds, smells, or other attributes determined to merit primary consideration during planning and management processes because they are essential to achieving the purpose of the park and maintaining its significance.

- **Park Partnership (value)**
- **Faneuil Hall, 1 Faneuil Hall Square, Boston**
- **Old North Church (complex), 193 Salem Street, Boston**
- **Old South Meeting House, 310 Washington Street, Boston**
- **Old State House, 206 Washington Street, Boston**
- **Paul Revere House (complex), 19 North Square, Boston**
- **Charlestown Navy Yard (Boston Naval Shipyard District), Charlestown**
- **USS *Constitution*, Charlestown Navy Yard, Charlestown**
- **USS Constitution Museum, Charlestown Navy Yard, Charlestown (value)**
- **Bunker Hill Monument, Monument Square, Charlestown**
- **Dorchester Heights Monument, Thomas Park, Boston**
- **Museum and Archival Collections (NPS, Partners)**
- **Archeological Resources**

Boston National Historical Park contains other resources and values that may not be fundamental to the purpose and significance of the park, but are important to consider in management and planning decisions. These are referred to as other important resources and values.

- **Bunker Hill Museum**
- **USS *Cassin Young***

## Interpretive Themes

Interpretive themes are often described as the key stories or concepts that visitors should understand after visiting a park—they define the most important ideas or concepts communicated to visitors about a park unit. Themes are derived from—and should reflect—park purpose, significance, resources, and values. The set of interpretive themes is complete when it provides the structure necessary for park staff to develop opportunities for visitors to explore and relate to all of the park significances and fundamental resources and values.

- **Battleground of Freedom (Freedom’s Hub and Downtown Boston)** – The role of diverse communities in the American Revolution proved to later generations that the price of citizenship is the commitment to take personal risk and participate in public life.
- **Gateway to Freedom (The North End)** – Since the first settlers arrived at Boston’s harbor in the early 1600s, the North End has served as a venue for both immigrants’ struggles and for its prominent role in a political feud that sparked a war for independence.
- **Defending Freedom (Charlestown)** – The sacrifice, ingenuity, courage, and commitment exhibited by both the civilian and military work force defended American ideals generated by the American Revolution.
- **Redefining Freedom (Beacon Hill)** – Boston’s free black community and its white allies led the city and the nation in the struggle against slavery and injustice, creating a movement that redefined freedom and civil rights.



Rainbow over Faneuil Hall

# Description

Boston National Historical Park (Massachusetts) is an association of sites that tell the story of Boston in the American Revolution and the founding and growth of an independent nation. The park was established by Congress in 1974 to include Bunker Hill, the Charlestown Navy Yard including USS *Constitution*, Faneuil Hall, Old North Church, Old South Meeting House, the Old State House, and the Paul Revere House. These sites are among the 16 sites that make up the Freedom Trail®, a 2.5-mile trail that winds through downtown Boston, the North End, and Charlestown.

In 1978, Congress expanded Boston National Historical Park to include Dorchester Heights in South Boston. The NPS boundary within the Charlestown Navy Yard expanded in 1980 to include three noncontiguous sites: the Ropewalk and Tar House, the Chain Forge, and the Round House. Per a loan agreement with the US Navy, USS *Cassin Young*, a Fletcher Class destroyer, is berthed at the Charlestown Navy Yard.

Within the Charlestown Navy Yard, Boston National Historical Park's boundary encompasses approximately 32 acres of a total of 130 acres—with a federal ownership interest of about 26 acres. The Ropewalk and the Chain Forge are owned by the City of Boston. The National Park Service also owns and operates the Bunker Hill and Dorchester Heights Monuments. Faneuil Hall is owned by the City of Boston. Boston National Historical Park maintains a visitor center and public education space within Faneuil Hall through a cooperative agreement with the city. The Bunker Hill Museum is in a city-owned building that is leased to the National Park Service. Under the lease, the National Park Service partners with the Charlestown Historical Society to provide space. The Old State House is also owned by the City of Boston but is operated and maintained by The Bostonian Society. The USS *Constitution* is owned and maintained by the US Navy and remains the nation's oldest commissioned warship.

The USS *Constitution* Museum is housed within NPS-owned buildings in the Charlestown Navy Yard, though privately operated under cooperative agreements with the National Park Service and the US Navy. The remaining sites are privately owned and operated, including Old North Church, Old South Meeting House, and the Paul Revere House. Boston National Historical Park operates through a series of cooperative agreements with these sites.

