



Historic Burying Grounds Preservation Attachments F-1 – F3 for Historic Resource Proposals

1. Analysis of Historic Significance

All three historic burying grounds have been placed on the National Register of Historic Places, the Federal government's official list of historic properties worthy of preservation. The sites possess integrity of location, design, materials, workmanship, feeling and association. They most certainly also have archaeological significance relating to unmarked graves and buried headstones.

Each site has a strong association with the history of Newton, particularly the early expansion of the community and the development of new neighborhoods. As some of the town's earliest surviving cultural resources, they have been constant elements around which the surround neighborhoods have developed.

The burial records, which have been carefully transcribed, archived, and posted to the internet, provide unusually thorough documentation regarding genealogy and the appearance of the burying grounds. Despite deterioration of headstones, footstones, monuments and tombs, the burying grounds evoke the past and provide a unique historical record of the early years of Newton.

2. Description of Historically Significant Features

Newton's historic burying grounds significance lies in the unique artwork etched on the stones and in the notable people buried there. The various types of burial markers display a range of styles that were popular during the 17th-19th centuries and clearly illustrate evolving funerary styles during these periods. These stones are skillfully carved with extensive decorative and architectural motifs ranging from death's heads to cherub stylized portraits to classical urns and willows. Many of them are signed by their makers and give evidence to work made by an impressive diversity of well-known carvers, many of whom are represented throughout the greater Boston area. Such carvers include: Alpheus Cary, and Newton artisans Ebenezer Howard and Daniel Hastings.

An inventory of East Parish, West Parish, and South Burying Grounds highlights burials from some of Newton's earliest and most important families as well as many Revolutionary War veterans. East Parish famously holds General William Hull, whose one time slave, Othello 'Tillo' Freeman, is said to be buried near him. General Michael Jackson, a member of George Washington's personal staff, and the horticulturalist William Kenrick can also be found at East Parish. West Parish is the final resting place of many members of the Fuller family, including Captain Nathan Fuller, who donated the land for the burying ground. Within South Burying Ground you will find Revolutionary War veterans including: General Ebenezer Cheney, Captain Thomas Pettee, and Captain



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Jeremiah Wiswall. Sadly, some of these veterans at South are interred within tombs in the worst condition amongst the three sites, a result of tree roots having caused wall faces to partially collapse.

3. Summary and Justification of Proposed Treatment

The tomb preservation work-plan and budget has been prepared with detailed input from a structural engineer and a stone structures conservation specialist, both of whom have worked on the restoration of underground and table top tombs similar in nature to those existing at East Parish, West Parish and South Burying Grounds. Structures North's survey report, *Newton's Historical Burying Grounds (2010)*, found many repetitive conditions amongst the three sites:

“Most of the above-grade mass masonry elements were found to be in an extreme case of disrepair, having suffered from the effects of water infiltration and freezing and thawing cycles that have filled mortar joints between the masonry units and caused structures to weaken and shift....Subsurface masonry vaults and foundations are usually materially in good condition beyond a certain distance from the ground surface, due mostly to the protective effects of the overlying soil...

Nearly all of the above grade exposed mass masonry construction has undergone mortar joint failure and needs to be dismantled and reconstructed. Typically we find that the subsurface masonry is in considerable better condition due to the protection that the covering grade provides.

Most of the mount tomb vaults have varying amounts of soil over them....it pushes down on the vaults and pushes outward on the fount walls and any walls that surround them (pg 6-7).”

Structures North, in collaboration with Building and Monument Conservation have created a comprehensive plan that both **restores** and reuses original historic materials while still ensuring reversibility, an essential component of historic **preservation**. In some instances, contractors will be forced to **rehabilitate** the most extremely deteriorated tombs, adding a certain amount of new materials including necessary extra bricks, stabilizing pins, and replacements for damaged tomb doors. Importantly, Structures North has prioritized the work-plan to first address any immediate safety concerns within the burying grounds.