

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC **Bunker Hill Monument**

AND/OR COMMON

**Bunker Hill Monument**

**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER **Breed's Hill (Monument Square)**

CITY, TOWN

**Boston (Charlestown)** VICINITY OF

\_\_NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT  
**Eighth**

STATE

**Massachusetts**

CODE

**025**

COUNTY

**Suffolk**

CODE

**025**

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

**CATEGORY**

- DISTRICT
- BUILDING(S)
- STRUCTURE
- SITE
- OBJECT

**OWNERSHIP**

- PUBLIC
- PRIVATE
- BOTH
- PUBLIC ACQUISITION**
- IN PROCESS
- BEING CONSIDERED

**STATUS**

- OCCUPIED
- UNOCCUPIED
- WORK IN PROGRESS
- ACCESSIBLE**
- YES: RESTRICTED
- YES: UNRESTRICTED
- NO

**PRESENT USE**

- AGRICULTURE
- MUSEUM
- COMMERCIAL
- PARK
- EDUCATIONAL
- PRIVATE RESIDENCE
- ENTERTAINMENT
- RELIGIOUS
- GOVERNMENT
- SCIENTIFIC
- INDUSTRIAL
- TRANSPORTATION
- MILITARY
- OTHER:

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

**Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Metropolitan District Commission**

STREET & NUMBER

**20 Somerset Street**

CITY, TOWN

**Boston**

VICINITY OF

**Massachusetts**

STATE

**3 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

**Suffolk County Registry of Deeds**

STREET & NUMBER

**Suffolk County Court House**

CITY, TOWN

**Boston**

STATE

**Massachusetts**

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

**none**

DATE

\_\_FEDERAL \_\_STATE \_\_COUNTY \_\_LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

# 7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

## DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Bunker Hill Monument and the remaining portion of the battlefield which it commemorates, now known as Monument Square, occupy slightly less than four acres atop Breed's Hill in the Charlestown district of Boston. Breed's Hill, the lower of the two hills on the Charlestown peninsula, is today primarily an urban residential area. When occupied by colonial militia on June 17, 1775, however, it was an area of open pasture and hay-fields dotted with apple trees.

The fortifications hastily excavated by the Americans in the early hours of that morning consisted of a redoubt about 44 yards square at the crest of the hill and a breastwork running some 100 yards from the redoubt to a point about midway down the northeastern slope of the hill (see site map attached). A rail fence on the same slope (running from a point north of the lower end of the breastwork down to the marsh along the Mystic River) was reinforced with posts and rails ripped from other fences and filled with freshly cut hay in an attempt to provide some cover for the men positioned there. Six field pieces lined the gap between the breastwork and the fence.

By the time construction of the Bunker Hill Monument began in 1825, nearly all traces of the American fortifications on Breed's Hill had disappeared. The position of the breastwork was still marked by a slight elevation of the ground but little evidence of the redoubt remained. Portions of a redoubt raised by the British after the Battle of Bunker Hill, in a location just west of the future Monument, were still easily distinguished, but these too disappeared in later work on the Monument grounds and in development of the surrounding area.

The Bunker Hill Monument, marking the approximate center of the American redoubt, was designed by Solomon Willard, who also supervised its construction. The cornerstone was laid on June 17, 1825, and work was completed seventeen years later in 1842. The structure, an undecorated obelisk of granite blocks—taken from the famous quarries at Quincy, Massachusetts—is 30 feet square at the base and rises to a height of 220 feet. From an entrance on the north, an iron spiral staircase leads to an observation platform at the top of the structure, served by a single opening on each of its faces.

The grounds of the monument assumed their present lines in the 1830's. The Bunker Hill Association had originally intended not only to erect the monument but to preserve all of the former battlefield as open ground, and had acquired some 25 acres on Breed's Hill for that purpose. However, because of financial difficulties, the group decided in 1834 to sell the major portion of its holdings. Slightly less than four acres were retained. The rest of the property was divided into houselots and sold under easements intended to protect the immediate setting of the Monument.

The ornamental iron fence which surrounds Monument Square is broken at the center of each of its four sides by a gate commemorating one of the American units that took part in the Battle of Bunker Hill (Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, and Col. Richard Gridley's engineers). Stone stairs lead up the hill from each gate to a gravel walkway which circles the crest and to the plaza at the base of

# 8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW				
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MILITARY *	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)	
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION			

\*War for Independence

SPECIFIC DATES 1775, 1825-42

BUILDER/ARCHITECT Solomon Willard

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Bunker Hill Monument, a 220-foot granite obelisk designed by Solomon Willard and erected in 1825-42, marks the approximate center of the redoubt occupied by the American forces in the Battle of Bunker Hill at Charlestown (now part of Boston), Massachusetts on June 17, 1775. Actually fought on Breed's Hill where the Monument is located, the battle was the first full-scale action between American militia and British regulars in the Revolutionary War. Although the Americans were driven from their position on the third assault, the heavy casualties which they inflicted convinced the British command that defeating the rebellious colonists would not be an easy task, and in later years the American defeat was translated into virtual victory by the folklore that grew out of the fight.

The Monument itself, erected by the Bunker Hill Monument Association, has considerable interest as an early example of historic monumentation; the most grandiose such enterprise of its day, it was not surpassed in size until the construction of the Washington National Monument four decades later. The Monument and Monument Square, the nearly four-acre park in which it stands, are now owned by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and administered by the Metropolitan District Commission.

## HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Within two months after the day of Lexington and Concord (April 19, 1775), Massachusetts, Connecticut, New Hampshire and Rhode Island had assembled over 15,000 troops in the neighbourhood of Boston to prevent the 5,000 or more British troops stationed there under Gen. Thomas Gage from making further sallies, and hopefully, when enough heavy artillery and ammunition had been collected, to drive them away. Gen. Artemas Ward, headquartered at Cambridge, was commander in chief of the Massachusetts troops and the senior New England officer.

Boston, then confined to a peninsula extending into Boston Bay from the south, was most vulnerable to artillery fire from two points. One was Dorchester Heights to the southeast. The other consisted of two high hills, Bunker's (110 feet) and Breed's (75 feet), to the northwest on the Charlestown peninsula, which jutted into the bay to within about a quarter-mile of Boston's north shore. As early as May 12 the Massachusetts committee of safety had recommended fortifying Bunker's Hill but nothing had come of the proposal. By the middle of June, hearing that Gage was about to occupy this hill (he was, in fact, planning first to occupy Dorchester Heights), the committee of safety and a council of war from among the higher officers of the besieging forces decided to forestall him.

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

- Alden, J.R. The American Revolution (New York, 1954).
- "Final Report of the Boston National Historic Sites Commission", June, 1960.
- Higginbotham, Don. The War of American Independence (New York, 1971).
- Willard, Solomon. Plans and Sections of the Obelisk on Bunker's Hill, with Experiments Made in Quarrying the Granite (Boston, 1843).

# 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 3.83 acres

UTM REFERENCES

A	19	330290	46193400	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C				D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION The boundaries of the National Historic Landmark designation for the Bunker Hill Monument are those of Monument Square (outlined within the circle on the accompanying U.S.G.S. map): beginning at the intersection of the southern curblineline of Bartlett Street and the western curblineline of Lexington Street; thence, southerly along said western curblineline to its intersection with the northern curblineline of High Street; thence, westerly along said northern curblineline to its intersection with the eastern curblineline of Pleasant Street; thence, northerly along said eastern (continued)

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

# 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME/TITLE Polly M. Rettig, Historian, Landmark Review Project; original form prepared by C.E. Shedd, Jr., Historian 8/1/60

ORGANIZATION	DATE
Historic Sites Survey, National Park Service	6/10/75
STREET & NUMBER	TELEPHONE
1100 L. Street, NW.	202-523-5464
CITY OR TOWN	STATE
Washington	D.C.

# 12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL \_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_ LOCAL \_\_\_

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665) I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE

(NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARKS)

TITLE

DATE

Designated: JAN 20, 1964  
 Boundary Certified: 4/13/78

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

2/13/78

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION ATTEST:

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER (NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARKS)

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the Monument. Along the walkway are low granite markers indicating the corners of the redoubt and the spot on which Gen. Joseph Warren was killed. On the plaza at the south side of the Monument is a statue (bronze on a granite base) of Col. William Prescott, commander of the American forces. Immediately to the north of the Monument (and now connected to it by a covered walkway--chain-link fencing over an iron frame) is a one-story Classical Revival building built in 1902, which serves as an interpretive center and meeting place; constructed of granite with a porticoed center pavilion (east facade), it is generally known as the Lodge, from its early use for meetings of a local group of the Masonic Order.

The Bunker Hill site was until recently in only fair condition. However, the Monument and its grounds are currently undergoing extensive rehabilitation in preparation for the celebration of the 200th anniversary of the Battle of Bunker Hill. Plans include steam cleaning and interior repair of the Monument and the Lodge, repair and repainting of the fence, repaving of portions of the stairs and the plaza, and necessary up-dating of electrical equipment.

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On the evening of June 16 about 800 Massachusetts and 200 Connecticut troops under the command of Col. William Prescott of Massachusetts were detached to carry out the project. Although Col. Prescott's orders from General Ward had designated Bunker's Hill as the position to be occupied fortifications were excavated on Breed's Hill, which though nearer Boston than Bunker's, was not only lower but could be more easily surrounded by the British.

Prescott and his men had completed a redoubt, about 44 yards square, on the top of Breed's hill by the time they were discovered by the British at daybreak of the 17th. Despite a cannonade by guns from British men-of-war in the harbour and from a battery on Copp's hill in north Boston, they were able further to strengthen their position during the morning by building a breastwork about 100 yd. long running northward down the slope of the hill toward the Mystic River.

On learning of the New Englanders' seizure of Breed's Hill, Gage sent over a detachment of 2,300 or more troops under Major General William Howe, with Brig. Gen. Robert Pigot, second in command, to dislodge or capture them. The British, landing without opposition under protection of British artillery fire, were divided into two wings, the left under Pigot to attack the redoubt from the south east, the right under Howe to get behind the fort and breastwork by marching northward along the bank of the Mystic.

Howe's advance was stopped by a deadly fire from a body of Connecticut, New Hampshire and Massachusetts troops, some detached by Prescott, others sent to the front when the British movement to attack became known. Posting themselves behind a rail fence hastily stuffed with grass, hay and brush, they pluckily held their fire until the British were very near. Pigot, too, was at first checked by a heavy fire from the redoubt and forced the surviving defenders, many of whom had exhausted their ammunition and were without bayonets, to flee. Their retreat was covered by the men at the fence, who now also retreated, and by New England reinforcements, spurred to the front by Gen. Israel Putnam of Connecticut.

The casualties, particularly the British, were extremely heavy in proportion to the number of troops engaged. The Americans lost about 450 killed, wounded and captured, the British 1054 killed and wounded, including 89 officers. Among the Americans who were killed was General Joseph Warren of Massachusetts who had entered the redoubt as a volunteer. Although the battle, (traditionally known as the Battle of Bunker Hill despite its actual location) was a tactical victory for the British, it was a strategic and moral one for the Americans, proving that the raw colonial army could meet trained troops on an equal basis. If the British had followed their taking of the Charlestown peninsula with the seizure of Dorchester Heights, their victory at Bunker Hill might have been worth its

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cost; instead, the Heights were left undefended. Thus, when Gen. Washington had gathered enough heavy guns and ammunition, he was able, in March, 1776, to seize and fortify Dorchester Heights without opposition and compel the British to evacuate Boston.

The Bunker Hill Monument was erected by the Bunker Hill Monument Association on the approximate center of the American redoubt on Breed's Hill. Its cornerstone was laid by Gen. Lafayette in ceremonies on the fiftieth anniversary of the battle, June 17, 1825. The 200-foot granite obelisk, the most ambitious commemorative structure of its day, was designed by Solomon Willard who also supervised its construction. In the course of his work, not completed until 1842, Willard invented a number of machines through which he achieved an efficiency previously unknown in the quarrying and handling of large pieces of stone. The granite from which the Monument was constructed was taken from the famous quarries at Quincy, Massachusetts. Moved by horse-drawn railway cars from the quarry to a wharf on the Neponset River, the stone was then carried to Boston by water.

The Bunker Hill Monument Association, organized in 1823, had originally intended not only to erect the present monument but to preserve the whole of the battlefield as open ground, and by 1825 had purchased some 25 acres on Breed's Hill for that purpose. However, the Association ran into serious financial difficulties not many years after the cornerstone of the Monument was laid and in 1834 voted to sell the greater part of the land, retaining just under four acres around the monument, now the park known as Monument Square. Proceeds of the sale were applied to the construction costs of the Monument. The Association deeded the Monument and the remaining portion of the battlefield to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in 1919 but continues to act in an advisory capacity to the Metropolitan District Commission which administers the site. The public may visit the Monument from 9:00 to 3:30 daily (except Christmas Day and New Year's Day).

Note: paragraphs 1-8 of historical background were taken from "Bunker Hill", Encyclopedia Britannica, with only slight revision.

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VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION (CONTINUED)

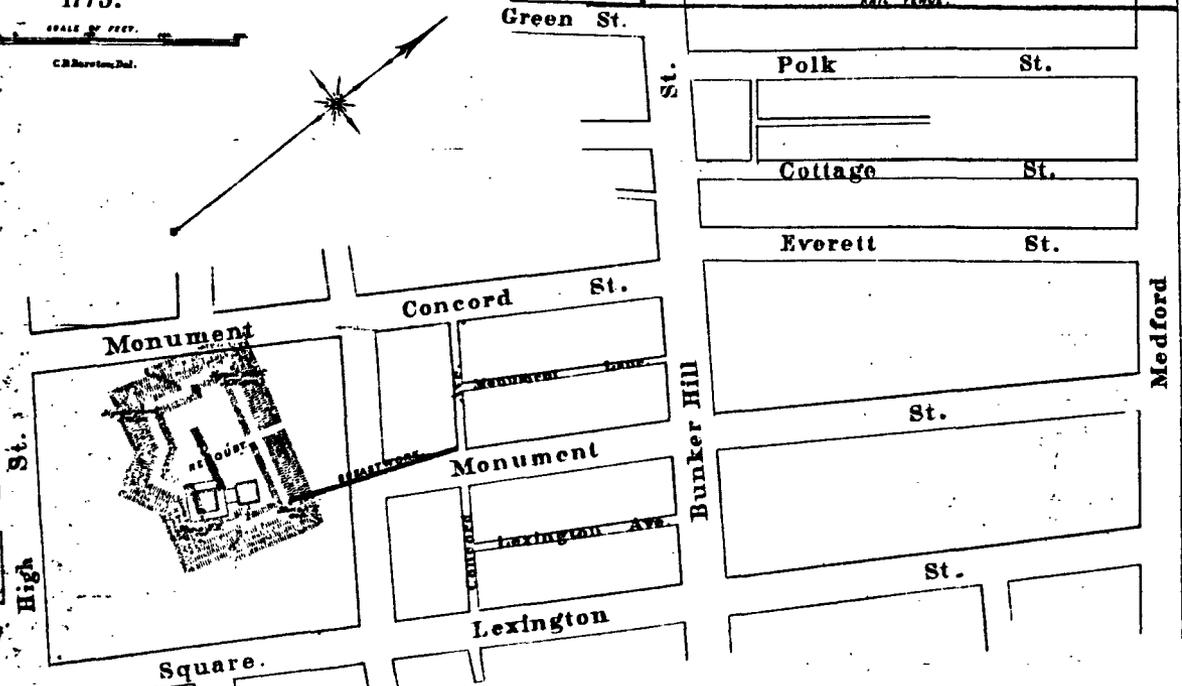
curbline to its intersection with the southern curbline of Bartlett Street; thence, easterly along said southern curbline to the point of beginning.

PLAN SHOWING THE  
REDOUBT, BREASTWORK & RAIL-FENCE &  
GRASS-PROTECTION  
of the AMERICANS, on the  
SEVENTEENTH OF JUNE,

1775.

SCALE IN FEET.

C.B. Barrett, Del.



Boston, May 12<sup>th</sup>, 1876.  
 Hon. Richard Washington, President of Bunker Hill Monument Association.  
 I have carefully examined the copy of the plan of Charleston, made from  
 actual surveys by Capt. Maitland, comparing it with the plans made by Adams & Parker, in 1840,  
 by order of the City Council of Charleston, - and find with a degree of approximation to correspondence  
 the top, as to work we judge it proper to annex the former as a base for laying down the location of the  
 defensive works constructed by the American troops on the sixteenth and seventeenth of June 1775.  
 I have accordingly annexed the lines to be run out and marked upon the ground, following the delineation  
 of the redoubt, the breastwork and the rail-fence by lines of ground.

R. W. Davis

MYSTIC RIVER