

Cambridge Advisory Committee on City Art, Monuments and Markers

Proposed Working Definition of “Shameful Acts”

For the purposes of this committee, a “shameful act” shall be defined as:

“An act in which an individual was:

1. Directly engaged in, profited from, or was principally known for their role in the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade or enslavement; or
 2. Directly participated in the theft of land or genocide of Indigenous People; or
 3. Engaged in work or efforts that promoted white supremacy and/or a hierarchy of human value based on race, gender, or other aspects of human identity.”
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Proposed Guiding Principles Based on New York City’s Mayoral Advisory Commission on City Art, Monuments and Markers

1. **Reckoning with power to represent history in public**
recognizing that the ability to represent histories in public is powerful; reckoning with inequity and injustice while looking to a just future.
2. **Historical understanding**
respect for and commitment to in-depth and nuanced histories, acknowledging multiple perspectives, including histories that previously have not been privileged.
3. **Inclusion**
creating conditions for all New Yorkers to feel welcome in New York City’s public spaces and to have a voice in the public processes by which monuments and markers are included in such spaces.
4. **Complexity**
acknowledging layered and evolving narratives represented in New York City’s public spaces, with preference for additive, relational, and intersectional approaches over subtractive ones. Monuments and markers have multiple meanings that are difficult to unravel, and it is often impossible to agree on a single meaning.
5. **Justice**
recognizing the erasure embedded in the City’s collection of monuments and markers; addressing histories of dispossession, enslavement, and discrimination not adequately represented in the current public landscape; and actualizing equity.

