

**Cambridge Advisory Committee on City Art, Monuments and Markers**  
**Meeting #5**  
**Wednesday, May 5, 2021**  
**6:00-8:00**

**Participant Agenda**

**Materials in Advance**

- Guiding Principles
- Criteria
- Possible actions for remediations

**Question to Consider in Advance of the Meeting:**

This committee has now spent several months establishing a new set of criteria by which the City can review its monuments, markers, and memorials. As a final exercise, we are interested in holding a group discussion in which we apply these new criteria to one or two of the City's existing monuments, markers, or memorials. The intent is not to seek out new issues of concern, but to determine how these future discussions (using the new criteria we've established) may work.

To that end, is there an existing monument, marker, or memorial you would like for this committee to use as a 'test scenario' for our final group exercise?"

**Desired Outcome:** Identity possible criteria and principles for future recognitions

**Agenda**

- **Opening**
  - Review Guiding Principles, Criteria and Possible Actions
  - Go-around: Something that resonates with you from the things that we have developed
- **Future Recognitions**
  - If your job were to determine new monuments, markers, or City art to be created or backed by the City, what kinds of people, events or communities do you think should be recognized in the future?
  - What might be criteria or principles that might guide decisions about future City Art, Monuments and Markers?
- **BREAK**
- **Next Meeting: Examining an Object**
  - Is there an existing monument, marker, or memorial you would like for this committee to use as a 'test scenario' for our final group exercise?"
- **Next Steps and Closing**

# Materials for the May 5, 2021 Meeting of the Cambridge Advisory Committee on City Art, Monuments, & Markers

Each section below is based on the 2018 Mayoral Advisory Commission on City Art, Monuments, and Markers Report to the City of New York and modified based on feedback from the Cambridge Advisory Committee on City Art, Monuments, & Markers.

## Definition of Shameful Acts

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For the purposes of this committee, a “shameful act” shall be defined as “An act in which an individual continues to be and/or was:

1. Directly engaged in, profited from, and/or was principally known for their role supporting the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade or enslavement;
2. Directly participated in the theft of land and/or genocide of Indigenous People;
3. Engaged in work and/or efforts that promoted the violence of white supremacy and/or a hierarchy of human value based on race, gender, and/or other aspects of human identity, including categories in the City’s non-discrimination ordinance.

## Guiding Principles

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### **Reckoning with power to represent values in public**

*recognizing that the ability to represent values in public is powerful; reckoning with deeply rooted inequities and injustices in Cambridge while looking to a just future.*

### **Historical understanding**

*respect for and commitment to in-depth and nuanced histories acknowledging multiple perspectives, including the narratives of people who have been actively marginalized.*

### **Inclusion**

*creating conditions for all people to feel welcome in Cambridge’s public spaces and enable inclusive public processes by which City art, monuments, and markers are included in such spaces.*

### **Complexity**

*acknowledging layered and evolving narratives represented in Cambridge’s public spaces, with preference for additive, relational, and intersectional approaches over subtractive ones. City art, monuments, and markers have multiple meanings that are difficult to unravel, and it is often impossible to agree on a single meaning.*

### **Justice**

*recognizing the erasure embedded in Cambridge’s collection of City art, monuments, and markers; addressing histories of dispossession, enslavement, and discrimination not adequately represented in the current public landscape; and actualizing equity.*

## Criteria

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The City creates in-person and virtual public facing programs actively inviting people to engage with public art, monuments, and markers across Cambridge.

Meeting one or more of these criteria:

1. Community led public reaction that supports a just City, prioritizing anti-racism, equity, diversity and inclusion<sup>1</sup>
2. Significant community opposition (as part of larger cultural/political concerns)
3. Recommendation from multiple local community members, particularly centering the voices of women, people of color, and people from other historically marginalized communities<sup>2</sup>
4. Egregious historical oversights, and/or revelation of new, significant information about the public art, monument, or marker and what or whom it represents<sup>3</sup>

## Possible Actions/Remediations

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The City of Cambridge takes reviewing City-owned objects extremely seriously, particularly focusing on those which may be viewed as inconsistent with the values of Cambridge, by which we mean a just City that prioritizes anti-racism, equity, diversity and inclusion.<sup>4</sup> The City of Cambridge recognizes that removal of an object is a serious response and will only choose to remove an object after a thorough, transparent deliberation process that centers women, people of color, and those from other historically marginalized communities.

1. No Action is Deemed Necessary—Existing public art, monument, or marker remains in place without intervention.
2. Re-Contextualization—Provide new or additional context by any means including: installing site-specific plaques or signage, updating historical information, disclaiming endorsement of the acts of historic figures, or providing information through a publicly accessible online database that offers translation services.
3. Relocation—Relocate to another City-owned public site. Alternatives include relocation or long-term loan to cultural organizations, museums, or relevant historical, cultural, or educational settings.
4. New Temporary or Permanent Works—Commission new artworks in any medium including sculpture, performance, and socially engaged art in order to foster public dialogue on polarizing historical moments and to amplify additional or excluded voices and underrepresented histories.
5. Removal—remove offending, controversial, or outdated works from outdoor or indoor displays on public property.

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<sup>1</sup> Charge of the Committee on City Art, Monuments and Markers. City of Cambridge. Accessed March 2021. <https://www.cambridgema.gov/Departments/citymanagersoffice/monumentsadvisorycommittee>

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Mayoral Advisory Commission on City Art, Monuments, and Markers. Report to the City of New York. January 2018. Accessed March 2021. <https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/monuments/downloads/pdf/mac-monuments-report.pdf>.

<sup>4</sup> Charge of the Committee on City Art, Monuments and Markers. City of Cambridge. Accessed March 2021. <https://www.cambridgema.gov/Departments/citymanagersoffice/monumentsadvisorycommittee>.