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Secretary of the Commonwealth

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**PLAINFIELD CENTER HISTORIC DISTRICT APPROVED FOR NOMINATION TO THE
NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES**

Secretary of the Commonwealth William F. Galvin is pleased to announce that the Massachusetts Historical Commission approved the Plainfield Center Historic District for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places at its March meeting. The nomination has been submitted to the National Register of Historic Places at the National Park Service in Washington, DC, for final consideration and designation.

“The Massachusetts Historical Commission is dedicated to preserving the Commonwealth’s rich historic, architectural, archaeological, and cultural resources,” Secretary Galvin said. “Inclusion of the Plainfield Center Historic District in the National Register will help to preserve an intact example of a rural town center that experienced most of its growth in the first half of the 19th century.”

Covering about 730 acres, the Plainfield Center Historic District contains 67 historic buildings in a range of architectural styles, including Federal, Greek Revival, Colonial Revival, Bungalow, and Postwar Traditional Ranch. At the core of the district stand the Congregational Church (1846) and Plainfield Town Hall (1847), facing south on adjacent lots. Captain John Cook constructed both Greek Revival-style buildings.

The Congregational Church stands on the site of the town’s first meetinghouse, which had been constructed in 1797. The Colonial Revival-style Hallock Memorial School, built in 1925, was named for the town’s first minister, Moses Hallock, whose own house had stood on the site until it burned in 1916. The former school now houses town offices and the town library, named for Dr. Samuel Shaw.

Dr. Shaw's circa 1833 house is also in the district and retains his attached office, preserved by his descendants as an illustration of American medical practices in the 19th century. Today, the Congregational Church owns the house, and the Plainfield Historical Society maintains the interior and the collections. The oldest house in the district, a good example of a full Cape, was built by Lt. Ebenezer Colson circa 1783. In addition to the well-preserved collection of historic buildings, the district encompasses several of the town's places of burial, including the circa 1792 Old Burying Ground and the circa 1810 Hilltop Cemetery.

By listing the district in the National Register, the town hopes to encourage historic preservation by building community pride and raising awareness of the area's historical significance.

The Plainfield Center Historic District is one of 7 historic resources around the Commonwealth approved for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places by the Massachusetts Historical Commission at this meeting.

Secretary Galvin serves as Chairman of the 17-member board, which meets regularly and considers historic resources eligible for the National Register four times a year.

The National Register is the nation's official listing of significant historic resources. In Massachusetts, there are more than 70,000 properties listed in the National Register. The Massachusetts Historical Commission has been administering the National Register of Historic Places program in Massachusetts since 1966.

The Massachusetts Historical Commission is the office of the State Historic Preservation Officer and the State Archaeologist. It was established in 1963 to identify, evaluate, and protect important historical and archaeological assets of the Commonwealth. Visit our website to learn more about the Commission's programs (www.sec.state.ma.us/mhc).

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