



NEWS

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BRAYTON HOMESTEAD IN SOMERSET APPROVED FOR NOMINATION TO THE NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

Secretary of the Commonwealth William F. Galvin has announced that the Massachusetts Historical Commission approved the Brayton Homestead in Somerset for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places. The nomination will now be submitted to the National Register of Historic Places at the National Park Service 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. “The Brayton Homestead is a remarkably intact Georgian house in Somerset. The National Register recognizes its architectural and historical significance to the town of Somerset.”

The building is one of five historic resources around the Commonwealth approved for nomination to the National Register by the Massachusetts Historical Commission at this meeting. Secretary Galvin serves as Chair of the 17-member board, which meets regularly and considers historic resources eligible for the National Register four times a year.

The Brayton Homestead, now surrounded by 20th-century residential neighborhoods, was originally the center of a large agricultural estate settled by a man named Preserved Brayton in the early 18th century. The current house, built by John Brayton, is believed to date to about 1796. It is a remarkable, intact example of high-style late Georgian architecture, with fine woodwork visible inside and out. One of three buildings in Somerset documented by the Historic American Buildings Survey in the 1930s, it is the only one of the three that retains historic integrity, one of the others having been demolished and the second substantially altered.

The property was home to the large, extended Brayton family for six generations, including later members David and John Brayton and nephew B.M.C. Durfee. Together, in 1865, they established the Durfee Cotton Mills in neighboring Fall River, which grew



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to be that city's largest corporation. The Brayton family owned the family homestead in Somerset until 1946.

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. More information about the Commission's programs may be found on Galvin's website, www.sec.state.ma.us/mhc.

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