



William Francis Galvin
Secretary of the Commonwealth

Contact: Brian McNiff
Telephone: 617-727-9180

March 18, 2011

DANIEL SAUNDERS SCHOOL, LAWRENCE, APPROVED FOR NOMINATION TO THE NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

Secretary of the Commonwealth William Francis Galvin is pleased to announce that the Massachusetts Historical Commission approved the Daniel Saunders School in Lawrence for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places at its March 9, 2011, meeting. The nomination will be 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 architectural, cultural, archaeological, and historic resources,” Secretary Galvin said. “Inclusion of the Saunders School in the National Register will help to protect this feature of Lawrence’s educational and social history.”

The Saunders School, 243 South Broadway, is a two-story, Classical Revival-style brick building erected in 1931. Lawrence native and resident architect M. Joseph G. Morissette designed the school, which is his only documented secular construction discovered to date. A fire had destroyed an earlier school building on the same site; rebuilding in 1931 provided the city an opportunity to construct a modern, fireproof school. The new facility was also substantially larger than its predecessor, allowing it to better serve Lawrence’s quickly expanding population. The present school and its predecessor were named for Daniel Saunders, a key figure in the founding of Lawrence and the town’s first treasurer. The school was in operation for more than 75 years, and its history reflects the drastic fluctuations in Lawrence’s population as the city experienced an industrial boom, the Great Depression, World War II, and economic collapse caused by the closure of mills in the mid-20th century. The building’s exterior is in good condition, and the interior retains its original plan as well as some historic doors, built-ins, and a fireplace. The school officially closed in 2006. In 2009, the city sold the building to Peabody Properties, which is converting it into sixteen affordable, supportive-housing units for homeless families, the first facility of its kind in Massachusetts.

The Daniel Saunders School 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 over 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).

-End-

State House, Room 337, Boston, Massachusetts 02133