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Secretary of the Commonwealth

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DORCHESTER PARK, BOSTON, 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 Dorchester Park in Boston for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places at its December 12, 2007 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 this property on the National Register will help protect our heritage for generations to come.”

Dorchester Park is a 28-acre neighborhood park located in the Lower Mills section of Dorchester, a modest working class area that has traditionally included many immigrants. Lower Mills was the center of early industrial activity along the Neponset River. The park is adjacent to Carney Hospital and across from St. Gregory Church. It was established in 1891 as part of the Boston Park system designed by the Olmsted firm. It is a naturalistic neighborhood park intended to be refuge from the rapidly growing city thus carrying out the philosophy of Frederick Law Olmsted who designed Central Park in New York. The park, which integrates principles of park design with early ideas of land conservation, has many features that still reflect the original design intent, notably the perimeter walls along Dorchester Avenue and Adams Street, and the curvilinear path system. The predominant character of the park is that of a natural forest interspersed with clearings. Much of the park is wooded with mature oak trees and a natural upland forest understory. While the character of the park is largely natural, it has been subtly enhanced to make the area easily accessible to the public. Curvilinear paths carry visitors through the space, creating what Olmsted called “passages of scenery.” The well-preserved municipal park retains strong historical associations and distinctive landscape features dating from the late 19th century to the present. In addition, the 1734 mile marker embedded in the Adams Street wall is a rare surviving feature associated with the early history of Dorchester. Dorchester Park is one of the best preserved of Boston’s large 19th century neighborhood parks, and one of the few to retain its essential natural character.

Dorchester Park is one of 6 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.

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The National Register is the nation's official listing of significant historic resources. In Massachusetts, there are over 65,000 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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