



William Francis Galvin
Secretary of the Commonwealth

Contact: Brian McNiff
Telephone: 617-727-9180

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**BOSTON FISH PIER 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 Boston Fish Pier, in the South Boston neighborhood of Boston, Massachusetts, for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places at a recent 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 historic, architectural, archaeological, and cultural resources,” Secretary Galvin said. “Inclusion of the Boston Fish Pier in the National Register will help to raise awareness of the importance of this remarkable complex to the history of Boston, New England, and the nation.”

Boston, and New England, had long been heavily involved with the fishing industry, but entering the 20th century, the crowded downtown wharves had become increasingly outdated and unsanitary. The New England Fish Exchange, a cooperative of fishermen and fish dealers, looked for a larger nearby location to consolidate the unloading, processing, marketing, and shipping of the daily catch, and found a suitable site on the South Boston flats off of Northern Avenue.

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The Fish Pier was the first national distribution center of fresh fish in the U.S. and was considered the most advanced facility for handling fresh fish at the time of its construction, 1910-1914. Boats could tie up at the pier's receiving stations, unload their cargo, and auction the catch on site. Railroad tracks were constructed to facilitate transporting the fish to markets throughout the Northeast. In short, the Fish Pier was a centralized marketing and processing point that boosted Boston's fishing industry to become the nation's leading port by 1920, and by 1936 nearly 350 million pounds of fish were unloaded annually.

The Fish Pier today is comprised of three buildings built on top of a granite wharf; all built between 1910 and 1914 and designed in the Classical Revival style by Boston architect Henry Keyes. They include the central Fish Exchange building, located at the head of the pier, which was the site of the daily fish auction, and two nearly identical buildings to the east and west, which were occupied by wholesalers and fish processors. A cold storage building that also stood on the pier was destroyed by fire in 1968. The Fish Exchange building is ornamented with carvings of various forms of sea life, as well as the head of Poseidon, the Greek god of the sea.

The fishing industry declined steadily after its mid-1930s peak, landing only 22 million pounds by the 1970s. With fewer vessels bringing in their catch, plans were considered for a redevelopment that would diminish the fishing industry's presence on the pier. However, an increase in the catch after the passage of the federal Fishery Conservation and Management Act in 1976 spurred Massport, the pier's owner, to undertake instead a comprehensive rehabilitation for continued use by local fishermen. At the same time, they changed the Fish Exchange building to become the Exchange Conference Center, a multipurpose function facility.

The Boston Fish Pier is one of five 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 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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