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Secretary of the Commonwealth

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ALMONT APARTMENTS, BOSTON, 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 Almont Apartments in Boston (Mattapan) for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places at its June 11 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 Almont Apartments in the National Register will help to preserve buildings that are significant for their association with the growth of the Jewish community in this area of Boston during the first half of the 20th century.”

The Almont Apartments property encompasses a pair of three-story, yellow-brick buildings at 1439-1443 and 1447-1451 Blue Hill Avenue, constructed together in 1926 to serve the growing population of working-class Jews in the Mattapan neighborhood of Boston. The buildings each have U-shaped footprints, resulting in shallow courtyards between them. While not identical, both buildings are Colonial Revival in style and were designed by prolific local architect and Dorchester resident Saul E. Moffie.

Moffie was born in the Boston neighborhood of Jamaica Plain in 1897 to Jewish, first-generation immigrant parents; with his family, he followed the pattern of Jewish movement around Boston, living in Jamaica Plain, Chelsea, the North End, and Dorchester, all before he turned twenty years old.

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State House, Room 337, Boston, Massachusetts 02133

The Almont Realty Company, organized by a group of local businessmen to develop the apartments, was one of many Jewish real estate entities that developed much of the housing and Jewish institutional buildings along Blue Hill Avenue. By the late 1920s and 1930s, the Jewish community in Roxbury, Mattapan, and Dorchester had reached a population of 77,000—approximately half of the entire Jewish population in Boston, and ten percent of Boston’s total population.

During the late 1960s and 1970s, a large percentage of the Jewish population in the area dispersed, moving to the western edges of the city in Brighton, Brookline, and Newton. The Almont Apartments continued in their intended use as multifamily housing, providing residences for a growing population of working-class African Americans and immigrants. The buildings recently underwent rehabilitation assisted by state and federal historic tax credits. Today, each building contains twenty-four affordable apartments in a combination of one- and two-bedroom units. The buildings’ first-floor corridors retain their historic, paneled-wood wainscoting and many of their original marble baseboards. All apartments retain their historic wood door surrounds.

The Almont Apartments property 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.

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).

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