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Secretary of the Commonwealth

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**CENTRE AND MONTELLO STREETS HISTORIC DISTRICT, BROCKTON, 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 Centre and Montello Streets Historic District in Brockton for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places at its March meeting. The nomination has been 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 Centre and Montello Streets Historic District in the National Register will help to preserve a collection of buildings that reflect Brockton’s past history as the country’s largest shoe-manufacturing city.”

The Centre and Montello Streets Historic District is an L-shaped area consisting of six buildings on the south side of Centre Street, and one industrial complex on the east side of Montello Street, at the southern edge of downtown Brockton. The group of well-preserved Romanesque Revival, Italianate, and Commercial-style buildings comprises all that remains in this section of Brockton of what had once been fully developed urban blocks. The district represents the commercial growth of downtown Brockton during a period of great prosperity and the expansion of the city’s shoe industry.

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By 1880, the city had between 70 and 80 shoe factories, as well as numerous businesses supporting the industry. The district's earliest building is the four-story, red-brick Lilly, Brackett & Company shoe factory, constructed in 1880. Lilly, Brackett & Company, manufacturers of fine men's shoes, operated at this site until 1902. George Knight & Company purchased the building in 1908, manufacturing machinery for the shoe industry here until 2004. W.B. Mason currently owns and operates three of the district's historic office and retail buildings—the five-story Smith Building (ca. 1899), five-story Bay State Block (1887), and two-story Howard-Tolman Building (1909)—as its headquarters.

Also included in the district is the Anglim Building, constructed in 1906 and known as Brockton's first skyscraper. Prominent Boston-based architect J. Williams Beal designed the eight-story, Renaissance Revival-style building. The first three floors originally housed the United Shoe Machinery Corporation, and the upper floors leased out to various companies including printers, shoe-pattern designers, and shoe-material manufacturers.

Over time, many historic buildings near Center Street were lost to fire and abandonment. Those that remain survived because they stayed occupied despite the decline of Brockton's shoe industry in the mid-20th century. The recent rehabilitation of the W.B. Mason buildings for continued use as the company's headquarters, and the rehabilitation and adaptive reuse of the Lilly, Brackett & Company Building for rental apartment units, both contribute to the ongoing revitalization of Brockton's downtown area, and both projects utilized state and federal historic rehabilitation tax credits.

The Centre and Montello Streets Historic District 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.

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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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