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Secretary of the Commonwealth

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**OLD BEDFORD CENTER HISTORIC DISTRICT TECHNICAL AMENDMENT AND BOUNDARY  
CHANGE 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 Old Bedford Center Historic District Technical Amendment and Boundary Change for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places at its December 11, 2013, 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. “This amendment to the Old Bedford Center National Register District will help to preserve 242 historically significant resources on about 75 acres at the town center.”

The amended Old Bedford Center Historic District encompasses Bedford’s historic center and its institutional, residential, and commercial core. Listed in the National Register in 1977, the district originally covered 56.15 acres and contained 81 contributing historic resources. The 2013 amendment provides new or revised narrative descriptions for resources that contributed to the original district, identifies resources present in 1977 that were not noted in the original nomination, and records changes since 1977 in street addresses and changes in the district’s appearance due to building deterioration, removal, or parcel subdivision.

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By extending the period of significance to 1963, a number of resources—previously noncontributing due to their post-1927 dates of construction—have been reclassified as contributing to the historical significance of the district. Although the boundary adjustment removes five parcels at the edges of the 1977 historic district due to redevelopment, it also adds approximately 20 acres and 43 parcels containing significant historic resources.

The amended Old Bedford Center Historic District is striking for its high degree of architectural integrity, displaying residential, commercial, ecclesiastic, and government buildings in a full range of styles from the early 18<sup>th</sup> century through the early 1960s, including Colonial, Georgian, Federal, Greek Revival, Queen Anne, Italianate, Second Empire, Victorian Eclectic, Georgian Revival, Colonial Revival, and Postwar traditional styles.

The district also encompasses a number of town-owned historic open spaces, including the Old Burying Ground (1729), the town's first burying ground; the Town Common (early 18<sup>th</sup> century); and the former Billerica & Bedford Railroad right-of-way (1877), which has been preserved as a pedestrian and bicycle trail. The Old Burying Ground contains an estimated 1,400 burials dating between 1731 and 1894. Two boulder monuments commemorate the Revolutionary War service of Bedford residents, including the African Reservation Monument, which was unveiled in 1896 to commemorate Cambridge Moore, Caesar Prescott, and Caesar Jones, former slaves who served in the Continental Army. The boulder marks the so-called African Reservation, set aside ca. 1800 for burials of people of color and containing at least a dozen unmarked graves.

The town completed a master plan for the Old Burying Ground in 2005, and has received two Massachusetts Preservation Project Fund (MPPF) grants for conservation and repair work in the cemetery. Since Bedford's adoption of the Community Preservation Act in 2001, Town Meeting has appropriated funding sixteen times for historic preservation projects within this National Register district.

The Old Bedford Center Historic District Technical Amendment and Boundary Change is one of 10 historic resources around the Commonwealth approved for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places by the Massachusetts Historical Commission at this meeting.

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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](http://www.sec.state.ma.us/mhc)).

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