



William Francis Galvin
Secretary of the Commonwealth

Contact: Brian McNiff

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Telephone: 617-727-9180

**ROSLINDALE SUBSTATION, 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 the Roslindale Substation in Boston for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places at its June 12, 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. “Inclusion of the Roslindale Substation in the National Register will help to preserve one of the last surviving remnants of the Boston Elevated Railway Company’s innovative early 20th-century electrical system.”

The Roslindale Substation, 4228 Washington Street, faces Adams Park in the heart of Roslindale Village. The substation was built as a part of the Boston Elevated Railway Company’s project to overhaul the means of power generation for their public transit system. In 1908, the company, which had leased the complete West End Street Railway and continued to expand public transit service, contracted Stone & Webster Engineers to study the power needs of the entire system. Stone & Webster recommended that the company consolidate power generation by constructing one alternating current-generating power station in South Boston, with underground cables distributing the electricity to power-converting substations.

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The advantages of alternating current (AC) over direct current (DC) electricity included its ability to travel more efficiently at higher voltages, and it could be increased or decreased using transformers and converted to DC to service appliances and systems that operated using DC electricity.

The Roslindale Substation was one of six substations built in the Boston area to convert AC electric power from the South Boston Power Station to DC electric power for streetcar use. The location of this substation in Roslindale reflects the growth and development of this area at the turn of the century, as well as the development of the city's transportation system. Construction of the Roslindale Substation began in early 1911, and the building was in service by November of that year. The building was designed in the Classical Revival style by prominent architect Robert S. Peabody along with Stone & Webster, who were also responsible for its construction. The building's decorative details illustrate the pride taken in Boston's public transit and its cutting-edge new electrical system. The Roslindale Substation was taken out of use in 1971 and has been vacant since that time, receiving minimal upkeep.

Of the six substations, three have been demolished, one is still in use as part of the MBTA system (Coolidge Corner), and two have been rehabilitated for new uses (Egleston and Arlington). The Roslindale Substation is the only extant building of the group that is vacant. Roslindale Village Main Streets (RVMS) and Historic Boston Incorporated (HBI) have been researching reuse options for the building since 2002. In February of 2012, the nonprofits proposed a phased rehabilitation of the building using the main level as a catered events space and venue for a winter farmers' market. It is hoped that the National Register nomination may stimulate the property's rehabilitation.

The Roslindale Substation is one of 5 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 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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