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Secretary of the Commonwealth

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October 8, 2014

**SOUTH END HISTORIC DISTRICT BOUNDARY INCREASE/NORTHAMPTON STREET,
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 South End Historic District Boundary Increase/Northampton Street in Boston for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places at its September 10, 2014, 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 South End Historic District Boundary Increase in the National Register will help to preserve thirteen historic buildings that defied expectations by surviving urban renewal-era demolitions.”

The purpose of the South End Historic District Boundary Increase is to add thirteen buildings to the existing district, which was listed in the National Register in 1973. The buildings at 200-224 Northampton Street represent excellent examples of Italianate-style, brick rowhouses typical of those found throughout Boston’s South End neighborhood. The row was excluded from the initial historic district boundaries because it was believed at the time that it was about to be demolished, along with the rest of the buildings removed from the area south of the district as part of urban renewal efforts in the mid-20th century.

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Today, these buildings constitute the only intact historic row immediately southwest of the district to survive urban renewal. The adjoining, three-story, red-brick rowhouses stand at the northeast ends of their long, narrow lots, leaving small rear yards. The lots measure approximately 1,900 square feet on average, and each building has a small front garden. Twelve of the buildings were constructed circa. 1860 following the same design. While the building at 200 Northampton Street was likely built at the same time, it is of a somewhat different design, and is the only building remaining of a row of thirteen identical houses. In addition to their architectural significance, the buildings at 200-224 Northampton Street are significant for their association with the creation of the South End neighborhood in the second half of the 19th century.

Developed as a fashionable neighborhood beginning in 1848, much of the South End was established on filled land, resulting from the city's ambitious campaign that substantially widened the slender neck that joined Boston to Roxbury along Washington Street. On this new land, the city laid out a grid of streets and house lots, which they began auctioning off in the late 1840s with restrictions as to the types of dwelling that could be constructed, including limitations on materials, height, and setback. As a result, the South End neighborhood presents uniform and cohesive streetscapes. Real estate speculators purchased many of the lots and constructed nearly identical fine residences, further adding to this cohesion. Although the South End initially attracted successful businessmen and manufacturers, their residency was relatively short lived.

About twenty years after the South End was laid out, the Back Bay neighborhood became a more fashionable location for wealthy Bostonians. South End residents who could afford to moved to the Back Bay, while the city's rapidly growing working-class and immigrant populations gradually repopulated the South End. Along with this change in population came a shift in architecture: new construction took the form of modest houses and multifamily apartment buildings, and older, single-family homes were converted for multifamily use. The buildings at 200-224 Northampton Street reflect this transition; all were constructed as single-family homes and later converted to multifamily use beginning in the late 19th century.

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The Community Builders (TCB) currently owns 210, 212, 216, 220, and 224 Northampton Street, all of which operate as apartment buildings providing affordable housing. TCB is in the process of rehabilitating all five of their properties on Northampton Street. The project, which will utilize state and federal historic rehabilitation tax credits, will include repairing and upgrading mechanical systems, windows, masonry, kitchens, and baths.

The South End Historic District Boundary Increase is one of 8 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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