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Secretary of the Commonwealth

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**WESTFIELD CENTER COMMERCIAL HISTORIC DISTRICT, WESTFIELD, 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 Westfield Center Commercial Historic District for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places at its March 12, 2008 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 architectural, cultural, archaeological, and historic resources,” Secretary Galvin said. “Inclusion of this property on the National Register will help to protect our heritage for generations to come.”

The Westfield Center Commercial Historic District consists of two blocks of buildings and lies between the Westfield River on the north and Park Square, Westfield’s town green, on the south. The area contains a concentration of 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> -century buildings erected to serve the industrializing town of Westfield and its surrounding residential neighborhoods. The district is significant for the types of commerce that it contained over the period of significance (1867-1956), from seamstresses, milliners, fish mongers, and harness makers, to department and music stores, banks, and auto repair shops. The commercial street contains a cross section of businesses critical to an early to late industrial town and typifies the mixed-use approach to downtowns that was prevalent after 1860. The second and third floors were typically a mix of residential rooms, music teachers, lawyers, and doctors. The district is also significant for the presence of government agencies new to the 20<sup>th</sup> century that were formed for public welfare, and private organizations such as the YMCA that provided social, religious, and educational opportunities. The Central Baptist Church represents one of the many religious institutions serving the Westfield population. Architecturally the district contains a representative range of masonry commercial building styles and a few remaining Italianate and Queen Anne frame buildings from the 1870s.

The Westfield Center Commercial Historic District 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 65,000 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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