



William Francis Galvin
Secretary of the Commonwealth

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**WELLESLEY CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH AND CEMETERY, WELLESLEY, 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 Wellesley Congregational Church and Cemetery for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places at its June 11 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 Wellesley Congregational Church and Cemetery in the National Register will help to preserve a property that has been significant throughout the town’s history, and that continues to be a unifying presence in the community today.”

The Wellesley Congregational Church and Cemetery are located on a single, 2.33-acre parcel in Wellesley Square, just west of the town hall. The cemetery was established in the 1770s and occupies about one acre on the western part of the site. It contains roughly 328 headstones, footstones, and family monuments, dating from the 1770s to the present. Eleven Revolutionary War veterans and two Civil War veterans are buried here. The first meetinghouse on the site was built in 1798, predating the separation of Wellesley (then known as West Needham) from the town of Needham.

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The present church, the fourth on this site, is part of a complex designed by Carrere and Hastings in 1918, after a fire destroyed the third church building in 1916. However, the onset of World War I delayed construction of the church, so the complex was built in phases, beginning with a small chapel and administrative offices in 1918, and ending with the sanctuary, completed in 1923. The cruciform, Georgian Revival-style church is the focal point of the complex. It is a two-story building with a brick exterior, slate roof, and a belltower at its eastern end.

Harold B. Willis of Collens, Willis & Beckonert designed the parish house addition, constructed in 1955, in a manner that complemented the Georgian Revival design of the original buildings. In 2006, the church completed a cemetery master plan with the goal of identifying and prioritizing preservation needs, and determining any remaining opportunities for burying cremated remains within the cemetery. The Memorial Path was dedicated in 2007 as a place for cremation burials.

The Wellesley Congregational Church and Cemetery property is one of 6 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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