

MEETING MINUTES
MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
November 8, 2023

Due to the Coronavirus pandemic, the Commission meeting was held remotely in a Zoom meeting.

Chairman Rosenberry called the meeting to order at 1:05 pm. On behalf of Secretary Galvin, he welcomed the Commissioners. Chairman Rosenberry next addressed the audience, thanking them for attending. For those individuals who may not have attended commission meetings in the past, Chairman Rosenberry explained the structure of the meeting and when in the process the public could address the commission. Chairman Rosenberry then took attendance to determine that a quorum was met.

The Chairman turned to the first item on the agenda, the **approval of the September 13, 2023 meeting minutes**. He called for a MOTION TO ACCEPT the minutes. A MOTION was made by Commissioner DeWitt and SECONDED by Commissioner Kellie Carter Jackson. Hearing no questions or comments, the chair moved the motion. The motion CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Chairman Rosenberry then turned to the next item on the agenda, the Local Historic District Preliminary Study Reports, first calling for any recusals. Hearing none, he turned the meeting over to Jennifer Doherty, Local Government Programs Coordinator. Ms. Doherty presented the study reports with a PowerPoint presentation. A copy of the presentation is on file with these minutes.

Industrial School for Girls, Boston (Dorchester)

Ms. Doherty first presented the **Industrial School for Girls in Boston (Dorchester)**. The City of Boston is proposing to landmark the Industrial School for Girls. The petition for this landmark designation was accepted by the Boston Landmarks Commission on October 23, 2012.

The building is located at 232 Centre Street in Dorchester, just off of Dorchester Ave. between Fields Corner and Ashmont.

There are only a handful of other designated properties in the immediate area. Three smaller National Register of Historic Places districts are located to the west: the Thane Street Historic District, listed in 2020; the Sherman Apartments Historic District, listed in 2012; and the Codman Square District, listed in 1983. Further to the east is the Dorchester Pottery Works, designated a Boston Landmark in 1980 and individually listed in the National Register in 1985, and the larger Harrison Square Historic District, listed in 2002.

The Industrial School for Girls is on a residential side street away from the main commercial area of Dorchester Ave. Surrounding buildings are primarily late 19th and early 20th century two families and triple-deckers typical of Dorchester.

Opened in 1859, the Industrial School for Girls was designed by George Snell and constructed by William Rumrell. It included both classroom facilities as well as housing for the students, teachers, and matron, and thus was designed to have a more residential appearance. It sits near the center of its square lot, surrounded historically by lawns and gardens, facing south across Centre Street. The building is three stories, with the third underneath a Mansard roof. It is constructed of brick and features a three-bay façade, with the centered entry door sheltered by an enclosed entrance porch. The patterned slate, overhanging eaves, cupola, and bargeboard give the building a Romantic look typical of the mid-19th century, but not necessarily an industrial school building. A shallow, full-height projection covers the rear pile of the west elevation. Metal doors and 2/2 windows are modern replacements. Other alterations include metal gutters and inoperable shutters.

Architect George Snell was a native of England, where he graduated from the Institute of Civil Engineers, which awarded him the Telford Medal, the Institute's highest honor. He arrived in Boston in 1849, and already by 1852 he had received a major commission to design the 2000-seat Music Hall (now the Orpheum Theatre). Few of his many major Boston commercial buildings survive, but his residential work is well-represented in the Back Bay, where he worked first on his own, and after about 1862 in partnership with James Gregerson, with whom he is represented by over 40 MACRIS records, mostly private residences located on Beacon Street and Commonwealth Avenue. His work elsewhere includes a number of monuments in Mt. Auburn Cemetery.

In 2017, the Epiphany School opened a large new building on the site that wraps around the west and north elevations of the historic building. The two buildings are not connected. Although starkly modern in appearance when compared to the

Industrial School building, the new building takes design cues from the surrounding neighborhood, such as its placement at the sidewalk, covered porches, multipane windows, and projections and material changes that mimic the bays on the surrounding historic residences. The new building is part of the parcel that would be protected by the landmark designation.

The Industrial School for Girls was founded by a group of Boston elites in Winchester in 1853. The original intent was to provide a preventative, rather than correctional, curriculum for young women. The school quickly outgrew its repurposed house in Winchester and it purchased land in Dorchester in 1858, opening this building on the site in January, 1859. The semi-rural nature of Dorchester at that time kept the female students away from the perceived negative influences of urban life and allowed them to use the grounds for gardens and exercise space. Yet the school was still close to available public transportation on Dorchester Ave., allowing access into the city.

The school served around 30 students at a time, ranging in age from 10 to 14, and occasionally as young as six. Most students were white, although the first African American student was admitted as early as 1863. Their parents relinquished guardianship of the girls to the school. Lessons included both vocational and academic training, which was initially held on site until 1888, when students transitioned to the local public schools. After a few years of training, students were placed out to employment, with their success and health monitored by a school guardian for several years after they left the school. The school's model was considered to be so successful that the Commonwealth featured the school in an exhibit at the 1876 Centennial Exhibition in Philadelphia.

The Industrial School was founded in an era of reform and industrial schools for children, several campuses of which are extant in Massachusetts. However, most of these were correctional institutions to house and rehabilitate delinquent and criminal children, rather than providing instruction for indigent children as at the Industrial School.

The school continued operating well into the 20th century, and was acquired by the Home for Little Wanderers in 2002. The campus was acquired by the independent Epiphany School in 2011, which constructed a large addition on the site and continues to operate their Early Learning Center there today, as well as providing teacher housing on site. As part of the new construction in 2017, a large archaeological dig was completed over the course of two years that provided a

significant amount of information about the use of the site before and during its time as a school. The dig was paired with historical research by UMass Boston students on the Industrial School's students, teachers, and staff listed in the 1860 census, providing a detailed snapshot of the school at that time and connecting its residents more fully with the over 17,000 artifacts found.

While there is currently no proposal to further develop the site, with increasing development pressures in the area the Landmarks Commission is seeking to further protect the school building and the archaeological resources on the rest of its grounds that weren't recovered in 2015.

Because of its association with late 19th century urban progressive movements, its role as an early educational institution with a goal of supporting women, and its romantic Italianate/Second Empire architecture and historic semi-rural campus, BLC staff recommends that the Industrial School for Girls be designated as a Boston Landmark.

MHC staff recommends acknowledging receipt of the Landmark Study Report for the Industrial School for Girls and providing the following advisory recommendations and comments:

The Massachusetts Historical Commission concurs with the recommendations of the Boston Landmarks Commission staff.

Boston City Hall, Boston (Government Center)

Ms. Doherty then presented the **Boston City Hall in Boston (Government Center)**. The City of Boston is also proposing to landmark Boston City Hall. The petition for further study was accepted by the BLC on April 24, 2007.

The building forms the heart of Government Center. The landmark designation would protect the exterior of the building as well as the interior main lobby space on the third floor. The designation does not extend to the surrounding outdoor plaza.

There are many designated properties in the immediate Government Center area. To the northwest is the JFK Federal Building, individually listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 2021. Four designated properties are located to the south: the Sears' Crescent and Sears' Block, listed in the National Register in 1986; two Old Colony Trust Company buildings, both determined eligible for the

National Register in 1986 but not listed; and the Ames Building, individually listed in the National Register in 1974 and designated a Boston landmark in 1993.

Other designated districts are located outside of Government Center, such as the Beacon Hill Historic District to the west, established by the State Legislature in 1955, and National Register districts to east covering the Blackstone Block streets, Quincy Market, and the area around the Custom House Tower.

Boston City Hall is set off from the surrounding area by a large, open plaza with the new government Center T station to the west. To the east are older, historic areas with a tourism focus, such as the Blackstone Block area, Faneuil Hall, and Quincy Market. To the north, south, and west are large buildings of a variety of ages, many used for local, state, and federal offices, and most constructed as part of the same urban renewal effort as Boston City Hall.

The extreme Brutalist architecture of Boston City Hall has elicited strong opinions since its design and construction in the 1960s. Designed by Kallman McKinnell & Knowles, the building interprets a traditional tripartite commercial structure in concrete. The brick base of the building rises out of the surrounding plaza and street network, taller on the east elevation due to changes in topography. The middle floors of the building, containing many of the public and ceremonial spaces, are shaped by tall, narrow windows arranged into boxes and separated in parts by long fins of concrete. The upper floors of the building feature regularly-spaced paired concrete fins reminiscent of paired brackets on a cornice.

The building features three public entrances, with the main one entering the third floor lobby from the Government Center plaza. Due to the concrete construction of the building, there has been little alteration of the interior spaces since its construction, although improvement projects over the years have included a lift in the main lobby, wayfinding improvements, renovations to the City Council chambers, and exterior lighting for the building.

Gerhard Kallman was a German architect and the most senior among the three with a strong interest in Brutalist architecture. He met Michael McKinnell and Edward Knowles while the three were teaching at Columbia University. Boston City Hall was the first joint commission for the three, and afterwards Kallman and McKinnell formed a partnership, later joining with Henry Wood in a firm that still exists today. The two iterations of the firm have ten entries in MACRIS. Only one, the American Academy of Arts and Sciences in Cambridge, has any designation; it is part of the Shady Hill National Register Historic District.

The roots of Boston City Hall are found in the immediate postwar years and the city's economic and population decline of the 1950s. A succession of mayors sought out urban renewal projects to improve the city – the Central Artery, the New York Streets, and the West End. Along with those projects, Mayors Hynes and Collins and the Boston Redevelopment Authority looked to Scollay Square as the next blighted area to be tackled and turned into a hub of offices for government and private workers.

A master plan for the area was drawn up by IM Pei in 1961, and demolition of nearly 1500 buildings in Scollay Square began the following year. A design competition for the new city hall was also held in 1961, with Pei's master plan setting out the parameters for the project. The winning design by Kallman McKinnell & Knowles was constructed exactly as designed in the competition.

The building's architecture and the overall Government Center project have generated controversy and discussion since they were revealed. The sharp contrast of the starkly Brutalist building with the more traditional and historic architecture of the surrounding neighborhoods has always been a point of debate. In recent years, the City has sought to embrace and improve the site. The Government Center T stop was recently redesigned, and the City's administration has worked to make the barren plaza in front of the building more hospitable, with new plantings, seasonal events such as a beer garden and festivals, and most recently, the addition of a permanent children's playground. In 2017, the City received a Getty Foundation grant to develop a conservation management plan for the building, which was published in 2021. The plan provides guidance on caring for and altering the historic building.

Because of its association with Boston's postwar urban redevelopment efforts, its symbolism as the civic core of the City of Boston, and its groundbreaking Brutalist architecture by noted firm Kallman McKinnell & Knowles, BLC staff recommends that Boston City Hall be designated as a Boston Landmark.

MHC staff recommends acknowledging receipt of the Landmark Study Report for Boston City Hall and providing the following advisory recommendations and comments:

The Massachusetts Historical Commission concurs with the recommendations of the Boston Landmarks Commission staff.

Ms. Doherty also noted that the Society of Architectural Historians submitted an open letter to the City supporting the proposed designation.

Jonathan Kingsbury House Local Historic District, Needham

Ms. Doherty then presented the Jonathan Kingsbury House Local Historic District in Needham. The Town of Needham is proposing to establish its first local historic district protecting a single property, the late 18th century Jonathan Kingsbury House.

The proposed district would protect a single property at 3 Rosemary Street. It is located in a residential area midway between Needham Heights to the north, and Needham Center to the south.

There are no designated properties in the immediate area of the Kingsbury House. The area around Needham Town Hall was listed in the National Register in 1990, while further west along Great Plain Ave, the McIntosh Corner Historic District was listed in 1989. There are several other individual National Register listings in the area. In addition, the Kingsbury-Whitaker House is protected by a Preservation Restriction held by Historic New England.

While the Kingsbury House is a late 18th century house, the surrounding neighborhood was primarily developed in the later 20th century, like much of residential Needham. Colonial Revival style single family houses predominate in the area, in typical forms such as the Cape and Garrison Colonial. With increasing development pressures in recent years, some of the older buildings have been replaced by new construction, often maintaining the traditional styling and materials of the older houses but in a much larger form.

The Kingsbury House is believed to have been constructed around 1779. It is a two-story, side-gable, four bay house. It is extended by a one-and-a-half story ell from the rear southwest corner that sits flush with the elevation on that side, terminating in a two car garage. Not visible from the street is a large extension of the ell that extends north, filling the reentrant angle between the house and the ell. A second one-story shed-roofed ell extends from the north elevation of the house.

The house has limited trim or elaboration aside from around the doors and windows. The windows are 6/6 wood sash protected by exterior storm windows, with small 3/3 sash in the half-story of the ell. On the façade the main entry door sits in the bay second from right and is protected by a gabled enclosed entry porch. This entry was removed at some point in the 20th century, and in the later 20th

century replaced by an exterior brick chimney. A secondary entrance is located on the south elevation.

There is only one other property in MACRIS with a pre-1800 construction date in Needham.

The Kingsbury House is believed to have been constructed by Jonathan Kingsbury, Jr. around 1779. Several generations of the Kingsbury family had lived in the area since the early 18th century, assembling over 100 acres of land around the house and extending east across Webster Street.

Jonathan Kingsbury Jr. married Jemima Skinner in 1767. He mustered with the East Needham Militia at Arlington on April 19, 1775, and later served at Dorchester Heights and at the Boston camp. The house remained in several generations of the Kingsbury family, although its acreage was reduced several times over the years. In 1888, it was finally sold out of the family on a one-acre lot. The house has had a series of owners since the late 19th century. The current owners approached the Town about establishing the historic district as they would like to see the property protected.

MHC staff recommends acknowledging receipt of the Preliminary Study Report for the Jonathan Kingsbury House Local Historic District and providing the following advisory recommendations and comments:

The Massachusetts Historical Commission encourages the Town of Needham to establish the Jonathan Kingsbury House Local Historic District.

The Massachusetts Historical Commission encourages the protection of additional significant historic resources through a larger district or additional local historic districts.

Plymouth Historic District Expansion, Plymouth

Ms. Doherty then presented the proposed expansion of the existing Plymouth Historic District in the Town of Plymouth.

The proposed expansion of Plymouth's only local historic district would protect an additional 59 properties to the southeast of the existing district. Across Town Brook from downtown Plymouth, the new properties are primarily located along Bradford and Union streets.

The existing Plymouth Historic District was established in 1973 and expanded in 1977, 1991, and 1995. Plymouth's downtown is also covered by several National Register districts, such as the Plymouth Village Historic District, listed in 1982; the Old Burial Hill district, listed in 2013; and the Town Brook Historic and Archaeological District, listed in 1995. Much of the area of the proposed expansion was also listed in the National Register in 1983 as the Bradford-Union Street Historic District. Nearby individual listings include the Mayflower II, listed in 2020; Plymouth Rock, listed in 1971; the Jabez Howland House, listed in 1974; and the Harlow Old Fort House, listed in 1974 and with a Preservation Restriction held by the MHC.

The character of the houses along Bradford Street is distinct from those buildings immediately outside the area. Beyond Bradford Street, houses are larger and often later, dating to the late 19th and early 20th centuries. There are also a number of commercial uses that extend out from the heart of downtown Plymouth along Sandwich Street. There is interest in the community in extending the district even further into some of these areas, but for now the Historic District Commission is choosing to focus on what is potentially, immediately threatened.

The core of the proposed expansion area is Bradford Street, which includes a grouping of small one-and-a-half story gabled cottages with their entrances on the side wall. Two of these buildings are believed to be fish houses used in the 19th century to dry cod and later converted to residences. It also includes two late 19th/early 20th century Colonial Revival school buildings, and several maritime properties. These include the Plymouth Yacht Club and the marina building at 14 Union Street that was formerly used as a foundry. An iron foundry was established on the site in the 1840s or 1850s, and a portion of the current building was constructed for that use in 1867. The space was added to around 1900. It has been used as a marina with space for additional commercial uses for a number of years.

Located on Plymouth Harbor, the Bradford-Union Street area developed in the 19th century as a residential area for those in the maritime trades. Commercial buildings directly on the water included the foundry company and a lumber company, while census records show that area residents were occupied in the maritime trade as boat builders, carpenters, mariners, coopers, seamen, and shipmasters. Cod drying was also a common trade, with numerous fish houses in the area used for the purpose. Closest to the water is the grouping of small cottages along Bradford Street.

Further back from the street are larger houses primarily single-family in construction although now converted to multi-family use.

Although maritime use has declined in the area, the foundry building still operates partially as a marina, and the Plymouth Yacht Club is nearby. A redevelopment plan done by the Town in the 1980s recognized the significant historic resources in the area and recommended that any redevelopment efforts focus on preservation, including a potential local historic district. The area was listed in the National Register in 1983.

The owner of 14 Union Street approached the Town in late 2021 about demolishing the marina building and replacing it with a new one. The Plymouth Historic District Commission, which also serves as the Historical Commission, imposed a demolition delay on the building which expired in February of 2023. The fate of the building is still up in the air, but the parcel is part of the proposed historic district expansion.

MHC staff recommends acknowledging receipt of the Preliminary Study Report for the expansion of the Plymouth Historic District and providing the following advisory recommendations and comments:

The Massachusetts Historical Commission encourages the Town of Plymouth to expand the Plymouth Historic District.

Chairman Rosenberry thanked Ms. Doherty, and then began the voting:

Chairman Rosenberry then called for a MOTION TO ACCEPT the MHC staff recommendations on the Landmark Study Report for the **Industrial School for Girls in Boston**. A MOTION was made by Commissioner Friary and SECONDED by Commissioner Pride. The Chair called for questions or comments from the commission. The chairman recognized Commissioner Friary who said for seven years from kindergarten to the sixth grade he went to school next to the Industrial School for Girls, and that he was very glad to have read the application, because as children, they knew nothing about the school and nothing was never mentioned about the building. It was just a mysterious building next to the old Dorchester High School where they were going to grammar school. He's pleased to see what has taken place, although he thinks it looked better in 1945 than it does today. He's delighted to see it proposed. The Chair thanked Commissioner Friary. The Chair called for any other questions or comments from the commission.

Hearing none, he called for any questions or comments from the public. Hearing none, he moved the motion. The motion CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Chairman Rosenberry then called for a MOTION TO ACCEPT the MHC staff recommendations on the Landmark Study Report for the **Boston City Hall in Boston**. A MOTION was made by Commissioner Sullivan and SECONDED by Commissioner Wilson. The Chair called for questions or comments from the commission. The chairman recognized Commissioner DeWitt who said he was surprised that in the lengthy discussion there was no mention of Le Corbusier. It would be hard to overstate that this is probably the most important monument influenced by Le Corbusier, and specifically by his La Tourette monastery. He is delighted to see that this is being listed by the City, but he just thinks the record should be clearer about its genesis. The Chair thanked Commissioner DeWitt. He then called for any other questions or comments from the commission. Hearing none, he called for any questions or comments from the public. Hearing none, he moved the motion. The motion CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Chairman Rosenberry then called for a MOTION TO ACCEPT the MHC staff recommendations on the **Jonathan Kingsbury House Local Historic District Study Report in Needham**. A MOTION was made by Commissioner Ceccacci and SECONDED by Commissioner Friary. The Chair called for questions or comments from the commission. Hearing none, he called for questions or comments from the public. The chairman recognized Moe Handel, who identified himself as a resident of the proposed district. Mr. Handel thanked the Commission and particularly Ms. Doherty. He also noted that he was doing his city planning residency with the City of Boston Redevelopment Authority during the construction of Boston City Hall, so he's very pleased that the Needham district is sharing the agenda with Boston City Hall. The Chair thanked Mr. Handel for his comments. The Chair called for any other questions or comments. Hearing none, he moved the motion. The motion CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Chairman Rosenberry then called for a MOTION TO ACCEPT the MHC staff recommendations on the Landmark Study Report for the **Plymouth Historic District Expansion in Plymouth**. A MOTION was made by Commissioner

DeWitt and SECONDED by Commissioner Friary. The Chair called for questions or comments from the commission. The chairman recognized Commissioner DeWitt, who said he would like to commend Plymouth for doing the right thing here. He has been following the proposed fate of the shipyard, but it certainly goes beyond that. This is a rare survival of urban renewal in Plymouth which took away a lot of its industrial heritage, and it also recognizes some of Plymouth's Colonial Revival heritage. The Chair called for any other questions or comments from the Commission. Hearing none, he asked for any questions or comments from the public. Hearing none, he moved the motion. The motion CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

This concluded the voting. Chairman Rosenberry then turned to the next item on the agenda, **Preview of the December 13, 2023 National Register Nominations**, and recognized Ben Haley, National Register Director, who informed the commission that there would be four nominations on the agenda for the December 13 meeting. Copies of the nominations will be sent to the Commissioners about two weeks prior to the meeting.

The Four Nominations Are:

Boston, Lenox Street Apartments Historic District

Boston, Uphams Corner Historic District

Fall River, Bradford Durfee Textile School

Tisbury, United States Marine Hospital at Vineyard Haven

The Chairman thanked Mr. Haley for the preview of the National Register agenda for December, and he then turned to the next item on the agenda, the **Executive Director's Report**. He then recognized Brona Simon, Executive Director.

Ms. Simon began by reminding the Commissioners that the Survey and Planning Grant invitations to submit full applications will be voted on at the Commission's December's 13th meeting. She indicated that Commissioner volunteers will be needed to serve on the Survey and Planning Grant subcommittee for a subcommittee meeting in the morning of December 13th before the full

commission meeting. The December's 13th subcommittee and full Commission meetings will be virtual meetings. Commissioners DeWitt, McDowell, and Wilson volunteered to serve on the Survey and Planning subcommittee. The subcommittee will report its recommendations to the full commission meeting in the afternoon for votes on the recommended invitations to submit full applications.

Ms. Simon then reported on personnel, by introducing MHC's new preservation planner, Robin Fordham, who is from Amherst, and who has joined the Preservation Planning Division to assist with Survey and Planning grant administration, and who also will assist with administration of the tax credit program, and Trace Potter the newly hired GIS Data Entry Intern, who comes to MHC as a graduate student intern from the Department of Archaeology at UMass Boston.

Ms. Simon then announced the sad news that Karen Davis passed away very recently. She was a reviewer and editor of National Register nominations here at MHC for many years, editing and polishing nominations before they were presented to the commission, and she will be greatly missed.

That concluded the Executive Director's report.

The Chairman then asked if any Commissioners had any other new business. Hearing none, he called for a MOTION to adjourn. A MOTION was made by Commissioner DeWitt and SECONDED by Commissioner Friary. The MOTION CARRIED, and the meeting adjourned at 1:54pm.

Commissioners Present

John Rosenberry

Dennis DeWitt

Susan Ceccacci

Donald Friary

Simone Early

Mark Wilson

Ashley Stolba

Kellie Carter Jackson

Anne Pride

Charles Sullivan

Gina Perille

Staff Present

Brona Simon

Jennifer Doherty

Michael Steinitz

Ben Haley

Elizabeth Sherva

Peter Stott

Paul Holtz

Nancy Alexson

Shari Perry-Wallace

Liz King

Josh Dorin

Robin Forham

A TRUE COPY ATTEST

Respectfully submitted,

Shirley Brown