



**William Francis Galvin**  
Secretary of the Commonwealth

Contact: Brian McNiff  
Telephone: 617-727-9180

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**SACRED HEART PARISH COMPLEX, LAWRENCE, 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 Sacred Heart Parish Complex in Lawrence for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places at its September 14, 2011, 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 Sacred Heart Parish Complex in the National Register will bring awareness of these buildings and their importance to Lawrence’s French Canadian heritage.”

The Sacred Heart Parish Complex, 321 South Broadway, is significant for its associations with the city’s French Canadian community, who worshipped and were educated there for more than 100 years. French Canadians began arriving in the growing mill town in the late 1860s, quickly becoming the city’s second-largest immigrant group, after the Irish. The intact complex, which includes a church, a rectory, a convent, two school buildings, and a grotto, documents the history of the parish. The oldest building on the site is the 1899 school, a three-story, highly ornamental brick structure designed in the Romanesque Revival style. The convent, rectory, and second school were built in 1920, 1924, and 1925, respectively. The ground level of the church was constructed in 1916 as a one-story brick structure, but between 1934 and 1936, the original church was incorporated into a Gothic Revival-style building constructed of polychromatic ashlar. The grotto was likely built in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, and is constructed entirely of fieldstone. The closing of Lawrence’s textile mills in the 1950s began a period of decline for the city, which affected the parish. Sacred Heart School closed in 2004, and the last mass at the complex was held on April 3, 2005. After several years of vacancy, the entire complex was purchased by Sagrado Corazon LLC, the current owner. The church and rectory are currently leased to a Dominican chapter, while the remaining buildings are part of a long-term ground lease to BC Sacred Heart LLC, who converted the convent and two schools to residential use in 2010 using federal and state historic tax credits.

The Sacred Heart Parish Complex is one of 7 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](http://www.sec.state.ma.us/mhc)).

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