



William Francis Galvin
Secretary of the Commonwealth

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**HOME FOR DESTITUTE JEWISH CHILDREN, BOSTON, 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 Home for Destitute Jewish Children, located in Boston (Dorchester), 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 Home for Destitute Jewish Children in the National Register will help to preserve a historically and socially significant neighborhood resource, ensuring its continued service to the community.”

The Home for Destitute Jewish Children, located on American Legion Highway across from Franklin Park in Boston’s Dorchester neighborhood, was the first purpose-built orphanage for the care of Jewish children in the city. John A. Hasty designed the three-story, red-brick building in the Classical Revival style. The Hebrew Ladies Helping Hand Association and the Ladies Auxiliary raised funds for construction of the orphanage, which opened in 1911. The building provided housing to about 200 boys and girls annually, aged six to eighteen, until 1934, when the Home for Destitute Jewish Children moved to a new location in Boston’s Brighton neighborhood.

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State House, Room 337, Boston, Massachusetts 02133

The Hecht House, a Jewish community service organization, moved into the building in 1936, and in 1945 completed moderate renovations that included the creation of an assembly hall, game room, arts and crafts room, nursery school, and library. In 1959, the Hecht House merged with the Young Men's Hebrew Association. At that time, the Kennedy Foundation financed an addition to the building, the Mid-Century Modern Joseph P. Kennedy Jr. Memorial Gymnasium designed by Boston architects Isidor Richmond and Carney Goldberg. At the same time, Richmond and Goldberg directed the renovation of the original building.

The nonprofit Lena Park Community Development Corporation (CDC) bought the building in 1970 and established the Lena Park Neighborhood Service Center, which served the increasingly multicultural community and occupied the property until 2006. The Home for Destitute Jewish Children is currently undergoing rehabilitation, utilizing state and federal historic tax credits, which will convert the majority of the property into the Edward W. Brooke Charter School while also providing space for the Lena Park CDC, in keeping with the building's history of serving the community's young people.

The Home for Destitute Jewish Children 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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