

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Religion: Religious Structure

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Religion: Religious Structure

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

Late Victorian: Romanesque

foundation Granite

walls Wood: Shingle

roof Asphalt shingles

other

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

DESCRIPTION

The Roslindale Congregational Church, at 25 Cummins Highway, is a shingle style church prominently located in the Roslindale Village section of the Roslindale neighborhood. The Church faces southeast on Cummins Highway at the corner of Summer Avenue, with a set back of about 15 feet creating a small neatly landscaped lawn with low hedges that border the public sidewalk. Adjacent to the Summer Avenue side of the Church are two parking lots -- one serving the Church and the other serving the adjacent funeral home.

Roslindale Village is a crossroads community located at the intersection of three early routes: Washington Street, South Street, and Poplar Street. Roslindale Village has been the institutional and commercial core of this neighborhood since the late 19th century when there was an influx of churches, including the Bethlehem Evangelical Lutheran Church (1887), the Roslindale Baptist Church (1889) and the Bethany Methodist Church (1874, destroyed by fire in the 1940s). Notable late 19th century commercial buildings in the village include 49 Poplar Street (1891), 756 South Street (1896), and the Masonic Building at Belgrade and Birch Streets (1899) (all prominently located on corner lots). Today this area remains an important institutional center with a commercial strip that experienced a rejuvenation in the 1980s.

The Roslindale Congregational Church is an outstanding example of the shingle style influenced by the Richardsonian Romanesque. Its design emphasizes massing, with details of both shingle and Richardsonian styles. The Church's timber frame rests on a solid foundation of rough-cut granite which is original to the structure. Round-arched porticos on clustered squat columns mark entrances at the nave/tower juncture and on the east side of the church. The Church's parsonage is located at 9 Primrose Street in Roslindale.

The Church's cross-gable plan is made asymmetrical by the three story square tower at the northeast and by a one story semi-circular bay at the southeast. The Church is two and one-half stories high and has a full basement. The cross-gable roof has a cupola which sits at the intersection of the two roof lines. A large chimney rises from back of the Church, a smaller chimney sits behind the semi-circular front bay, and the roof of the tower has four octagonal turrets. The original slate roof was replaced with asphalt shingles

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Roslindale Congregational Church,
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in the mid-twentieth century. The exterior of the Church has cedar shingles that are painted grey. The original shingles, which were stained brown, were replaced in 1986.

The Church's fenestration is dominated by a tripartite scheme. The facade has at the one story level a tripartite arched window with a pair of rectangular windows on each side.

On the second story level of the facade is a large, deeply inset arched window divided by heavy, shingled mullions and simple frame muntins. This central window is set between two vertically narrow arched windows. An arched vent with a drop bracket sits above the central window. The tripartite window scheme is repeated at the cross-gable elevations, where large arched, divided windows are flanked by sets of rectangular windows divided into thin vertical openings. At the apex of each of the four cross-gable elevations is a louvred opening supported by an elongated drop bracket. The rear elevation has a central gabled mass which is flanked by lower hipped wings which house office space. At the rear elevation the Church's northwest office has a bay window which replaced a small rectangular window in 1986.

The square clocktower is divided by an open belvedere on the second story level. A large circular clock is located at the third story level on each of the tower's four sides. The tower has a turreted pyramidal roof, bracketed cornice, and fenestration that repeats the tripartite scheme of the rest of the structure.

Interior

Contained beyond the small, rectangular vestibule, at the base of the clock tower, is the sanctuary; a cross-axial plan creates a specific focus reinforced by the orientation of the elliptical pew configuration. This expansive volume is defined along its principal axis by the chancel distinguished by an arch; opposite this are located folding doors beyond which lies the chapel. On the main axis and above the chapel is situated the balcony that rises to the base of the grand tri-partite window set within the primary gable. Two additional tri-partite windows define at full height the volume of the transverse axis.

Major structural members are expressed internally by exposed wooden beams at the ceiling and at the span of the balcony. The interior elevations are typically composed of a wainscoting base and beige plaster walls. All interior hardwood surfaces, which include floors, wall panelling, pews, trim, and banisters, exist in their original unpainted finishes (some of the wood treatments in the basement have been painted).

(continued)

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Vertical circulation is arranged symmetrically at either of the entrances from the street facade. These stairs lead to the balcony level, multi-purpose rooms on the second floor, and basement facilities.

Typically the windows within the sanctuary and chapel are of a simple, geometric pattern of stained glass. Colors predominantly consist of light, warm tones. One notable exception, however, is a single stained glass panel in the chapel that was donated in memory of Alice Broughton Grover, the wife of the congregation's founding minister, Rev. Richard B. Grover, 1890-1899.

In contrast to the other windows, this particular panel is composed of richly colored floral patterns. Above the chancel arch, since painted over, was stenciled an inscription reading "Ye Shall Keep My Sabbaths And Reverence My Sanctuary." There are no records of the designer(s) for the church's stained glass.

The first organ was installed in an enlarged chancel space in the year 1906. The organ, built by the Estey Organ Company of Brattleboro, Vermont, was inaugurated with a recital in October of the same year. The Estey Organ was removed and replaced by the present organ in November, 1965. The new organ was donated in the memory of deceased members and friends of the Church. The original Estey organ pipes remain in their original place solely for aesthetic purposes.

In 1912-14, meeting rooms were added to the basement, and in 1914 the entire interior was painted. Folding chairs in the sanctuary were replaced by the present elliptical pews in 1915. The original folding chairs remain in the balcony. In 1935 the interior was again repainted and the roof repaired. Modernization in 1940 included the installation of new kitchen facilities and the construction of a stage, both in the basement. In 1956 an additional restroom was installed next to the chapel. Most recently, lexan covers were installed over the exterior openings of the stained glass windows, insulation was installed in the ceiling cavities, the roof was resingled with asphalt shingles, and interior ceiling fans were hung. In 1985-86, the Church's Centennial Restoration Committee proceeded with the resingling and painting of the exterior.

(end)

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DESCRIPTION AND SIGNIFICANCE OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCES

It is unlikely that intact archaeological resources are present at the Roslindale Congregational Church site. The church occupies nearly half of its 15,356 square foot lot. The central location of the building on the lot and the presence of a cellar hole beneath it suggests that archaeological resources predating its 1893 construction date are probably not preserved. However, archaeological evidence may exist for the changing landscape treatments of the site since 1893. These resources may include evidence for plantings, walkways, and refuse generated by functions held at the church. These resources may be considered significant in the context of the study or restoration of the church's original landscape treatment.

(end)

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

☐ nationally ☐ statewide ☒ locallyApplicable National Register Criteria ☒ A ☐ B ☒ C ☐ DCriteria Considerations (Exceptions) ☒ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E ☐ F ☐ G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

ArchitectureCommunity Development

Period of Significance

1893-1941

Significant Dates

1893

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

James Murry

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

SIGNIFICANCE

The Roslindale Congregational Church possesses integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. The Church is an outstanding example of the shingle style influenced by the Richardsonian Revival style. The church is a rare example of its type in Boston, and its monumental scale and prominent location make it an essential part of the Roslindale Village section of Roslindale. The founding of this congregation illustrates the migration of Boston's population to the surrounding suburbs, and the exemplifies the success of Congregationalism in and around Boston during this period. The Roslindale Congregational Church meets Criteria A and C and Exception A of the National Register of Historic Places at the local level.

Historical

Congregationalism has played an important role in the history of Massachusetts since the founding of the First Church in Boston in 1630. As stated in the Centennial History of Boston, "Congregationalism in Boston...is a record of magnificent achievement in civic, educational, and religious lines." Both the development of the public school system and the founding of Harvard University were products of Congregationalist "thought and purpose." The Centennial History also chronicles the important roles that Congregationalists played during the American Revolution and throughout the Anti-slavery movement.

During the period 1880-1930, the Congregational denomination in Boston expanded its membership and maintained its prominent role in society. In 1880 Boston had 27 Congregational churches with 9795 members -- by 1930 there were 34 churches with 18,677 members. The Reverend George A. Gordon, who had a long ministry at the Old South Church in Copley Square, did much to liberalize the theology of the Congregational denomination during this fifty year period. Reverend Gordon's assistant pastor at Old South was the founding minister of the Roslindale Congregational Church, Reverend Richard B. Grover.

☒ See continuation sheet

9. Major Bibliographical References

"A Pretty Structure," unattributed newspaper article dated August 3, 1893.

Boston Landmarks Commission, "Roslindale and West Roxbury Project Completion Report," 1988 Survey and Planning Grant, (submitted to Massachusetts Historical Commission July 31, 1989).

Cole, Miss Ruby H., "History of The Church," The Golden Jubilee Book (Boston: Roslindale Congregational Church), 1940.

Fruh, Mrs. Albert, "Reflections of the Church History, 1890-1965," The Diamond Jubilee Book (Boston: Roslindale Congregational Church), 1965.

Harris, Cyril M., ed., Illustrated Dictionary of Historic Architecture (New York: Dover Publications), 1977.

Inspectional Services Department, City of Boston, building jacket for 25 Cummins Highway, Boston.

☒ See continuation sheet

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested

☐ previously listed in the National Register

☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register

☐ designated a National Historic Landmark

☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____

☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary location of additional data:

☐ State historic preservation office

☐ Other State agency

☐ Federal agency

☐ Local government

☐ University

☐ Other

Specify repository: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property Less than one acre

UTM References

A 1 9 3 2 4 5 2 0 4 6 8 4 5 2 0
Zone Easting Northing

C _____

B _____
Zone Easting Northing

D _____

☐ See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The nominated property conforms to the City of Boston Tax Assessor's parcel number 4229, ward 19.

☐ See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The present legal boundary conforms to the original/historical boundary of the Roslindale Congregational Church.

☐ See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

Director, Massachusetts Historical Commission

name/title James Labeck, Boston Landmarks Commission, with Betsy Friedberg, National Register

organization Massachusetts Historical Commission

date June 1991

street & number 80 Boylston Street

telephone (617) 727-8470

city or town Boston

state MA

zip code 02116

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National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
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Roslindale, Massachusetts

Roslindale's development after 1870 can be attributed largely to better transportation systems. As early as 1834, a rail line ran through this area, although a station was not built until the 1870s. With two rail lines providing convenient transportation to Boston, Roslindale began to develop as a suburban community with stations at Roslindale, Mt. Hope, and Clarendon Hills. The railroads tried to boost its ridership on these lines by promoting residential development near these station stops. The Providence Division of the Old Colony Railroad, created by an 1888 consolidation of the Old Colony and the Boston & Providence, published a directory for those seeking to build suburban homes. The 1889 directory outlined the population and cost of building lots in the communities of Forest Hills (pop. 1000), Mt. Hope (pop. 3000), Roslindale (pop. 5000), Highland (pop. 600), and West Roxbury (pop. 1500).

More expansive residential growth to the south and west of Boston was spurred by the introduction of streetcar lines and other transportation improvements beginning in the 1890s. Unlike the railroads, which produced nucleated development near station stops, streetcar lines promoted linear growth, with development of land along the length of the line rather than focused at specific points. The West Roxbury branch trolley operated through Roslindale via Belgrade Avenue and Centre Street, with connections to Dedham and Grove Streets.

Trolleys also ran down Grove Street to Germantown in West Roxbury, and a cross-town route on Ashland Street (now Cummins Highway), connected Roslindale Village to Mattapan. Roslindale Village, which included the local fire station and library, became the commercial hub of this area. Roslindale had become the "garden suburb" of Boston; it was promoted as a healthy place in which to live, with its "clean air and rolling hills" creating a "salubrious climate" for its residents.

As Boston's population spread to the outlying suburbs, the establishment of Congregational churches kept pace. By 1880 new Congregational churches were established to the south and west of Boston -- Highland Church (1869), Walnut Avenue Church (1870), Church of the Hollanders (1873), and Boylston Church in Jamaica Plain (1879).

The Roslindale Congregational Church was founded on November 10, 1890, with sixty-seven charter members. The Reverend Richard B. Grover had commissioned a survey from the Massachusetts Home Missionary Committee to determine the need for Congregational services in Roslindale. That survey showed that a Congregational church could be supported in the growing community of Roslindale. Services were held in Association Hall on South Street for several months prior to the organization and during the construction of the church on Ashland Street. The congregation purchased the building lot from Catherine Havey in 1891 and ground was broken by Rev. Grover on August 2,

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1893. Church records show that most of the original charter members resided in the neighboring communities of Roxbury, Jamaica Plain, West Roxbury, and Dedham.

Architecture

The Roslindale Congregational Church has a cross-gable plan with projecting bays, dormers, and entrance porticos, and a two-story square clocktower. The design emphasizes the building's complex mass, which is unified by the smooth shingle surfaces. The Church exhibits influences of both the Shingle and Romanesque Revival styles. The emphasis of mass within shingled surfaces, and the use of curved walls and grouped windows are typical of the Shingle style. The recessed entrance porches with heavy arches on squat columns, the rectangular windows with a common transom, and the use of decorative panels on the tower are examples of Romanesque Revival influence.

The interior of the Church reflects the Church's cross-gable plan. The sanctuary space occupies main volume of the first floor, and a chapel, a ladies parlor (built out of two smaller offices in 1956), a storage room and two offices are organized around that main space and reflect the exterior shape of the Church.

The basement is made up of a function hall with a stage, a kitchen, two classrooms and two small offices (one of which was originally a kitchen). On the second floor are the balcony and several offices and smaller classrooms. Detailing throughout the interior is typical of the period, with extensive use of dark wood surfaces, exposed structural members, and paneled wainscoting.

Roslindale's building boom from the mid-1880s through the 1890s produced a large quantity of houses, churches and institutional structures, predominantly in the Stick, Queen Anne, and Colonial Revival styles. High style examples of the Shingle and Romanesque Revival styles, however, are uncommon in the study area; the most notable exception is the Roslindale Congregational Church, which is one of the finest shingles style buildings in Boston.

Plans for the church were commissioned in 1893 from the architect James Murray of 120 Tremont Street, Boston. A special committee of the congregation had chosen Murray, who was a member of the Roslindale Congregational Church. At the time of the Church's design he was practicing on his own. The Church appears to have been constructed as Murray designed it; however, a newspaper article dated August 3, 1893, shows a small tower where the 1 1/2 story bay was built. Later in his career Murray collaborated with James G. Hutchinson (1905-1910), forming the firm of Murray and Hutchinson, and with William Dykeman around 1915.

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Murray's primary works, executed between 1891 and 1942, were multiple family dwellings of wood-frame construction located in the city's developing neighborhoods of Roxbury, Roslindale, and Jamaica Plain. Murry's other Roslindale works are finely detailed, single family, Colonial Revival houses (9, 14, 23, & 27 Whitmore, & 57 Weld Hill Streets), single and multiple family houses that combine Queen Anne, Shingle, and Colonial Revival styles (903 South & 37 Fairview Streets), and an early twentieth century one-story commercial strip (120-120 1/2 Park Street). The Roslindale Congregational Church was Murry's earliest and most elaborate design in Roslindale.

By 1894, the date of the cornerstone, one room in the front of the church had been completed and was used for services. This room is the present chapel and still used for some services. The construction of the church building was completed in 1896 at the cost of about \$25,000.

(end)

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National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Roslindale Congregational Church,
Roslindale, Massachusetts

Section number 9 Page 1

BIBLIOGRAPHY (cont'd)

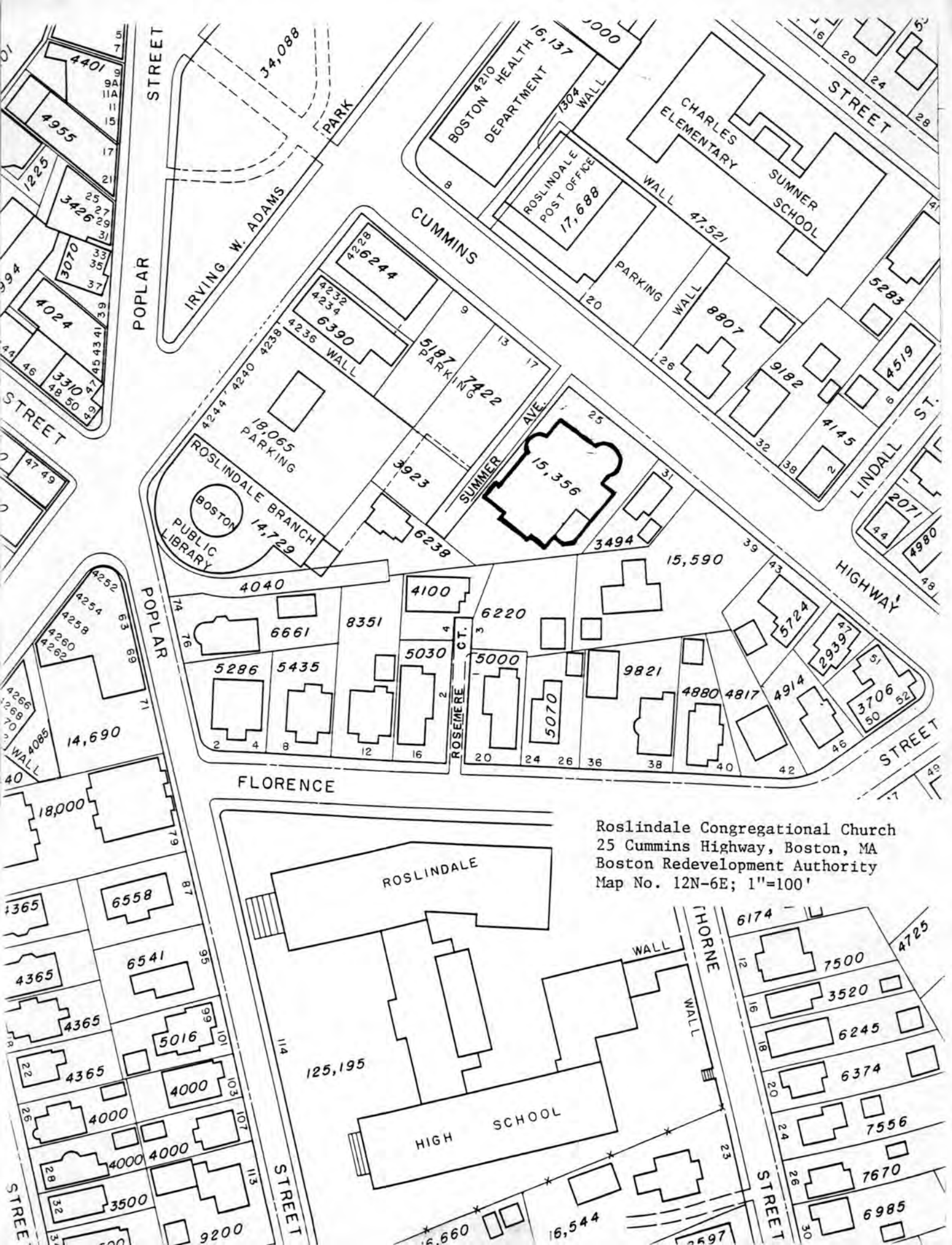
MacGray, Claude R., "A History of the Roslindale Congregational Church Building," an address given February 8, 1987.

McAlester, Virginia and Lee, A Field Guide to American Houses (New York: Alfred A. Knopf), 1984.

Murray, James, Boston Public Library/Fine Arts Department, Architect File.

Tucci, Douglas Shand, Built in Boston, City and Suburb 1800-1950
(Boston: New York Graphic Society), 1978.

Winsor, Justin, ed., The Memorial History of Boston, 1630-1880, vol. VI
(Boston: James R. Osgood and Company), 1883.



Roslindale Congregational Church
25 Cummins Highway, Boston, MA
Boston Redevelopment Authority
Map No. 12N-6E; 1"=100'

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY Roslindale Congregational Church
NAME:

MULTIPLE
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: MASSACHUSETTS, Suffolk

DATE RECEIVED: 6/24/91 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 7/08/91
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 7/24/91 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 8/08/91
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 91000925

NOMINATOR: STATE

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N
OTHER: N PDIL: N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N
REQUEST: N SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: N NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

☒ ACCEPT ☐ RETURN ☐ REJECT 7/26/91 DATE

Entered in the
National Register

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

RECOM./CRITERIA _____
REVIEWER _____
DISCIPLINE _____
DATE _____

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N

CLASSIFICATION

___count ___resource type

STATE/FEDERAL AGENCY CERTIFICATION

FUNCTION

___historic ___current

DESCRIPTION

___architectural classification
___materials
___descriptive text

SIGNIFICANCE

Period Areas of Significance--Check and justify below

Specific dates Builder/Architect
Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

___summary paragraph
___completeness
___clarity
___applicable criteria
___justification of areas checked
___relating significance to the resource
___context
___relationship of integrity to significance
___justification of exception
___other

BIBLIOGRAPHY

GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

___acreage ___verbal boundary description
___UTMs ___boundary justification

ACCOMPANYING DOCUMENTATION/PRESENTATION

___sketch maps ___USGS maps ___photographs ___presentation

OTHER COMMENTS

Questions concerning this nomination may be directed to

_____ Phone _____

Signed _____ Date _____



Roslindale Congregational Church

25 Cummins Highway

Boston, MA



photograph by James Laback, BLC
10-90 (neg. located at BLC office)
view of altar



Roslindale Congregational Church
25 Cummins Highway
Boston, MA

photographed by James Labeck, BLC
10-90 (neg at BLC office)

Kodak
Processing Service
NOV 90 N

view looking south

Kodak
Processing Service
NOV 90 N



Roslindale Congregational Church
25 Cummins Highway
Boston, MA

photograph by James Labeck, BLC
10-90 (neg located at BLC office)
view looking west



Roslindale Congregational Church
25 Cummins Highway, Boston MA
photograph by James Labeck, BLC
10-90 (neg located at BLC office)



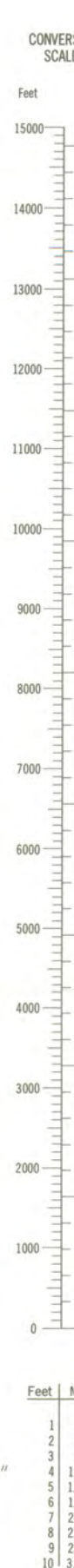
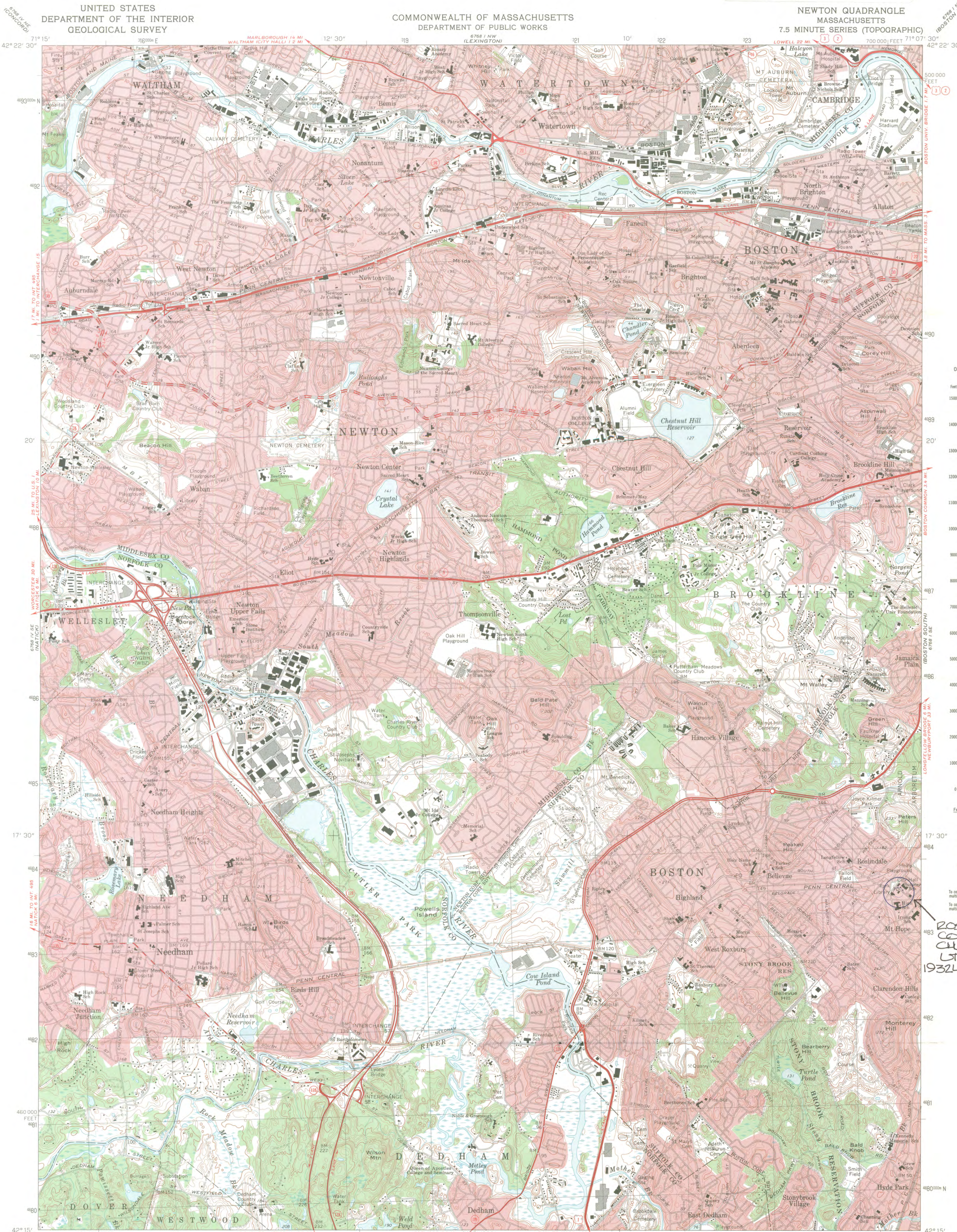
view looking southwest at clock tower

Rosindale Congregational Church
25 Cummins Highway & Summer Avenue
zone 19
324-520/4684-520

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

NEWTON QUADRANGLE
MASSACHUSETTS
7.5 MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC)

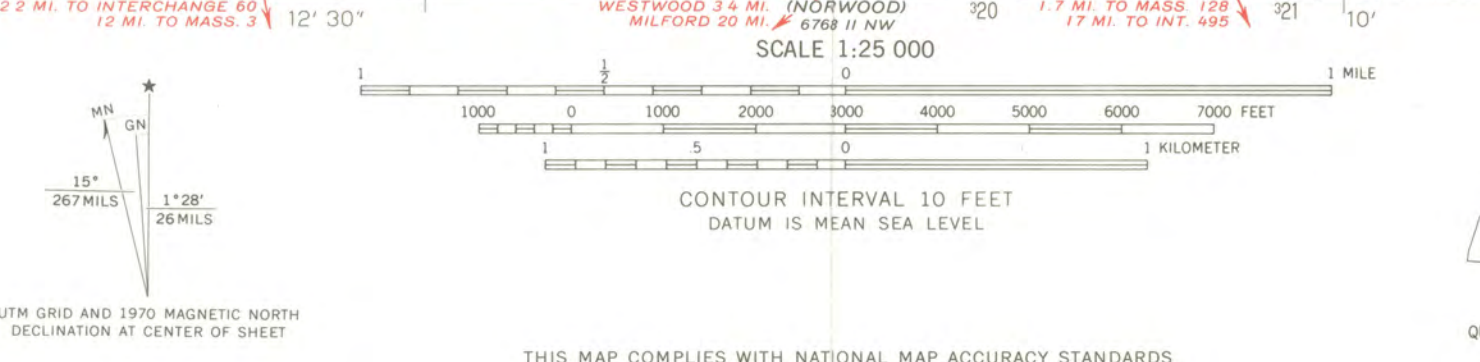


To convert feet to meters
multiply by .3048

To convert meters to feet
multiply by 3.2808

ROSINDALE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
UTM REF.
193245204684520

Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey
Control by USGS, USC&GS, and Massachusetts Geodetic Survey
Planimetry by photogrammetric methods from aerial photographs
taken 1939. Topography by planimetric surveys 1943.
Revised from aerial photographs taken 1969. Field checked 1970
Polyconic projection. 1927 North American datum
10,000-foot grid based on Massachusetts coordinate system,
mainland zone
1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid,
zone 19
Red tint indicates areas in which only landmark buildings are shown



ROAD CLASSIFICATION

Primary highway, hard surface

Secondary highway, hard surface

Light-duty road, hard or improved surface

Unimproved road

Interstate Route

U. S. Route

State Route

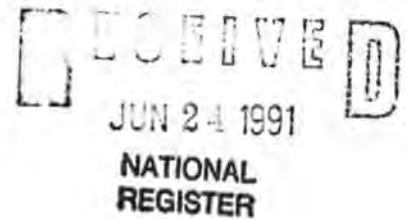
MASS.

QUADRANGLE LOCATION

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS
FOR SALE BY U. S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, RESTON, VIRGINIA 22092
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

NEWTON, MASS.
N4215-W7107.5/7.5
1970

AMS 6768 I SW-SERIES V814



June 11, 1991

Carol Shull
National Register of Historic Places
Department of the Interior
National Park Service
P.O. Box 37127
Washington, DC 20013-7127

Dear Ms. Shull:

Enclosed please find the following nomination:

Roslindale Congregational Church, 25 Cummins Highway, Roslindale (Suffolk County), Massachusetts 02131.

There have been no owner objections for the property listed above.

The nomination has been voted eligible by the State Review Board and has been signed by the State Historic Preservation Officer. Owners were notified of pending State Review Board consideration 30-75 days before the meeting and were afforded the opportunity to comment. No comments have been received to date.

Sincerely,

Betsy Friedberg
National Register Director
Massachusetts Historical Commission

enclosure

cc. James LaBeck, Boston Landmark Commission
Claude MacGray, Chairman, Church Historical Committee
Stephen Cole, Chairperson, Board of Trustees,
Roslindale Congregational Church

Massachusetts Historical Commission, Judith B. McDonough, *Executive Director, State Historic Preservation Officer*
80 Boylston Street, Boston, Massachusetts 02116 (617) 727-8470

Office of the Secretary of State, Michael J. Connolly, *Secretary*