

FORM B - BUILDING

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
80 BOYLSTON STREET
BOSTON, MA 02116

AREA	FORM NO.
	3117

Town Newton, Mass. MRA
NEWTON (West Newton)

Address 1326 Washington Street

Historic Name _____
First Unitarian Church

Use: Present church & parish house

Original church & parish house

DESCRIPTION

Date 1906

Source Church history

Style Neo-Gothic

Architect Cram, Goodhue & Ferguson

Exterior Wall Fabric stone

Outbuildings none

Major Alterations (with dates) _____

Courtyard portal, 1916+

Condition Excellent

Moved no Date ---

Acreage 58,432 sq. ft. (1.3 acres)

Setting Located at the center of
West Newton village, dominating
streetscape

Recorded by Kathlyn Hatch, Peter Stott

Organization Newton Historical Comm.

Date January 1978, April 1986

Photo (3"x3" or 3"x5", black and white) Indicate address of property on back of photo. Staple to left side of form.

Sketch Map: Draw map showing property's location in relation to nearest cross streets and/or geographical features. Indicate all buildings between inventoried property and nearest intersection(s).
Indicate north

(SEE ATTACHED MAP)

UTM REFERENCE 19.316470.4690660

USGS QUADRANGLE NEWTON, MA

SCALE 1:25,000

NATIONAL REGISTER CRITERIA STATEMENT (if applicable)

As an important example of ecclesiastical architecture in Newton and for its associations with Ralph Adams Cram, the First Unitarian Church meets criterion C of the National Register of Historic Places.

ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE Describe important architectural features and evaluate in terms of other buildings within the community.

Dedicated in 1906, the Neo-Gothic First Unitarian Church was designed by the famous architectural firm of Cram, Goodhue, and Ferguson. Its principals, Ralph Adams Cram (1863-1942) and Bertram Goodhue (1869-1924), were internationally recognized for their church designs. In Church Building in Boston (1974), Douglas Tucci cites the Newton building as one of the firm's four most important early churches.

Working with a select group of highly-skilled specialists, Cram produced a series of early 20th-century churches particularly notable for their excellent craftsmanship. The firm was responsible for the furnishings of the West Newton building, including interior wood fittings provided by the Irving & Casson furniture company, pulpit carvings by Angelo Lualdi, and stained glass by Reynolds and Rohnstock. Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr. supplied the landscape plans.

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE Explain the role owners played in local or state history and how the building relates to the development of the community.

The Unitarian faith took its origins as a liberal reaction to the more austere and Calvinist preaching of the Congregationalists. The congregation of King's Chapel in Boston had been the first to adopt Unitarianism in 1782. In the early 19th century, Boston's William Ellery Channing became the leader of the movement. In many of the suburban towns, including Brighton, Brookline, Needham, Weston, Waltham, and Watertown, "the liberals in the churches had secured a majority, and the Orthodox [Congregationalists] had withdrawn, leaving the Unitarians in possession of the meeting-houses and other church property" (Mayo: 6). In Newton, however, conservative tendencies prevailed, the town remaining, as one historian has written, "a rocky knoll of Conservatism in the green pasture of the new faith" (Mayo: 6).

The coming of Unitarianism to West Newton was due to the combined liberal influences of the arrival of the Boston & Worcester Railroad in 1834 and of the Lexington Normal School ten years later. William Parker, the superintendent of the railroad, was a Unitarian; so was Horace Mann (1796-1859), who had acquired the old Fuller Academy building and moved the Normal School into it. Parker, described as the "life and soul of the

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

- John Brimblecom, Beautiful Newton (c.1917), pp. 85-86.
Lawrence Shaw Mayo, The First Unitarian Society in Newton, 1848-1923.
Written in Commemoration of the 75th Anniversary of the Founding of the Society (c.1923). Pamphlet, Collection of the Jackson Homestead.
Henry Rowe, Tercentenary History of Newton (1930), pp. 375-376.
Douglas Tucci, Church Building in Boston (1974), pp. 23, 124.
Douglas Tucci, Ralph Adams Cram, American Medievalist (1975).

INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
Office of the Secretary, Boston

Community: Newton, Mass. MRA	Form No: 3117
Property Name: First Unitarian Church	

Indicate each item on inventory form which is being continued below.

ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE, cont.

The granite church and attached parish house are grouped about a central courtyard entered through a portal tower. The brick and half-timbered parish house contrasts in style and materials with the granite church building, whose offset tower provides the composition's focal point.

The Perpendicular phase of English Gothic architecture forms the basis for the church's design. The gabled nave and flanking tower provide a scheme that is both bold and simple, a juxtaposition of blocky, rectilinear forms that was widely imitated in stone churches through the 1940s.

The detailing, which consists of wide Gothic arches and pier buttresses, is kept to a minimum, allowing for a large expanse of stone wall and an emphasis on the building's massing. Capped with corner pinnacles and crenelation, the blocky tower received a decorative emphasis that reinforces its central position in the building's design.

Flanking the church in a U-shaped configuration, the parish house is a version of Elizabethan town architecture, with shallow pavilions, mullion windows, and corbeled timber-and-plaster walls at the upper levels.

The church remains in an excellent state of preservation. Alterations, which are minor in impact on the building's overall appearance, include the addition of a clock to the tower belfry in 1916, sealing off the open portal at its base, and additions to the interior courtyard.

The west aisle window commemorates the formative role that West Newton played in the educational life of the town as well as the location of the church itself, the former site of Horace Mann's Normal School. An allegorical figure of Education is flanked by Cyrus Peirce, head of the Normal School, and Horace Mann, founder of the Massachusetts Public School System.

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE, cont.

movement to establish the [Unitarian] Society" (Mayo: 11), arranged public services in the hall of Davis Tavern in the summer of 1844.

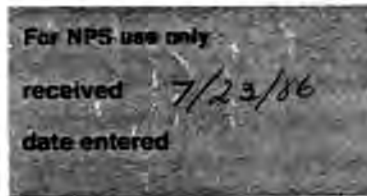
The West Newton Unitarian Church, formally organized in 1848, erected its first building, a wood-frame Gothic Revival structure in 1860. The building was enlarged in 1868, and again in 1887, becoming a substantial Stick Style edifice.

The corner stone of the present church was laid September 17, 1905, and the dedication ceremony took place just over a year later, on October 14, 1906. The church occupies the site of Horace Mann's experimental Normal School at the corner of Washington and Highland streets in the West Newton village center.

Staple to Inventory form at bottom

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form



Continuation sheet

Item number

Page

Multiple Resource Area
Thematic Group

4

Name Newton MRA
State Middlesex County, MA

Nomination/Type of Review

Date/Signature

41. Dupee Estate

Entered in the
National Register for Keeper

Delores Byrum 9/4/86

Attest

42. Elliott, Charles D., House

Entered in the
National Register for Keeper

Delores Byrum 9/4/86

Attest

43. Eminence, The

Entered in the
National Register for Keeper

Delores Byrum 9/4/86

Attest

44. Estabrook, Rufus, House

Entered in the
National Register for Keeper

Delores Byrum 9/4/86

Attest

45. Evangelical Baptist
Church

Entered in the
National Register for Keeper

Delores Byrum 9/4/86

Attest

46. Farquhar, Samuel, House

Entered in the
National Register for Keeper

Delores Byrum 9/4/86

Attest

47. Fenno, John A., House

Entered in the
National Register for Keeper

Delores Byrum 9/4/86

Attest

48. First Unitarian Church

Entered in the
National Register for Keeper

Delores Byrum 9/4/86

Attest

49. Fuller, Capt. Edward,
Farm

Entered in the
National Register for Keeper

Delores Byrum 9/4/86

Attest

50. Gane, Henry, House

Entered in the
National Register for Keeper

Delores Byrum 9/4/86

Attest

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

First Unitarian Church (Newton MRA)
Middlesex County
MASSACHUSETTS

Working No. _____
Fed. Reg. Date: JUL 23 1986 / 2/3/87
Date Due: 8/21/86 - 9/6/86
Action: ACCEPT 9-4-86
 RETURN _____
 REJECT _____
Federal Agency: _____

Entered in National Register

- resubmission
- nomination by person or local government
- owner objection
- appeal

Substantive Review: sample request appeal NR decision

Reviewer's comments:

Recom./Criteria _____
Reviewer _____
Discipline _____
Date _____
_____ see continuation sheet

Nomination returned for: technical corrections cited below
 substantive reasons discussed below

1. Name

2. Location

3. Classification

Category	Ownership Public Acquisition	Status Accessible	Present Use
----------	---------------------------------	----------------------	-------------

4. Owner of Property

5. Location of Legal Description

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

Has this property been determined eligible? yes no

7. Description

Condition	Check one	Check one
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> original site
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed	

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

- summary paragraph
- completeness
- clarity
- alterations/integrity
- dates
- boundary selection

8. 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

9. Major Bibliographical References

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property _____

Quadrangle name _____

UTM References _____

Verbal boundary description and justification _____

11. Form Prepared By

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

____ national ____ state ____ local

State Historic Preservation Officer signature _____

title _____ date _____

13. Other

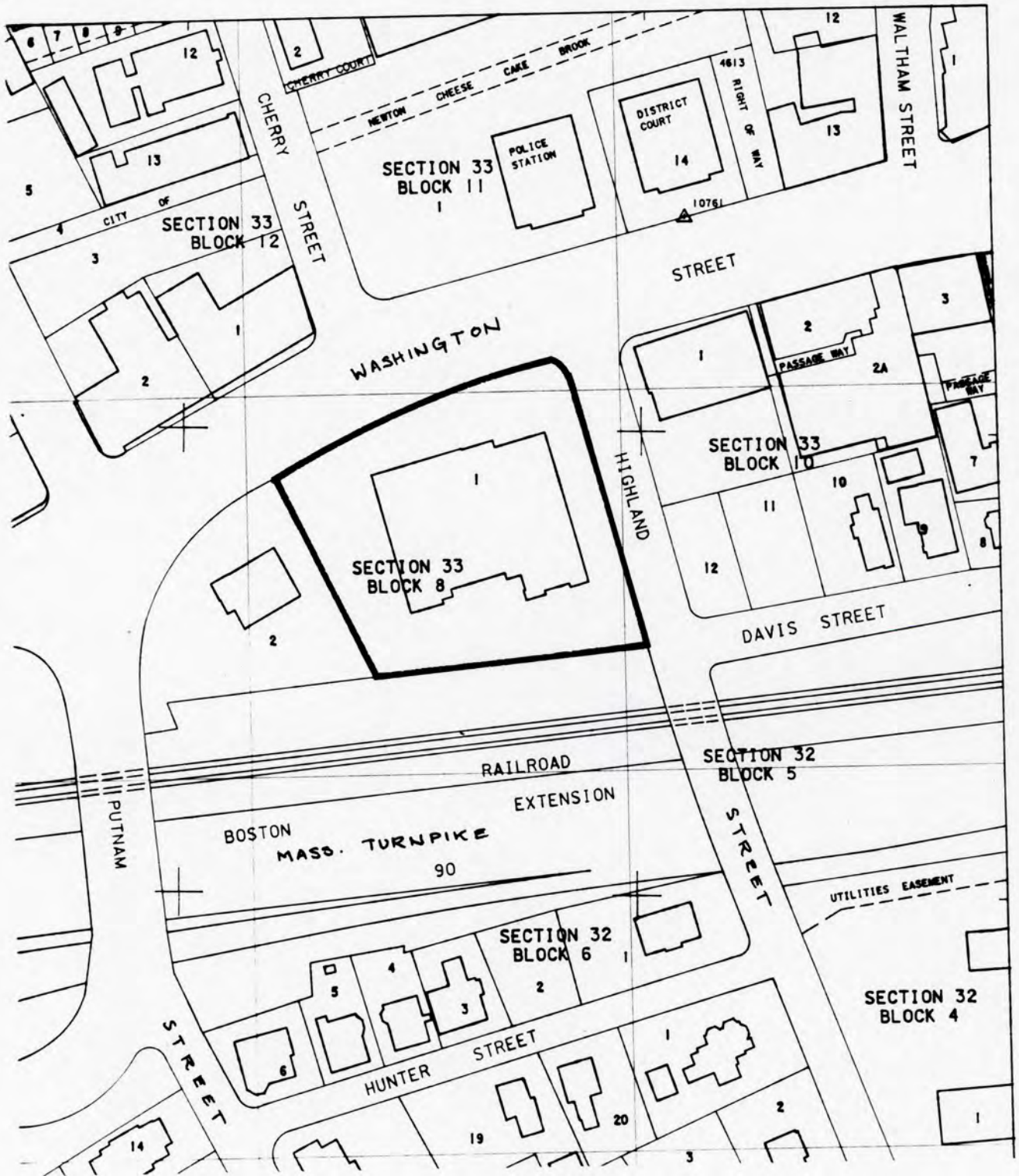
- Maps
- Photographs
- Other

Questions concerning this nomination may be directed to _____

Signed _____ Date _____ Phone: _____



Newton, Mass. MRA
1326 Washington St., West
(First Unitarian Church)
Inv. #3117



City of Newton Assessor's Maps. Sheet 41
 Metric Series. 1979
 Scale: UTM grid line interval = 100 meters (328 feet)

Newton, Mass. MRA
 1326 Washington St., West Newton
 (First Unitarian Church)
 33-8-1