

FORM B - BUILDING

AREA	FORM NO.
MID CAM.	MC II C 2

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
294 WASHINGTON STREET, BOSTON, MA 02108

USGS Map #16

PHOTO: (3x3" or 3x5", black & white)
staple to left side of form

Photo number 78-15

Town Cambridge, Mass.
Cambridge MRA

Address 12 Divinity Ave.

Historic Name Divinity Hall

Use: Present dormitory

Original institutional

DESCRIPTION:

Date 1825

SKETCH MAP

Show property's location in relation to nearest cross streets and/or geographical features. Indicate all buildings between inventoried property and nearest intersection. Indicate north.

SEE ATTACHED MAP

Source deed records, Harvard publication

Style Federal/Greek Revival

Architect Solomon Willard/Thomas W Sumner

Exterior wall fabric brick

Outbuildings NA

Major alterations (with dates) none

Moved no Date NA

Approx. acreage .0358 acres

Recorded by R. Rettig/ T. Alduino

Organization Cambridge Historical Com.

Date 1968/1985

Setting Divinity Hall occupies a tight but quiet site at the end of Divinity Avenue; early 20th century (1930) Biological Laboratories were around it to the rear, forming a pleasant courtyard; the modern Herbaria stands to the north. The Peabody Museum (1859-1913) stands

UTM 19/325890/4693760
Boston Nohht

(Staple additional sheets here) across the street.

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

Divinity Hall was built in 1825 with an elongated rectangular plan and hip roof, the most popular contemporary form for institutional buildings. It is constructed of brick, laid up in Flemish bond, and rises three stories from a granite foundation to a slate roof. Trim, which is confined to windows and doors, is brownstone; windows, in the main block, contain 6/6 sash. This simple building achieves a sense of monumentality through mass and proportion. Rigidly symmetrical, its main facade is organized around a projecting three bay center pavilion flanked by five bay sections. Entries are located in the next to

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

Continued

Divinity Hall was the first major college building constructed outside of Harvard Yard and it later served as a focus for development of the North Yard. Originally it served all the functions of the Divinity School at Harvard: classrooms, library and administrative offices.

The design was by Solomon Willard (1783-1861), adapted by Thomas W. Sumner, who took charge of the project at an early stage. Willard at this time was beginning the most productive period of his career; he was developing the Quincy Granite Railway and about to undertake the construction of the Bunker Hill Monument (1825-1843). His later commissions, all in granite, include the Bowdoin Street Church of 1830 in Boston, and St. Peter's of 1833 and the North Church of 1836, both in Salem. He was a pioneer in the use of granite as a building material, and Divinity Hall is notable as one of his few designs to be executed in brick.

Divinity Hall is significant under Criterion A for its associations with the development of Harvard University.

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES (name of publication, author, date and publisher)

SEE ATTACHED BIBLIOGRAPHY

INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
Office of the Secretary, Boston

Community: Cambridge MRA Cambridge, Mass.	Form No: MC II C 2
Property Name: Divinity Hall	

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

Architectural Significance con't.

outer bays, and are highlighted by heavy Doric porticoes. Elsewhere, windows occupy each bay at each story; at the third story they are set into the cornice, at the second and first they are headed by architraves with corner blocks. The central pavilion maintains a similiar window treatment at the first story, but unites the upper stories with elongated round arched windows which illuminate a chapel. The rear elevation is a simpler version of the facade, maintaining the central pavilion and entry positions. Here however, the pavilion projects by only a few wythes and the entries lack porticoes; windows have the simple flared architraves of the Federal Period. The side elevations are two bays each and simply treated.

Divinity Hall was built in the most popular mode for institutional buildings of the Federal Period: an elongated rectangular form with intersecting central gable pavilion and hip roof. However, it retains a Greek Revival heaviness of detail, particularly evident in the brownstone Doric entrance porches. As one of the few survivors of of this institutional style in the Boston region and as an example of the transitional Federal/Greek Revival style, Divinity Hall meets Criterion C.

Staple to Inventory form at bottom.

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
Office of the Secretary, Boston

Cambridge, Mass.
Cambridge, MA

MC
II C 2

Property Name: Divinity Hall

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

Bibliography/References

- Cambridge Historical Commission. Survey of Architectural History
in Cambridge: Volume I, East Cambridge (1965), out of print.
Volume II, Mid Cambridge (1967), Cambridge, MA
Volume III, Cambridgeport (1971), Cambridge, MA
Volume IV, Old Cambridge (1973), Cambridge, MA
Volume V, Northwest Cambridge (1977), Cambridge, MA
- Cambridge Historical Society, Proceedings (1906-Present), Cambridge, MA.
- D.A.R., Winthrop Chapter, An Historical Guide to Cambridge (1907),
Cambridge, MA.
- Gillman, A. (ed.), Cambridge of Eighteen Hundred and Ninety-Six (1896),
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(1930), Boston, MA.
- Rand, C., Cambridge, U.S.A. (1964), New York, NY.
- Rettig, R.B., Guide to Cambridge Architecture (1969), Cambridge, MA.
- Stillman, W.J. (ed.), Poetic Localities of Cambridge (1876),
Cambridge, MA.
- Woods, R.A., and Kennedy, A.J. (Warner, ed.), Zone of Emergence
(1962), Cambridge, MA.
- Zaitzevsky, C., with the advice of the Review Committee members,
The Harvard University Study of Historic and Architectural
Properties in the Environs of Cambridge, (April 1983-December
1984), Cambridge, MA.

Staple to Inventory form at bottom

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

Substantive Review
EVALUATION / RETURN SHEET

Property: Divinity Hall
(Cambridge Multiple Resource Area)
State, County: MA - Middlesex
Federal Agency: _____

DOE/OWNER OBJECTION

Working No. 11-14-80-2862
Fed. Reg. Date: _____
Date Due: 4/17/82
Action: ACCEPT
 RETURN 6/10/82
 REJECT

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

photos 1
maps _____

Substantive Review: sample request appeal NR decision

Reviewer's comments:

This building is nominated under criterion C, yet there has been no local architectural context provided from which to evaluate the significance of this property, nor is there an explanation of what features this building possesses to make it distinctive enough, in comparison to other local examples of the Federal/transitional Greek Revival style of architecture, to merit individual listing under criterion C.

Recom./Criteria Return
Reviewer Patrick Anders
Discipline Historian
Date 6/10/82
 see continuation sheet

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

1. Name _____
2. Location _____
3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
	Public Acquisition	Accessible	
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"/> unaltered | <input type="checkbox"/> original site |
| <input type="checkbox"/> good | <input type="checkbox"/> ruins | <input type="checkbox"/> altered | <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

Acres of nominated property _____

Quadrangle name _____

UMT 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 Patrick Andrus

Signed Brannan Date 6.10.82 ~~4.28.82~~ Phone: 202 272-3504

Comments for any item may be continued on an attached sheet

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only
received
date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number

Page 10 of 17

Multiple Resource Area
Thematic Group

Name Cambridge Multiple Resource Area
State MA

Nomination/Type of Review

Date/Signature

- 91. Substantive Review Cummings, e. e., House ✓ Keeper Bruce H. Douglas 6-30-81
Attest _____
- 92. Substantive Review Divinity Hall **DOE/OWNER OBJECTION** ✓ Keeper Patrick Anders 9/12/86
owner objection withdrawn Attest Beth L. Savage 9/12/86
- 93. Substantive Review North Avenue Congregational Church ✓ Keeper Bruce H. Douglas 6-30-81
Attest _____
- 94. Substantive Review Prospect Congregational Church ✓ Keeper William A. Bravham 4.13.82
Attest _____
- 95. Substantive Review University Museum **DOE/OWNER OBJECTION** ✓ Keeper Patrick Anders 9/12/86
owner objection withdrawn Attest Beth L. Savage 9/12/86
- 96. Substantive Review Old Cambridge Baptist Church ✓ Keeper William H. Bravham 4.13.82
Attest _____
- 97. Substantive Review Ware Hall ✓ Keeper Bruce H. Douglas 6-30-81
Attest _____
- 98. Substantive Review Cambridge Public Library ✓ Keeper William H. Bravham 4.13.82
Attest _____
- 99. Substantive Review Church of the New Jerusalem ✓ Keeper Bruce H. Douglas 6-30-81
Attest _____
- 100. Substantive Review Busch-Reischinger House **DOE/OWNER OBJECTION** ✓ Keeper Ret 6/10/82
Attest Hanard

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Divinity Hall (Cambridge MRA)
Middlesex County
MASSACHUSETTS

Substantive Review

JUL 30 1986

Working No. _____
Fed. Reg. Date: 2/2/88
Date Due: 8/28/86 - 9/12/86
Action: ACCEPT 9-12-86
 RETURN
 REJECT
Federal Agency: _____

- resubmission *was doc/drawn obj.*
- nomination by person or local government
- owner objection
- appeal

Substantive Review: sample request appeal NR decision

Reviewer's comments:

Locally important building in the development of Harvard University's Divinity School. Representative of transitional Federal/Greek Revival institutional form & style, a rare survivor of this type in the region. Return comments have been adequately addressed.

Recom./Criteria Accept C, A
Reviewer Savage
Discipline Architectural History
Date 9/12/86
see continuation sheet

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

1. Name _____

2. Location _____

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
	Public Acquisition	Accessible	

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"/> unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> original site
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> altered	<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
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- justification of areas checked
- relating significance to the resource
- context
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- justification of exception
- other

9. Major Bibliographical References

10. Geographical Data

Acreage 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: _____



Divinity Hall
12 Divinity Ave.

Cambridge *MA* *Ma*
78-15

Please refer to the map in the
Multiple Property Cover Sheet
for this property

Multiple Property Cover Sheet Reference Number: 64000275