

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

For HCRS use only

received

MAR 18 1982

date entered

APR 15 1982

1. Name

historic First Baptist Church in Newton

and/or common same

2. Location

street & number 848 Beacon Street, corner of Centre Street NA not for publication

city, town Newton NA vicinity of congressional district 4th

state Massachusetts code 025 county Middlesex code 018

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
☐ district	☐ public	☒ occupied	☐ agriculture
☒ building(s)	☒ private	☐ unoccupied	☐ commercial
☐ structure	☐ both	☐ work in progress	☐ educational
☐ site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	☐ entertainment
☐ object	<u>NA</u> in process	☒ yes: restricted	☐ government
	☐ being considered	☐ yes: unrestricted	☐ industrial
		☐ no	☐ military
			☐ museum
			☐ park
			☐ private residence
			☒ religious
			☐ scientific
			☐ transportation
			☐ other:

4. Owner of Property

name First Baptist Church in Newton

street & number 848 Beacon Street

city, town Newton NA vicinity of state MA 02159

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Middlesex County Registry of Deeds

street & number 40 Thorndike Street

city, town Cambridge state MA 02141

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

Inventory of the Historic Assets of the
title Commonwealth has this property been determined eligible? ☐ yes ☒ no

date Sept. 15, 1979 ☐ federal ☒ state ☐ county ☐ local

depository for survey records Massachusetts Historical Commission

city, town Boston state Mass.

7. Description

Condition

☐ excellent
☒ good
☐ fair

☐ deteriorated
☐ ruins
☐ unexposed

Check one

☒ unaltered
☐ altered

Check one

☒ original site
☐ moved date *NA*

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The First Baptist Church in Newton is located at the busy intersection of Beacon and Center Streets. The main body of the Church faces east on Center Street, while the Parish Hall wing extends at right angles to the north and Beacon Street. Diagonally opposite the Church is a sizeable grassed park area, Newton's colonial common. The Church serves as a transition from commercial to residential uses being abutted to the north and east by primarily one story commercial structures and to the south and west by late nineteenth century single family residences.

The Church, with its Parish Hall, is an excellent example of the Richardsonian Romanesque style, with its emphasis on horizontal mass and asymmetry. Typically, it is constructed of rock faced granite with dark red East Longmeadow sandstone trim. The trim forms strong horizontal belt courses, accentuates door and window openings (often round arched) and forms decorative banding patterns. The complex gable roof is covered with gray slate.

The Church follows a Greek cross plan and is enclosed by intersecting gable roofs. The apse at the western end, which houses the chancel, is enclosed by a conical roof. The Parish Hall which is attached to the Church at the northwest corner, assumes a basically rectangular form with projections and is enclosed by a gable roof. The Church measures approximately 85'x135' while the Parish Hall measures 50'x75'.

The Church interior which seats 600 is dominated by four low, broad arches forming the central crossing. Extensive ornamentation, much of it Christian symbols, ranges from elaborate stencilling and gold trim along the arches to a rich, gold frieze surrounding the room atop the dado and again at the cornice line. North and south transepts each have large, stained glass rose windows dominating the gable ends and a similar half rose window throughout are opalescent glass, in the style of LaFarge and Tiffany, and have been maintained in excellent condition. The clock which hangs on the east wall was built by Simon Willard in 1826 and hung as well in both of the Church's earlier buildings. The original carved oak pews have remained unchanged.

In 1963 an educational wing was added abutting the west edge of the Parish Hall and running parallel to Beacon Street. Measuring from 50 feet by 75 feet, it is 2½ stories above grade, flat roof, sheathed in split faced composition stone. It houses classrooms, offices, nursery, and a large parlor. Architects were Harold C. Knight Associates (later Knight, Bagge and Anderson), Boston. The building is not sensitively added, but detracts minimally from the original buildings because of its location at one edge.

Alterations to the original buildings except to attach the educational wing have been minor involving principally modernizing the Parish Hall (Chapel) and rearranging elements (organ, pulpit, choir) in the chancel. Electric lighting was added to the Church in 1901.

The main elevation (east) consists of a broad gable, a projecting porch and a tall bell tower at its northern corner. The porch contains a triple arched Syrian portal reached by a flight of three steps. It is decorated with patterned sandstone bands and topped by a trefoil pierced parapet. The gable contains a large semicircular light with radiating sandstone bars at its base and is also decorated with patterned sandstone bands. A triple window lights its apex, above which rises a sandstone cross. The tower rises from a square buttressed base to an eight sided configuration and is enclosed by a polygonal roof. Gargoyles project from

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received	
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four sides of the tower at mid height; above this are eight tall round arched openings behind which is the belfrey.

The south elevation is dominated by the broad gable of the transept arm which contains a large rose window set within a round arch. The west elevation consists of the conical roofed apse which contains four round arched windows, and a small polygonal projection at the southern corner. The north elevation, like the south, is dominated by the transept arm containing a rose window. The Parish House continues the design elements of the Church with the exception of the windows which are square headed rather than arched. Chimney stacks rise from it north and south elevations and polygonal projections are located at each corner with the exception of the southwest which is attached to the Church.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
☐ prehistoric	☐ archeology-prehistoric	☐ community planning	☐ landscape architecture	☒ religion
☐ 1400–1499	☐ archeology-historic	☐ conservation	☐ law	☐ science
☐ 1500–1599	☐ agriculture	☐ economics	☐ literature	☐ sculpture
☐ 1600–1699	☒ architecture	☐ education	☐ military	☐ social/
☐ 1700–1799	☐ art	☐ engineering	☐ music	☐ humanitarian
☒ 1800–1899	☐ commerce	☐ exploration/settlement	☐ philosophy	☐ theater
☐ 1900–	☐ communications	☐ industry	☐ politics/government	☐ transportation
		☐ invention		☐ other (specify)

Specific dates 1888

Builder/Architect

John Lyman Faxon

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The First Baptist Church in Newton possesses integrity of location, design, materials, and workmanship and embodies the distinctive characteristics of the Richardsonian Romanesque style thereby meeting criterion C. It is historically significant as the home of Newton's first Baptist congregation.

The Church is the work of John Lyman Faxon (b.1851), Boston architect strongly influenced by his brilliant contemporary, Henry Hobson Richardson. Richardson's spirit is evident in the similarity of the over-all plan to that of Trinity Church (1877), of the tower to Richardson's Town Hall in North Easton (1881) and of the porch to Austin Hall at Harvard Law School (1883), as well as the use of Romanesque detailing executed in rock faced granite and brown-stone. Richardson's powerful, uniquely American style was eclipsed within a decade by more traditional classicism, and well executed examples of "Richardsonian Romanesque" such as First Baptist Church are comparatively rare.

Faxon was said to have studied the best churches of Europe and applied many of their features to the First Baptist. The strong Byzantine decoration of the interior is said to have been influenced by St. Mark's Basilica in Venice. Faxon's other churches include Rollins Chapel (Dartmouth College), the Central Baptist Church (Norwich, Connecticut), the First Congregational Church (Detroit, Michigan), and the Mount Olivet Baptist Church (Massachusetts Ave., Cambridge). Faxon also designed the Hotels Kensington and Victoria in the Back Bay, the East Boston High School, and the Ferdinand Department Store at 2260 Washington Street, in Roxbury.

Cost of the First Baptist Church was reportedly about \$90,000. Construction was by the firm of Mead, Mason and Co., and interior decoration was by L. Haberstroth & Son, a Boston decorating firm known for their work on the Colonial and Saxon/Majestic Theatres.

The First Baptist Church in Newton is among the oldest Baptist congregations in the state. Baptists were recorded as living in Newton as early as the 1720's, but growth of the sect was slow and marked by persecution. It was not until 1776 that Newton Baptists were relieved of the obligation of paying taxes in support of established congregational churches. Four years later, in 1780, a congregation was assembled and the next year a rough, unplastered barn like meeting house was begun alongside Baptist Pond (now Crystal Lake). Fifteen years later the congregation was finally able to afford a stove; twenty one years later, in 1802, the structure was enlarged. In 1836, the congregation constructed a larger Romanesque Revival meeting house in a more convenient location, the corner of Beacon and Center Streets. The second building was remodelled in 1856 and 1869 and finally was moved from the site to make way for the present church, the third meeting house, dedicated on November 1, 1888. The latter is now the only one of the three still standing.

Among the distinguished leaders of the church over the years were its second pastor, Father Grafton, minister for nearly half a century (1788-1836) and one of the founders of the Newton Theological Institute (now Andover-Newton Theological School) in 1825.

In 1818, Mrs. Charles Hyde founded the church's Sabbath School, one of the earliest in

9. Major Bibliographical References

Kings Handbook of Newton, M/F. Sweetser, Boston, 1889. Mirror of Newton Past and Present, Newton Federation of Women's Clubs, Newton, 1907. History of the Early Settlement of Newton From 1639-1800, Francis Jackson, Boston, 1854. Tercentenary History of Newton, 1630-1930, Henry K. Rowe, Newton, 1930. History of Newton, Massachusetts, 1630-1880, S.F. Smith D.D. (minister of 1st Baptist Church) Boston, 1880.

10. Geographical Data

Historical Sketch of The First Baptist Church, E.D. Herrick, Newton, 1955

Acreage of nominated property 63.499 sq. ft.

Quadrangle name Newton

ACREAGE NOT VERIFIED

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UMT References

UTM NOT VERIFIED

A 1 9 3 1 9 0 4 10 4 6 8 8 4 7 10
Zone Easting Northing

B Zone Easting Northing

C Zone Easting Northing

D Zone Easting Northing

E Zone Easting Northing

F Zone Easting Northing

G Zone Easting Northing

H Zone Easting Northing

Verbal boundary description and justification

Please see Newton Engineering Dept. Block/Section Map. The church occupies lot 15, block 9, section 62.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state NA code county code

state code county code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Candace Jenkins, Registration Director, MHC, with
Elsie M. Husher, Chairman, Newton Historical Commission

organization Massachusetts Historical Commission date October 1, 1980

street & number 294 Washington Street telephone 617-727-8470

city or town Boston, state MA

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

___ national ___ state ☒ local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

Peter H. Werbycki

title Executive Director, Massachusetts Historical Commission date 12/11/80

For HCRS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

Entered in the
National Register

date 4/15/82

for *William Byers*
Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

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date entered

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Massachusetts. The Rev. Samuel F. Smith, minister from 1842-1854, was the author of the lyrics to "America". Mrs. Gardner Colby, a member of the congregation, was instrumental in the founding of the Women's American Baptist Foreign Mission Society in 1871, while her husband, Gardner Colby, successful dry goods merchant, became a generous benefactor to Baptist ventures and gave his name to Colby Hall (listed on the National Register) at Andover-Newton Theological School and to Colby College in Maine. Other pastors include Rev. William Newton Clarke, author of Outlines of Christian Theology, a book which shaped the theological thinking of divinity students and clergymen alike at the turn of the century; Rev. Edgar Mullins, later President of the Baptist World Alliance; Rev. Emory Hunt, President of Denison University before being called to Newton, and Bucknell University after; and Rev. Gene E. Bartlett, the present minister, who served previously as President of Colgate-Rochester Divinity School.

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

EVALUATION / RETURN SHEET

Property: First Baptist Church in Newton
State, County: MA, Middlesex
Federal Agency: _____

Working No. 3-18-82-804

Fed. Reg. Date: 2-1-83

Date Due: 4-15-82 / 5-2-82

Action: ☒ ACCEPT 4/15/82

Entered in the _____ RETURN _____

National Register _____ REJECT _____

photos ☒

maps ☒

- ☐ 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	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
☐ excellent	☐ deteriorated	☐ unaltered
☐ good	☐ ruins	☐ altered
☐ fair	☐ unexposed	☐ original site
		☐ moved date _____

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

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

8. Significance

Period _____ Area 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

Acreage of nominated property _____

Quadrangle name _____

UNIT 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

Site _____ date _____

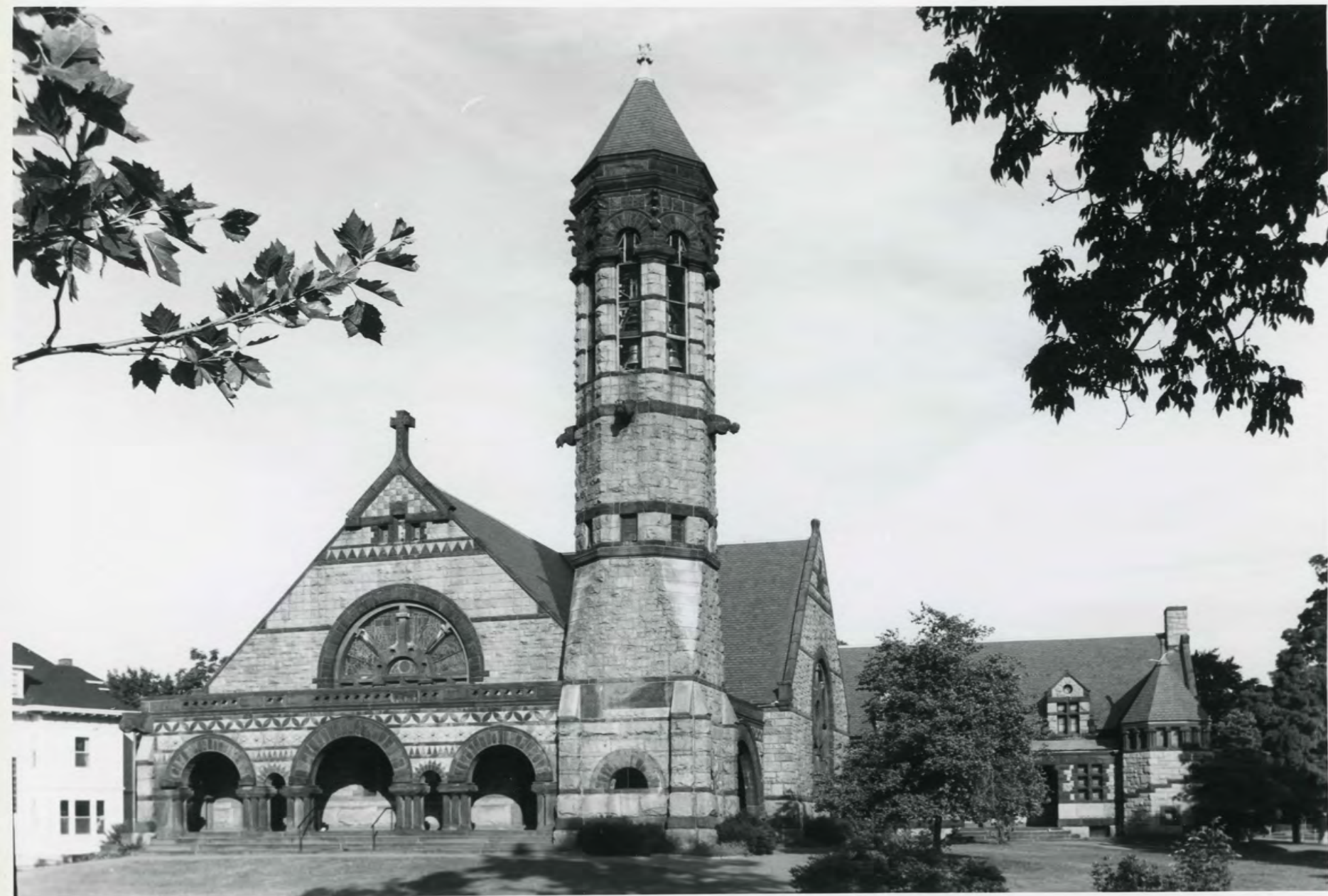
13. Other

- _____ Maps
- _____ Photographs
- _____ Other

Questions concerning this nomination may be directed to _____

Signed _____ Date _____ Phone: 202 272 - 3504

Comments for any item may be continued on an attached sheet



FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH IN NEWTON, MASS

①

EAST & partial NORTH ELEVATIONS

1979

NEWTON, MA

First Baptist Church

East Elevation

Photo by Frank Olney,

August 1979

Negative at Jackson

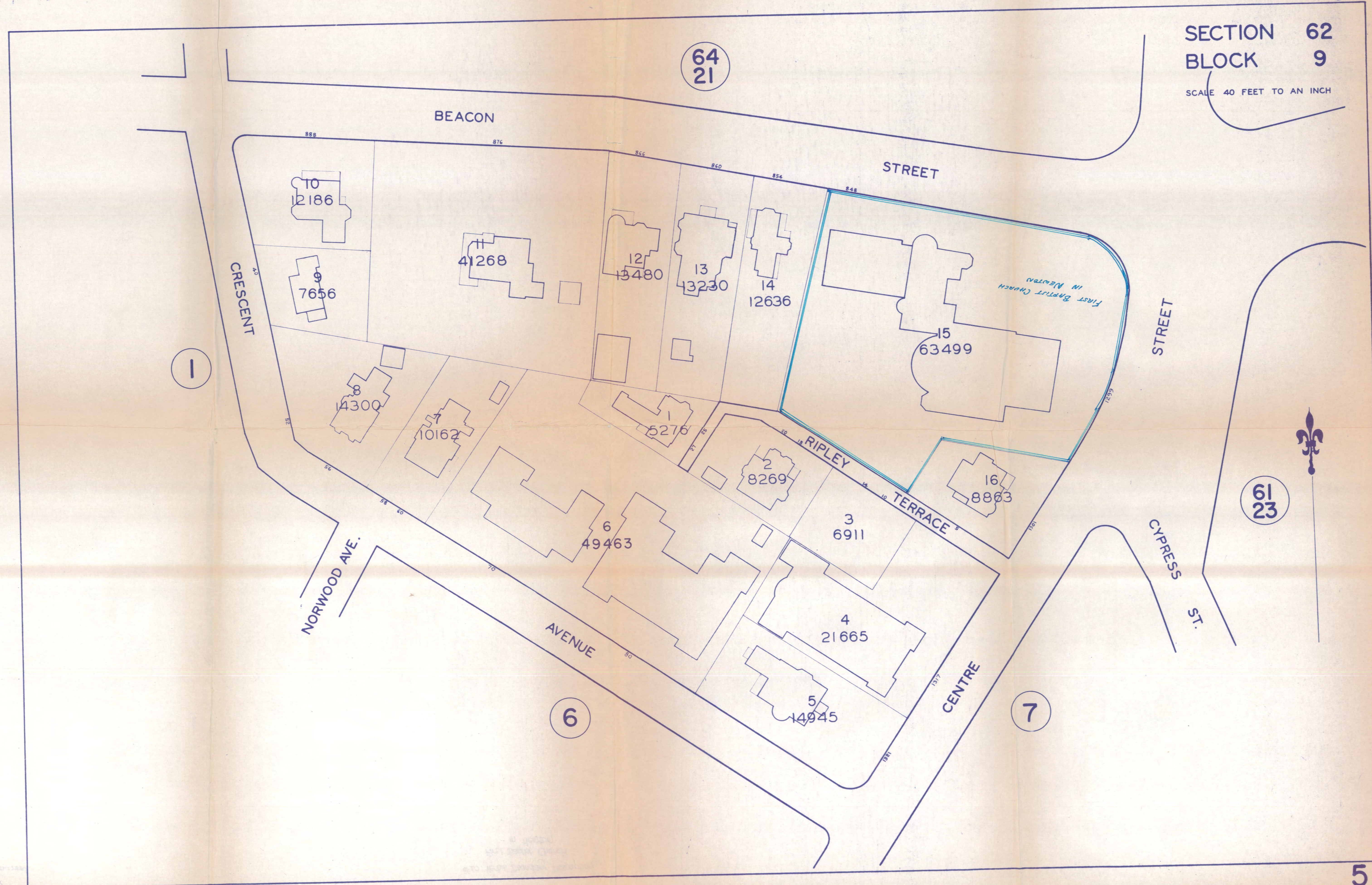
Homestead,

527 Washington St,

Newton

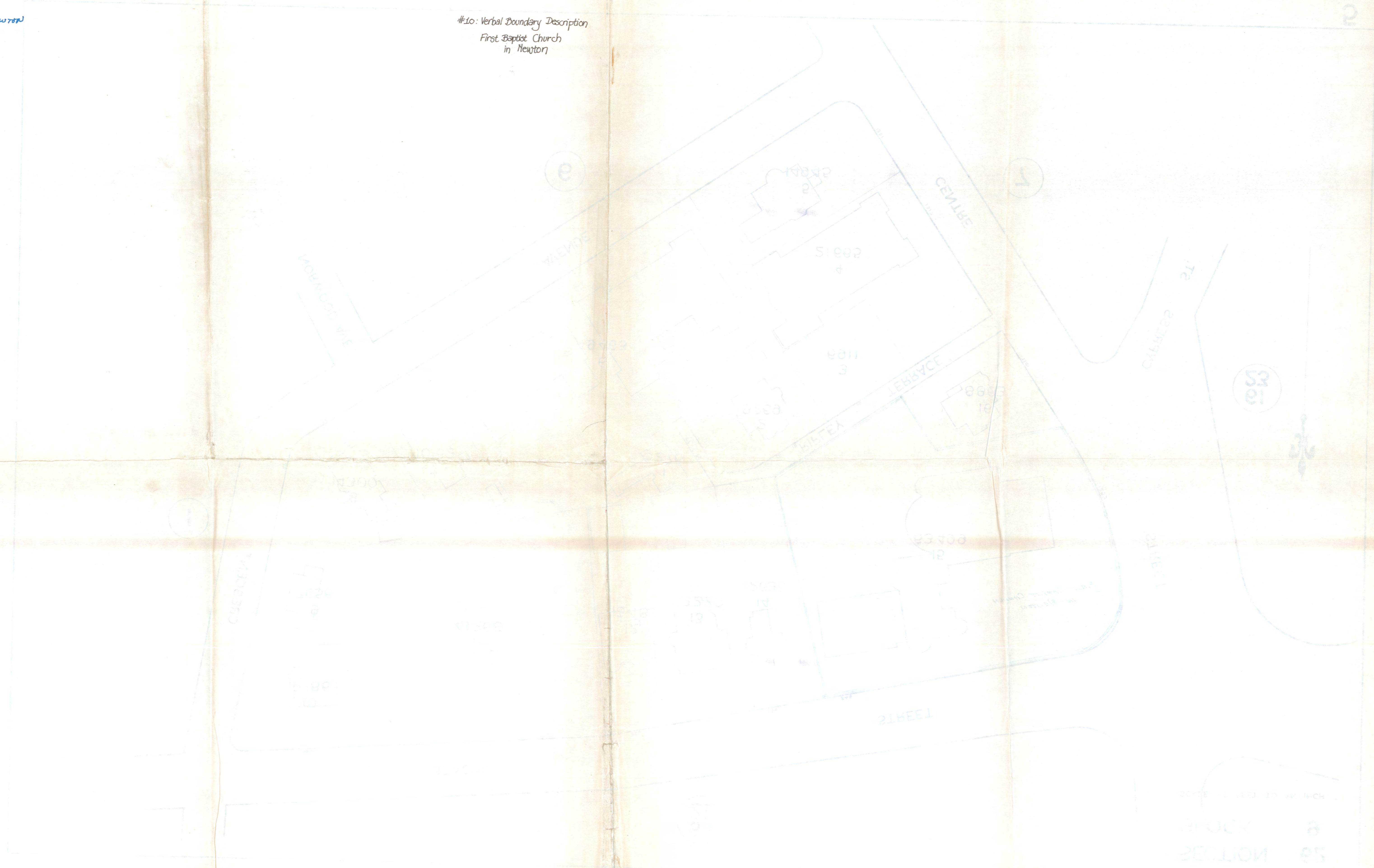
SECTION 62
BLOCK 9

SCALE 40 FEET TO AN INCH



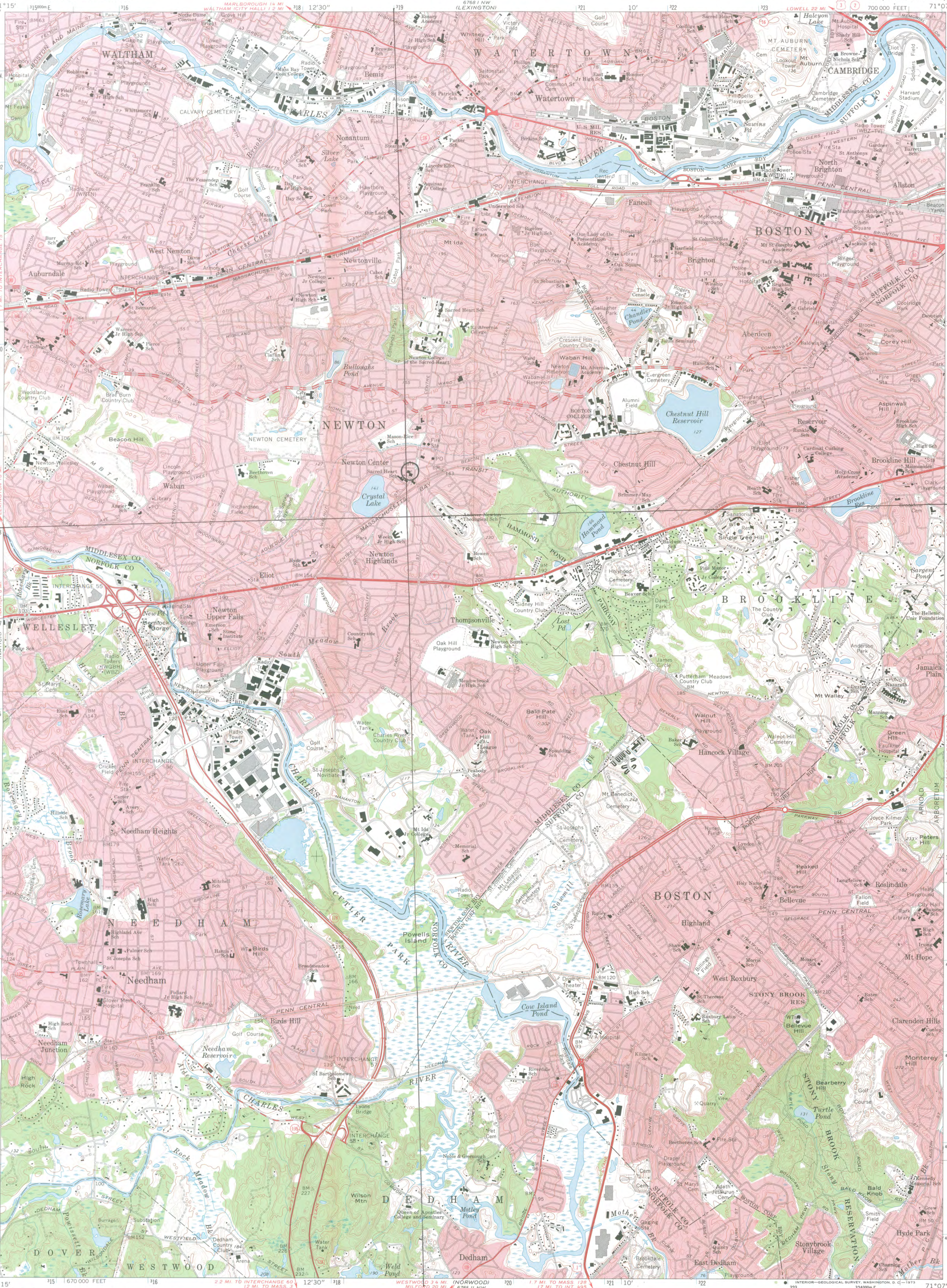
FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH IN NEWTON
Block-Section Map

#10: Verbal Boundary Description
First Baptist Church
in Newton



SCALE 1" = 100' TO 1/4" INCH
BLOCK 8
SECTION 25

NEWTON MA
First Baptist Church
UTM Reference:
19/319040/4688470



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 ticks,
zone 19, shown in blue
Red tint indicates areas in which only landmark buildings are shown

UTM GRID AND 1970 MAGNETIC NORTH
DECLINATION AT CENTER OF SHEET

SCALE 1:24,000
1 1000 0 11000 2000 3000 4000 5000 6000 7000 FEET
1 KILOMETER
CONTOUR INTERVAL 10 FEET
DATUM IS MEAN SEA LEVEL



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

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS
FOR SALE BY U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, WASHINGTON, D. C. 20242
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

NEWTON, MASS.
N4215—W7107.5/7.5

—1970

AMS 6768 I SW—SERIES B184



City of Newton, Massachusetts

Incorporated 1873

CITY HALL

COMMONWEALTH AVENUE AND WALNUT STREET
NEWTON CENTRE 02159

RECEIVED

NOV 24 1980

21 November 1980

MASS. HIST. COMM.

THEODORE D. MANN
MAYOR

Patricia L. Weslowski
State Historic Preservation Officer
Massachusetts Historical Commission
294 Washington Street
Boston, Massachusetts 02108

Dear Ms. Weslowski:

I strongly believe that the First Baptist Church should be nominated to the National Register of Historic Places, for the following reasons:

The First Baptist Church in Newton was designed by John Lyman Faxon, a Boston architect strongly influenced by the work of Henry Hobson Richardson (architect for the Bigelow House, but better known for Trinity Church in Copley Square, Boston). Constructed in 1887, it is a building of high exterior and interior architectural quality in Richardsonian Romanesque style. Many architects and architectural historians believe that this church building is Newton's finest piece of architecture. The building's magnificent features have been carefully maintained inside and out by its congregation.

In 1980, the First Baptist Church in Newton is celebrating its 200th anniversary as a congregation; it is Newton's oldest established congregation still gathered.

Reverend Joseph Grafton, the church's second minister 1788-1836, was one of the founders of the Newton Theological Seminary in 1825, the first Baptist seminary in the United States. It is now called Andover-Newton Theological School and is Protestant interdenominational. In addition, Reverend Samuel F. Smith, minister 1842-1854, was the author of the lyrics to the beloved patriotic hymn, "America."

I enthusiastically support this nomination.

Sincerely,


Theodore D. Mann
Mayor

/eth





**MASSACHUSETTS
HISTORICAL
COMMISSION**

**COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
Office of the Secretary of State**

294 Washington Street
Boston, Massachusetts
02108
617-727-8470

MICHAEL JOSEPH CONNOLLY
Secretary of State

December 12, 1980

Ms. Carol Shull, Chief
Registration Branch
Heritage, Conservation and
Recreation Service
DOI, W434

Dear Ms. Shull:

Enclosed you will find the following nomination forms:

Chelsea-C. Henry Kimball House (Local)
Great Barrington-Searles Castle (national)
Ipswich-Turner Hill (state)
Newton-First Baptist Church (Local)
Richmond-Goodwood (national)

All have been voted eligible by the State Review Board and have been signed by the State Historic Preservation Officer. The owners of the above properties all consent to their nomination.

Sincerely,

Candace Jenkins

Candace Jenkins
Registration Director

CJ/lk



First Baptist Church in Newton
848 Beacon Street
Newton, MA

The owner was originally notified of MHC's intent to nominate on 11/7/80.
A letter of support was sent by the city mayor.

The State Review Board considered the nomination on 12/10/80 and voted
unanimously in favor.

The nomination was submitted to the National Register on 12/12/80; it
was returned to MHC on 12/13/81.

Ownership was verified on 12/2/81 and the owner was renotified of
Massachusetts Historic Commission's intent to nominate on 12/14/81.
No response was received.

ENTRIES IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

STATE MASSACHUSETTS

Date Entered APRIL 15, 1982

Name

Location

First Baptist Church in Newton

Newton
Middlesex County

Roughan Hall

Boston (Charlestown)
Suffolk County

Notified

Honorable Barney Frank
Honorable Thomas P. O'Neill, Jr.
Honorable Edward M. Kennedy
Honorable Paul E. Tsongas

Mid-Atlantic Regional Office, NPS
North Atlantic Regional Office, NPS

State Historic Preservation Officer
Mrs. Patricia L. Weslowski
Executive Director, Massachusetts
Historical Commission
294 Washington Street
Boston, Massachusetts 02108