




United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
1849 C Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20240

March 1, 2011

Notice to file:

This property has been automatically listed in the National Register of Historic Places. This is due to the fact that the publication of our Federal Register Notice: "National Register of Historic Places: Pending Nominations and Other Actions" was delayed beyond our control to the point where the mandated 15 day public comment period ended after our required 45 day time frame to act on the nomination. If the 45th day falls on a weekend or Federal holiday, the property will be automatically listed the next business day. The nomination is technically adequate and meets the National Register criteria for evaluation, and thus, automatically listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

069



National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a).

1. Name of Property

Historic name Grace Universalist Church

Other names/site number Grace Unitarian Universalist Church, St. George Hellenic Orthodox Church

2. Location

street & number 44 Princeton Boulevard not for publication

city of town Lowell vicinity

State Masachusetts code MA county Middlesex code 017 zip code 01851

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

national statewide local

Brona Simon
Signature of certifying official Brona Simon, SHPO, MA Historical Commission

January 7, 2011
Date

Title _____ State or Federal agency and bureau _____

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official _____ Date _____

Brona Simon, State Historic Preservation Officer
Title _____ State or Federal agency and bureau _____

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

for
Signature of the Keeper Edson H. Beall Date of Action 3.1.11

entered in the National Register

determined eligible for the National Register

determined not eligible for the National Register

removed from the National Register

other (explain:)

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public - Local
- public - State
- public - Federal
- private

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- building(s)
- object

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1		buildings
		sites
		structures
		Objects
		buildings
1		Total

Name of related multiple property listing
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

RELIGION: religious facility

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

RELIGION: religious facility

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

Late Victorian/Victorian Eclectic

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation: Painted masonry
walls: Brick & limestone

Church: metal dome
Vestry: metal, shingle, rubber roofing
roof: Towers: terra cotta tile
other: _____

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance of the property. Explain contributing and noncontributing resources if necessary. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, setting, size, and significant features.)

Summary Paragraph

The former Grace Universalist Church (built 1895-1896), now known as the St. George Hellenic Orthodox Church, stands on a 19,152-square-foot lot on the corner of Princeton Boulevard and South Canton Street (photo 1), in the western section of Lowell, MA. The church is a 2½ story, asymmetrical, brick structure with a raised basement, large central dome, a two-towered front façade, and an attached vestry. The design is eclectic, incorporating Romanesque, Beaux Arts, and Classical Revival motifs. Surrounded by a mixture of single- and multi-family residential housing generally dating to the late 19th century, the church is located in the densely settled Highlands neighborhood. The Acre neighborhood and the Merrimack River lie to the north; the South Lowell and Back Central neighborhoods are to the east. The property consists of one contributing building, the church, with an attached vestry. A significant feature of this building is the 70-foot diameter masonry dome, constructed by Rafael Guastavino, Jr.

Narrative Description

Setting

The church is located on the northwest corner of a block bounded by Princeton Boulevard, South Canton Street, Westford Street, and Wilder Street. The building faces north, and is situated in the center of a rectangular lot that measures 100 feet along its Princeton Boulevard frontage, and 208.38 feet along South Canton Street. Both the corner location of the building and its design make the church a prominent feature in the immediate residential neighborhood, which is largely characterized by modest, wood-frame, late 19th-century houses.

The setting of the church was altered somewhat during the mid 20th century, when several large brick apartment buildings replaced two-story, wood-frame houses. One of the brick apartment buildings stands west of the church, on the opposite side of South Canton Street. A brick nursing home (ca. 1969) stands next door to the east on Princeton Boulevard. In 1981, the church demolished a ca. 1890 wood-frame house which stood on the lot abutting the church to the south (along South Canton Street), creating the present church parking lot. Since the parking lot parcel was not associated with the church during the period of significance, it is not included in this nomination.

The 1896 Sanborn atlas shows two large brick churches in the area—Grace Universalist Church on Princeton Boulevard, and Highland Congregational Church (1884) on Westford Street. They are surrounded by wood-frame houses, generally built between 1880 and 1890. The 1924 Sanborn Atlas also shows the two churches surrounded by the houses. The Highland Congregational Church was razed in 1971 to build the present Montefiore Orthodox Synagogue (460 Westford Street).

Exterior

The principal façade (north elevation), which is Romanesque Revival in design, features a central front-gabled section flanked by a short and a tall tower. The raised foundation is brick, covered with cement which is painted and scored to look like stone. The building appears as a heavy and solid structure, enhanced by the use of brick as a building material. The use of brick as an exterior material ties the church and attached vestry together. The brick also provides a contrast with the limestone trim (painted yellow) and zinc dome, which is painted gold and topped by a golden cross. A limestone

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stringcourse divides the mass of the brick walls of the church, while texture is achieved with patterns in the brick. The brick walls are set in a Flemish bond pattern, with every seventh course being black-headed brick on the upper sections of the church.

The main façade of the church (north elevation) is a symmetrical, three-part composition up to the principal cornice. The lower section of the center bay has a set of concrete stairs leading from ground level into a porch. The metal stair railing dates to 1951. On either side of the stairs are small concrete pillars, each engraved with an iron cross medallion. The lower sections of the flanking towers each have a small vertical window. The middle section of the center bay of the front façade has an arcade of three round archways, supported by two columns with composite capitals. Between the ionic volutes of the capitals are round medallions with a Celtic-cross design. From the porch, three doors lead to the interior, with the middle door serving as the main entrance. Above each door is a transom containing three-lights with arched tops. The glazing is green opalescent stained glass with lead crosses. A band of limestone trim runs above the transom and continues as a stringcourse that separates the lower and middle sections of the façade.

Above the decorative stringcourse, the recessed center bay has three brick arches, each with two rows of red-headed brick segments and one row of black-headed brick segments. Above each arch is a limestone Celtic-cross medallion edged with black brick headers. A large limestone panel above the medallions holds a rectangular sign, with the name of the current parish—Saint George—in English and Greek. On either side of the recessed bay are brick pillars that are flush with the lower part of the middle section of the flanking towers. The upper parts of the towers are recessed and contain identical small square windows topped by a sill and blind arch. A wide concrete cornice separates the middle and upper sections of the façade.

Above the cornice, which was originally decorated with corbels, the center bay has a large, stained-glass lunette. The lunette is composed of a central green-glass window, flanked by windows with opalescent stained glass in a fishscale pattern. Centered above the lunette is a single, larger version of the cross medallions beneath the limestone panel. The center bay rises to a front gable trimmed by a corbelled cornice.

The short northeast tower rises one story above the central gable. Although the tower has a bell deck, there is no evidence of a bell having hung there. An arcade of windows with triple arches, columns, and panels can be seen on all four sides of the tower. The tower has a low pyramidal roof covered with terra-cotta tiles.

The northwest corner rises at least three stories above the core of the church. It is capped by a bell deck containing two arched openings, covered with louvers on each of its four sides. The low, pyramidal, terra-cotta roof is an alteration. Originally, a polygonal cupola capped by a conical roof completed the tower (figure 2). That section was damaged in the New England Hurricane of 1938.

The west elevation of the church projects beyond the tower, and follows the design of the main façade. The three-bay elevation is divided horizontally by the masonry stringcourse. The lower section has a small window in the center of each side bay. Above the stringcourse, small arches are aligned over the two windows. The upper section of the west elevation has a center bay with a stained-glass window, while the two flanking bays are slightly recessed with five blind openings. A single blind opening is seen on the side of the projecting elevation facing north. The openings are connected by a continuous cornice which wraps around to connect with the north-facing blind opening in the left bay. Above the cornice are arched openings aligned with the windows. The central bay rises above the main cornice to a front gable with a large lunette set into the dome. The lunette, which matches the one on the façade, is composed of a central green-glass window, flanked by opalescent stained-glass windows in a fishscale pattern. The apex and base of the gable are decorated with acroteria. A similar lunette is located on the south elevation of the church, where it meets the attached vestry.

The east elevation of the church is identical to the west elevation, except for the southernmost bay having only four blind openings, and a projecting brick chimney that rises from the southeast corner of the church. The tall, square chimney has chamfered corners and a corbelled top. The brick is laid in a Flemish-bond pattern with a seventh course of black headers. A cross made from headers decorates each of the four sides of the chimney. The masonry stringcourse that divides the building horizontally continues around the chimney.

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Interior

Just inside the main entrance to the church lies the vestibule, known as the narthex in Orthodox architecture. Of the three doors from the exterior, only the center door is used today. The other two doors are blocked, and light oak service tables face each other, flanking the central doorway.

On the south wall of the narthex, a set of plate-glass double doors, between pilasters, lead into the auditorium. On either side of the doors are plate-glass windows. Under the windows are cabinets known as *pangaria*, which are filled with sand to hold candles. (The original configuration had two central columns and a double door, flanked by a set of additional double doors.)

On either side of the narthex are two equal-sized rooms, which are at the base of the two towers. The narthex and side rooms all have woodwork of quartered oak with a rich dark stain. The room on the west is the former treasury room, which contains a large metal safe recessed into the south wall. The room on the east side of the narthex was once a waiting room, but is now used for storage. Staircases on either side of the narthex lead up to the second-floor galleries of the auditorium.

The auditorium, or nave, is a large two-story room, topped by a 70-foot diameter dome. The Guastavino dome, which forms the ceiling of the auditorium, is constructed of interlocking terra-cotta tiles, and is supported by a steel tension band embedded in masonry (figure 1). The tiles were visible until 1973, when they were covered with the present plaster and religious iconography. The tiles remain exposed in the vault over the choir gallery (photo 3). The dome is punctuated by three stained-glass lunettes, one each on the east, west, and south walls, which have been described with the exterior features.

The walls of the auditorium, up to their junction with the dome, are painted blue, and the oak woodwork is painted white. The four corner walls are concave, giving the auditorium its circular shape. A white cornice, decorated with rosettes and golden crosses, visually separates the dome from the walls of the auditorium. The pews are darkly stained quartered oak, and they are arranged in slightly curved sections facing the southeast corner of the auditorium.

The southeast corner contains the sanctuary and semi-circular apse (photo 2). The curving wall of the apse is decorated with Orthodox iconography and a thick band of gold paint that separates the apse from the sanctuary. The sanctuary is filled with Orthodox items used in the mass, such as an altar and a large, ornately carved wooden chair on wheels. This chair was used by the Universalists, and was reupholstered in red velvet for the present Orthodox congregation.

The apse and sanctuary are separated from the auditorium by an oak iconostasis—a screen used in Orthodox churches to shield the sanctuary from the congregation. The iconostasis, which was added to the church in 1973 for the present congregation, holds various icons central to the Orthodox faith. The iconostasis is set on a stepped base, and is divided into doors and panels of various sizes. The icons are placed in the panels, and a central pair of double doors, called Beautiful Gates, lead to the sanctuary. Single doors within the iconostasis are called Deacon's Doors. There is a triangular pediment centered on the top of the iconostasis, which depicts the All-Seeing Eye in its tympanum. A cross rises from the peak of the pediment.

The icons are arranged hierarchically (photo 2). The center icon of the top row is a representation of the Last Supper. Flanking the Last Supper are smaller icons depicting scenes from the Life of Christ, known as the Feast Cycle. Large vertical panels are to the left and right of the Beautiful Gates, as one faces the iconostasis. To the left (moving from right to left) are the Theotokos, Saint George—patron saint of the church—Archangel Michael (on the left Deacon's Door), and St. Barbara—patron saint of architects, construction workers, and artillery workers. To the right of the Beautiful Gates (moving left to right) are representations of Christ, John the Baptist, Saint Gabriel (on the right Deacon's Door), and Saint Haralambos. The iconographer is unknown, as is the artist who painted the icons hanging on the lower walls of the auditorium.

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George Filipakas (see section 8) created the iconographic paintings on the ceiling dome and upper walls of the auditorium in the 1970s. Arranged in a hierarchy, the icons were painted with egg tempura on a canvas in his studio, and then affixed to the dome and walls of the church. In Orthodox Church architecture, an icon representing Christ blessing his followers is usually placed on the main ceiling dome. On the ceiling at St. George, however, the icon of Christ the Pantocrator is in the center of a round medallion, ringed by a verse written in Greek. Four angels are in the next ring. At the base of the medallion is a ring of twelve figures from the Old Testament—Moses, Aaron, David, Solomon, Samuel, Isaiah, Elijah, Ezekial, Jeremiah, Daniel, Malachai, and Zacharius—holding written scrolls. The next ring of iconography is of the four evangelists. These icons are placed on the walls at the base of the dome between the windows and choir vault. An icon of St. John, in a cave holding a scroll, is above the sanctuary. The icons of St. Mark, St. Luke, and St. Matthew are also present. The icon on the wall of the apse is the Platytera, or “Queen of Heaven,” depicting the Theotokos flanked by angels with the Christ, or Godchild, in her lap. This icon’s position on the wall, located between the Pantocrator and the parish level, represents the link between heaven and earth. Archangel Gabriel and Archangel Michael flank the Theotakos inside the apse. Flanking the entire apse are the twelve apostles, seated six on each side. Below the apse along the floor of the sanctuary, hidden from the view of the parish, is another tier of painted icons.

The south wall of the auditorium is recessed and is divided vertically into three bays by pilasters, and horizontally into two sections by wood molding. In the lower section an icon hangs in the right bay, while the left bay is obscured by the iconostasis. A bishop’s throne, an elaborately decorated wooden seat holding an icon of Christ, sits against the lower central bay, between the double-seat set on an oak base, known as a *stacidia*, and a table holding two smaller icons. In the upper section, above the wooden architrave and cornice, the central bay holds a large framed icon of Christ. The two side bays have a decorative metal grill in the center of the bay. Below the grill in the left bay is a metal vent.

An arched, two-story opening in the southwest corner of the auditorium leads to a lower chapel and an upper gallery. Two single-story Ionic columns are at the entry to the chapel. In the lower chapel, the columns are flanked by decorative wooden stands for holding icons and candles. Above the columns, in the entablature, are decorative corbels with golden crosses. Icons decorate the chapel walls, and a doorway leads into the vestry. The upper gallery consists of a solid wood wall, topped by a decorative wrought-iron banister. Darkly stained oak pews are arranged in the gallery.

The west wall of the auditorium is twice-recessed. The inner section consists of a wall from the floor to the base of the dome. In the lower section, an oak frame, painted white, holds five Orthodox icons in its panels. Five hanging oil lamps are mounted on the cornice of the frame, one over each icon. In the center of the upper wall is a stained-glass window, depicting an angel holding a ceremonial item. The wall is separated from the dome by a set of decorative wooden rails.

An arched, two-story opening in the northwest corner of the auditorium leads to another chapel with gallery above. The chapel contains a large icon of Saint Demetrios, a revered Orthodox military figure who is often paired with Saint George. The gallery has darkly stained oak pews, and also holds an air conditioning unit.

The north wall of the auditorium has a choir gallery that projects over the vestibule (photo 3). The choir gallery has a solid balustrade, topped by a wrought-iron rail. A barrel vaulted alcove above the choir gallery houses a ca.1838 George Stevens organ. Originally housed in the Universalist Church on Shattuck Street, it was restored, given a new quartered-oak case, and moved to its present location in 1895.

The northeast corner of the auditorium is identical to the northwest and southwest corners. In the lower chapel is a large icon of St. Nectarios. The upper gallery has darkly stained oak pews and holds an air conditioning unit.

The east wall of the auditorium is similar to the west wall. The last section of the framed icons is obscured by the iconostasis where it connects to the east wall, so there are only four icons and four oil lamps visible. The stained-glass window depicts an angel holding a ceremonial piece.

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Vestry-Exterior

The rectangular-plan vestry is attached to the south elevation of the church. The west elevation of the vestry faces South Canton Street, and the south elevation faces the parking lot. The east elevation faces the nursing home. The side-gabled roof is covered with tin in a standing seam pattern. The ridge of the roof runs parallel to South Canton Street. A chimney is on the east elevation, at the intersection of the vestry and the church. The exterior architecture of the vestry matches that of the church in materials and design. The vestry has a raised basement and brick walls that are set in a Flemish bond pattern, with the upper sections and chimney having black headers at every seventh course.

The west elevation of the vestry has a gray wooden vestibule, a later addition, at the South Canton Street entrance. There are wrought-iron gates leading into the vestibule, and wooden doors leading into the vestry. Above the vestibule is a recessed archway with a small window above. A polygonal projecting bay to the right (south) of the vestibule is a stairtower, and arched windows punctuate its three sides. A metal service door is at the bottom of the stairtower on the south. A masonry stringcourse runs the length of the vestry, interrupted by the stairtower and two recessed, two-story windows with round-arch tops. The lower sash are 6/6 and the upper are six-light sash beneath a six-light sunburst-pattern sash. A bellcote breaks through the cornice line and has a cricket behind it for drainage.

The south elevation of the vestry faces the church parking lot. The elevation has two sections: the gable end of the main vestry block, and a five-bay section with a low-pitched roof. The gable-end section has a barred window opening, flanked by two smaller windows in the raised basement. The brick wall is divided by a stringcourse. The next level up has a single central window, with a segmented arch decorated with three rows of brick headers. The uppermost section has a recessed center with a small opening, and a lunette window above. The lunette consists of a central 1/1 window flanked by two smaller windows with bulls-eye glass.

The five-bay section of the south elevation is recessed, with four windows in the raised basement and a set of stairs leading down to a doorway. The central section of the elevation is recessed, and consists of four 6/6 windows in segmentally arched openings, with three rows of headers forming the arches. A cornice runs the length of the section and over the next section as well. A gray wooden ramp leads from the ground to a first-floor doorway in the slightly projecting bay. Below this doorway is another door in the basement, which is reached by a set of concrete stairs. The upper doorway has a segmented archway with header crown, and is set in a large, recessed, blind arch. The cornice line wraps around this section as well.

The east elevation is a largely blank, brick, gable-end wall with three openings and a central projecting section. The central section has an oculus centered beneath the peak. The north and south bays each have an upper window with a crown of stretcher bricks and a larger, lower, segmental arched window.

Vestry-Interior

The main entrance on the west elevation, and an interior door from the southwest chapel, lead into the vestry's vestibule, which is a small, square room with a closet and stairwell. The closet has a cutaway corner and a Dutch door. The vestibule walls are painted white, and the woodwork is quartered oak with a dark stain. A set of doors on the east wall leads into the main hall, and an over-scaled wooden door on the south wall leads into a side room. The rooms have large, ornately decorated radiators painted white.

The side room has white walls, a hardwood floor, beamed ceiling, and darkly stained woodwork. Floor plans indicate it was once used as a classroom. In the center of the west wall is a fireplace that projects into the room. It has a darkly stained wood mantle, and the firebox is fitted with a radiator. Five plaques, carved in high relief and depicting *putti* playing instruments, are inserted into the wall above the mantle. Flanking the fireplace are 6/6 double-hung windows. Under the northernmost window are light-colored oak cabinets. A double-hung 6/6 window is also on the south wall. The room is open to the main hall on the east.

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The large, main hall of the vestry is used for church functions. It has hardwood floors, pale walls, and darkly stained oak woodwork, and a cathedral ceiling with exposed roof framing. The north wall has alcoves under a massive cornice that spans what was once an opening into the auditorium. The south wall has four 6/6 double-hung windows. A metal mechanical duct runs along the upper north wall, and fluorescent lights and ceiling fans hang from the rafters. A large HVAC unit is located to the south, suspended on the wall.

A raised stage that bows out into the east side of the hall is framed in dark-stained wood with decorative molding. On either side of the stage, doorways lead into small rooms. To the north of the stage, a handicapped restroom has been constructed inside the small room. To the south of the stage, a small room serves as an entrance for those using the handicapped entrance, located on the south exterior elevation of the vestry.

Two small, second-story rooms on either side of the stage are reached by stairs in the first-floor rooms. The second story room to the north has a fireplace in the northeast corner and a closet in the southeast corner. Once the Pastor's room, it is now used for storage. The second-story room to the south is used for storage. Both rooms are lit by a set of three casement windows, each with eight lights. The rooms overlook the main hall, but the view from the former Pastor's room is now obscured by the metal ductwork of the HVAC system.

Second-story rooms are also located above the vestibule and infant classroom. These rooms are reached by a stairwell in the vestibule. The ladies' parlor, located over the infant classroom, has white walls and darkly stained oak woodwork and trim. The room has a cathedral ceiling with exposed timber framing, a chair rail, and a fireplace that has been blocked up and fitted with a heater. On either side of the fireplace are arched windows with six lights in an arched pattern in the upper sash over six in the lower sash. A built-in bench with a beadboard back is located under the northernmost window on the west wall, and continues around to the entry wall next to the doorway. The ladies' parlor has a large lunette with a casement window at its center, and on either side is a circular stained-glass pattern. The original stained-glass center window was damaged a year ago by vandals, and the pieces were placed on the floor underneath the window until it can be repaired. The east wall has casement windows overlooking the main hall. There is a small alcove to the north of the room next to the doorway.

To the north of the parlor are smaller rooms off a hallway that leads into the upper gallery in the southwest corner of the auditorium. A bathroom off the hallway contains a dark wood stall and woodwork, indicating it is original to the building. The former library is located off the hallway to the west, and it is now used for storage.

The stairwell in the main vestibule leads down to the finished basement of the vestry. The stairwell has light-colored walls and darkly stained woodwork on the trim around the arched windows. A framed square section of the wall in the lower stairwell was once a window, but it was removed and the exterior opening was filled in. A small hallway has restrooms along the north wall, a large doorway to the dining hall to the east, and an entrance to the kitchen on the south wall. This area retains the white walls and original darkly stained woodwork.

The kitchen was remodeled in the 1970s by the St. George Hellenic Parish, but an original darkly stained, built-in cabinet remains on the entry wall. Two smaller rooms were opened and combined to make a large kitchen area, which stretches to the east wall, where there is a square central window flanked by two smaller windows. Updated appliances, oak cabinets, and a new serving bar complete the kitchen. A dumbwaiter, installed in 1946, was used to bring the food from the kitchen to the upper floors.

A serving bar opens the kitchen up to the large dining room. Six steel support columns, painted white, are evenly spaced in the room. Four fixed windows are along the upper part of the south wall. The dining room has white walls, darkly stained woodwork, and exposed beams. On the west wall of the dining room is the serving bar in an oak veneer. The oak-veneer paneling continues up to the ceiling above the bar. On the east wall of the dining room are various vents and a hanging bingo board. A doorway in the southeast corner of the room leads to the utility rooms. In the northeast corner is a utility closet.

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The room to the east of the dining room is the boiler room. It holds the mechanical units for the church and vestry. This area is unaltered, except for updating the mechanical equipment. A smaller room, to the north of the boiler room, was the original coal room.

Archaeological Description

While no ancient Native American sites are known on the Grace Universalist Church property, it is possible that sites are present. Five ancient sites are known in the general area (within one mile). Environmental characteristics of the property represent some locational criteria (slope, soil drainage, proximity to wetlands) that are favorable for the presence of Native sites. The Grace Universalist Church occupies a level to moderately sloping parcel that was probably well drained prior to urban/industrial development. Soils on the property are currently classified as the Canton-Charlton-Urban land complex, with generally well-drained, level to moderately sloping sandy soils, and some areas of urban land where soil characteristics have been obscured by construction of buildings, shopping centers, roads, and parking lots. The nominated property is also located more than 1,000 feet from the nearest wetlands, a locational characteristic that could detract from the overall ancient site sensitivity for this location. Given the above information, the small size of the property (approximately 0.44 acres), and construction impacts associated with building the 2½-story brick church building, which has a basement and covers nearly the entire lot, the potential for recovering significant archaeological survivals, both ancient and historic, is low. Construction of the Grace Universalist Church would have destroyed any ancient Native American and pre-1895 resources located on the property. While the 1879 Sanborn map of Lowell identifies some wood-frame houses in the vicinity of the church property, and the 1896 Sanborn atlas illustrates wood-frame houses surrounding the church, no buildings that pre-date church construction have been identified on the property.

(end)

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE

RELIGION

COMMUNITY PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Period of Significance

1895-1961

Significant Dates

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

William Chester Chase, architect

Rafael Guastavino Jr., dome

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply)

Property is:

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

Period of Significance (justification)

The period of significance begins in 1895 with the building of the Grace Universalist Church. It ends in 1961, 50 years before the present, which is the National Park Service's standard cutoff for establishing historical significance.

Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary)

N/A

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance and applicable criteria)

The former Grace Universalist Church (constructed in 1895-1896), now known as the St. George Hellenic Orthodox Church, is a mixture of styles that were popular in the late-19th century. Predominantly Romanesque Revival, it also features a classical, 70-foot-diameter masonry dome, which was the first major project designed and supervised by Rafael Guastavino, Jr. With only three courses of tile at its crown, it was one of the thinnest masonry domes of its day. The dome was constructed of interlocking terra-cotta tiles using a technique known as the Tile Arch System and patented by Rafael Guastavino, Sr., in 1885. Called Cohesive Construction, this structural engineering technique was used in buildings designed by major architects throughout the United States, beginning in 1889 with McKim, Mead, and White's Boston Public Library. The Grace Universalist Church dome is the largest masonry dome in Massachusetts, and one of the largest masonry domes ever built by the Guastavino Company.

The Grace Universalist Church is also significant for its association with the development of the city of Lowell, through the influence of the Universalist religion on the workers in Lowell's textile mills. Universalist leaders formed Improvement Circles for female factory workers and published their essays, poetry, and fiction in *The Lowell Offering* (1840-1845), a periodical that provided a glimpse into the lives of the workers. The success of Universalism, which arrived in Lowell in 1826, required the need for a permanent house of worship. After using several other buildings in the city, Lowell's Unitarians built Grace Universalist Church in 1895. It is Lowell's only remaining church built for the Universalists, who merged with the Unitarians in 1961. After the merger, the building remained a Unitarian Universalist church until 1973, when it was sold to the St. George Hellenic Church Society.

The Grace Universalist Church retains integrity of design, materials, location, feeling, workmanship, setting, and association, and meets National Register criteria A and C, with a local level of significance.

Narrative Statement of Significance (provide at least one paragraph for each area of significance)

The city of Lowell is located 30 miles northwest of Boston, at the confluence of the Merrimack and Concord rivers. Lowell is bordered on the north by Dracut, on the east by Tewksbury, on the south by Chelmsford, and on the west by Tyngsborough. A major urban industrial center for more than a century, Lowell became a town in 1826, and a city ten years later.

In the 17th century, most of what is now Lowell was one of six "Praying Towns" of the Bay Colony, where Christian Native Americans lived. Much of the land was agricultural, with family-owned farms and Native American settlements. After King Philip's War of 1675, the local Pennacook tribe abandoned the area, and the land was sold to settlers. The area remained primarily agricultural until 1821, when the farmland of East Chelmsford was bought by a group of businessmen known as the Boston Associates, who intended to build a mill village for textile manufacturing. Formed by Francis Cabot Lowell in 1814, the group had outgrown its Waltham location.

Transportation improvements became a focus in Massachusetts between 1790-1860, and the 1½-mile Pawtucket Canal was constructed in 1793 as a direct connection between New Hampshire and Newburyport, at the mouth of the Merrimack River. The Middlesex Canal (NRDIS) was finished in 1803, and at 27 miles long, connected the Merrimack River to the port of Boston.

The location of Lowell, at the meeting of two rivers with a supplemental canal system, was ideal for a water-powered factory system. The Merrimack Manufacturing Company textile mills were established in 1822, followed by the Hamilton (1826), Appleton (1828), Lowell (1829), Middlesex (1831), Suffolk (1832), Tremont (1832), Lawrence (1833),

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Boott (1836), and Massachusetts (1840) mills. An extensive canal system was developed between 1823 and 1850 to feed the mills. At the Pawtucket Falls, near the junction of the Merrimack and Concord Rivers, the Merrimack drops 30 feet in less than a mile, which provided the kinetic energy needed to power the mills. These mills employed close to 10,000 workers by 1850.¹

The first mill workers were young women from New England farms. Boardinghouses were erected to house the "mill girls," who agreed to work for a year in the cotton mills. These young women's lives were strictly controlled by their hours of work and by company rules, which regulated their conduct. Regular church attendance was mandatory. Protestantism was the dominant religion in New England during the early 19th century, and the founders of the mills were adamant that mill workers attend services. In 1824, Kirk Boott, acting in his role as agent and treasurer of the Merrimack Manufacturing Company, designed and oversaw the building of St. Anne's Episcopal Church (8 Kirk Street). Employment at the mills was contingent upon the workers attending St. Anne's. At one time, pew rent was deducted from the pay of the workers in the Merrimack Mills.²

Although the idea of universal salvation can be traced back to the third century A.D., it did not become widely known until 1759 when Englishman James Rely published the book *Union*, which defied the Calvinistic doctrine of salvation of the few. John Murray, a former Methodist and follower of Rely, brought Universalism to New England in 1770. He founded the Universalist Congregation in Gloucester, Massachusetts in 1779. Universalism began to spread throughout New England during the early 19th century with Hosea Ballou, a former Baptist minister, as its spokesman. He began publishing the *Universalist Magazine* in 1819, and was joined by his grandnephew, Hosea Ballou II, and Thomas Whittemore on the editorial staff in 1822. The periodical later became *The Trumpet and Universalist Magazine*, edited by Whittemore. It was the leading Universalist newspaper for more than 30 years, earning Whittemore the title of "the most influential Universalist editor of the nineteenth century."

The Universalists pushed for social reform, and were heavily focused on the anti-slavery movement. Later in the 19th century, Universalism shifted its focus to the economic well-being of the freed slaves and the industrial workers of the growing mill towns and cities. According to George Hunston Williams, author of "American Universalism, a Bicentennial Essay," Universalists were especially concerned with conditions affecting women and children working in the mills. Lowell, being a major mill city, was an ideal place to preach the Universalist beliefs.

Universalism was introduced to Lowell when Mr. George Bradburne invited Rev. Thomas Whittemore to deliver a sermon in 1826. As a result of his sermon, a group of men formed the First Universalist Society of Lowell on July 23, 1827. The society consisted of 99 men, many of whom were leaders in the industries of Lowell. Mill owners viewed the Universalists as troublemakers, due to their stand on workers' rights, and most, if not all, of the society's members lost their jobs within a year of the society's founding.³ Thomas J. Greenwood, for example, was the overseer of the carding room at the Merrimack Mills until Kirk Boott allegedly dismissed him for his association with the Universalists. Greenwood later joined the Universalist ministry.

In May of 1836, Rev. Thomas Thayer, pastor of the First Universalist Society, conducted a Sunday Evening Lecture at City Hall in Lowell. Following the lecture, there was a meeting in the Mechanics Building on Dutton Street to discuss the formation of a new Universalist parish, to accommodate the large number of interested parties. The Second Universalist Society was organized September 4, 1836, with Rev. John G. Adams as a temporary pastor, and services were held at the old City Hall on Merrimack Street. Rev. Zenas Thompson, an active abolitionist and prohibitionist, was installed as the pastor on February 3, 1837. A committee to build a church, headed by Otis Bullard and Holland Streeter, secured a lot on Shattuck Street at the corner of Market in 1838. The land was rented from the Locks & Canals Corporation for \$200 per year. Construction of the church began in April of 1838, and the building was dedicated on November 15 of that year.

Rev. Abel C. Thomas, a Quaker Universalist, came to Lowell from Philadelphia in August of 1839 to be the first pastor

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¹ U.S. Dept. of the Interior, National Park Service Lowell, The Story of an Industrial City, pg. 15-21

² *ibid*; pg.51-52

³ Husted, Laura S. "Universalism & Unitarianism in Lowell." First Grace Universalist-Unitarian Church.

of the Second Universalist Church. A prolific Universalist historian, he was the first president of the Universalist Historical Society in 1834. In 1840, Rev. Thomas and a group of female factory workers founded a literary magazine called *The Lowell Offering*. The most well-known of the founders was Lucy Larcom, who wrote poems, songs, and letters describing her life as a mill worker. The magazine was widely circulated, and Charles Dickens reviewed the *Lowell Offering* in his *American Notes*, 1842, saying that the articles "compare advantageously with a great many English Annuals." Rev. Thomas left the Second Universalist Church in 1842, and he sold *The Lowell Offering* to *The Operative Magazine*, which later became the *New England Offering* and ceased publication in 1849.

Although a Third Universalist Society formed in 1843, it was short-lived. In 1888, the Second Universalist Society formally changed its name to the Shattuck Street Universalist Church. Rev. Ransom A. Greene had come to Lowell to serve as pastor in 1877, and by 1892 he was gaining support to dispose of the Shattuck Street church and move to another section of the city. A Committee on Church Property was formed to find a new location, and on October 19, 1893, the Committee voted to purchase land at the corner of Princeton Boulevard and South Canton Street in the Highlands section of Lowell from Harriet Spaulding for \$5000.

Some of the present Highlands neighborhood was part of Lowell at its incorporation in 1826, but land annexed from Chelmsford in 1874 added 1,129 more acres to the neighborhood. Prior to the Civil War, most of the land had been used for farming. After the war, businessmen began building large estates in the Highlands. These estates were later broken up, and by the 1890s, residential subdivisions had been created to provide housing for the middle and upper classes moving into the area.

Several factors led to the middle- and upper-class migration to Lowell's new outlying neighborhoods in the mid to late-1800s. The use of streetcars, starting in 1864, made access possible. Another factor was that waves of immigrants were arriving in Lowell to replace the New England farm girls as mill labor. These immigrants settled near the downtown in ethnic pockets. A third factor was the 1874 annexation of three large parcels of land from neighboring towns, which more than doubled the population and land area of Lowell. Other large land annexations took place in 1879, 1888, and 1906. These factors contributed to the middle and upper classes moving away from the downtown area into the newly annexed outer areas, such as the Highlands, Centralville, and Belvidere neighborhoods. Being largely Catholic, the immigrants did not embrace Universalism. The Universalist Church needed to follow its congregation to the outer neighborhoods, and they chose the Highlands for the location of their new church.

In 1872, William H. Anderson subdivided a parcel of undeveloped land between Westford and Proud streets. The 1879 Sanborn insurance atlas of Lowell shows a few wood-frame houses along Westford and Princeton streets. Lots 13-16, located at the corner of Princeton and South Canton, were eventually sold to Harriet Spaulding in July of 1893. The 1896 Sanborn atlas shows the area with two large brick churches—Grace Universalist Church on Princeton Street, and the Highland Congregational Church (1884; non-extant) on Westford Street—surrounded by many wood-frame houses.

After touring churches in Haverhill, Lynn, Fitchburg, Gardner, and Worcester, the Committee on Church Property held a contest offering \$100 for the best plan for their new church. On April 14, 1894, the Committee issued guidelines for submissions that included their desire for an auditorium-type church that could seat 700 people, with the pews in inclined and circular rows with no aisle in front of the pulpit. The inclined floors and circular pews would maximize sight lines, which was desirable in Protestant churches due to the emphasis on the spoken word. (N.B. The floors of the present auditorium are not inclined.) Protestant churches also emphasized the importance of domestic areas of the church, which encouraged the idea of the church as a home. Hence, the vestry was just as important to the church as the auditorium itself.

William Chester Chase, an architect from Boston, was declared the winner of the design competition on June 4, 1894. Prior to submitting a design for the church, he had taken second place in the contest for the design of the Carnegie Library in Pittsburgh. Chase trained at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and had worked with several prominent architecture firms, such as the firm of Carrère and Hastings. Trained at the L'École Des Beaux Arts, John Carrère and Thomas Hastings were well-known architects who took classical forms from many cultures and incorporated them into American architecture. Chase worked with the firm on the Ponce De Leon Hotel in St. Augustine, Florida, which was

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heavily influenced by Spanish Renaissance architecture. There are notable similarities of form between the Grace Universalist Church, Chase's Neo-Renaissance Central Congregational Church in Providence (1892), and the Spanish Renaissance Basilica of St. Lawrence in Asheville, North Carolina (1905). The latter was co-designed by Gustavino's friend Richard Sharp Smith, and Raphael Guastavino, Sr. After the senior Gustavino's death, it was completed by his son in 1909.

In an undated letter to Mr. Welch, the Committee chair, Chase explained the reasoning behind his design ideas. He wrote, "...all current buildings are imitations of past buildings." Chase's design had a two-tower façade, square massing, a large central dome, and an attached vestry. He stated that brick should be used for Italian or Renaissance architecture, and advised against using it for Gothic or Romanesque buildings. The latter was likely a reference to what is now called the Richardsonian Romanesque style. Mr. Chase felt that the design should not only be consistent with the material used, but that the exterior should express the interior construction. He did comment that the design of the tall northwest tower was influenced by the design of the Mudéjar (Moorish-influenced) tower of the 14th-century Iglesia de Santo Tomé in Toledo, Spain.⁴ Chase strongly advised against covering the dome with a hipped timber roof, calling it "unnecessary, expensive, and in bad taste."⁵ He expressed concern that such a roof would be a menace and a fire hazard, suggested a fireproof tiled dome, and recommended the Guastavino Fireproof Company.

In April 1895, the Shattuck Street Universalists formally changed their name to Grace Universalist Church. Church records include contracts from various individuals and local companies involved in the construction of the church. Contractors included the Guastavino Fireproof Company for the tiled dome; the W.A. Mack Company for copper, tin, and galvanized metal work; Redding Baird & Company for the stained glass; and the Boston Bridge Works Company for the ironwork.

On May 25, 1895, a ceremony was held for the laying of the cornerstone. The church was completed in 1896, and dedicated on April 1 of that year. The interior design of the new church was unique in Lowell in that it had a round nave, called the auditorium, and four side chapels enclosed in a square plan. It had walls of brick, and was nearly fireproof. The auditorium could seat 548 on the ground floor and another 84 in the galleries. The pews were arranged in a curved pattern, facing the pulpit in the southeast corner of the church. Over the main entrance to the auditorium was the choir gallery, which housed the organ brought from the Shattuck Street Church. The organ was built ca. 1838 by George Stevens of Cambridge, a well-known organ builder. It was repaired and modified for the new church by George Hutchings Company, and was given a new quartered-oak case designed by William Chase. The original organ had a side keyboard. A central keyboard was one of the many modifications the organ received. The bellows were also repaired, the *contra gamba* re-voiced, and a new trumpet with 58 pipes added.

The Grace Universalist Church has had many distinguished leaders since its founding. Of note was Clarence Russell Skinner, who is hailed as the most influential Universalist minister of the first half of the 20th century. He served Grace Universalist from 1911 until 1914, when he accepted an appointment as Professor of Applied Christianity at Crane Theological School of Tufts College, later becoming Dean. While in Lowell, Skinner ran a Sunday evening program called the Lowell Forum, featuring guest speakers. In 1915 he published *The Social Implications of Universalism*, which established him as a major spokesperson for the denomination.

The New England Hurricane of 1938 caused major damage to the church. The Church applied for a permit to remodel the tall northwest tower on June 7, 1938. The proposed work was to remove the upper part of the tower and replace it with a new roof, which when completed, survived the 1958 hurricane with no damage.

In 1939, the First Universalist Society began holding services in the the Grace Universalist Church, and in November of 1944 the two Universalist Societies were legally united. The Grace Universalist Parish and Grace Universalist Church became one entity in 1957.

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⁴ Undated letter from William Chester Chase to Mr. Welch, head of the Shattuck Street Universalist Society Building Committee. Grace Universalist Papers. Center for Lowell History, Lowell, MA.

⁵ Ibid

In 1945, the chancel was renovated and dedicated to Rev. Cloyd Valentine, a popular pastor who had passed away in December of 1944. In 1954 the rooms of the vestry were dedicated to former pastors and members. The main hall became the Ransom A Greene Hall, the dining room became the Caleb Fisher Hall, the Ladies' Parlor became the Clarence Skinner Room, and the Primary Room (Infant Classroom) became the Ellen A. Stillings Room.

In 1961, the Universalist and Unitarian churches nationwide united to form a new denomination, and the church became the Grace Unitarian Universalist Church. Financial problems and other issues led to the sale of the church, in October 1973, to the St. George Hellenic Orthodox Church, for \$90,000. Included in the sale were the pews, the organ, pulpit, lectern, and all kitchen equipment. The Grace Unitarian Universalist congregation held its farewell service in the church on November 16, 1973, and in December they began to hold services at a fellowship house, located at 79 Florence Avenue in Lowell.

Meanwhile, the new owners, who were members of Lowell's Greek community, began to redecorate the interior of the church to meet the needs of their congregation. Greek immigrants began arriving in Lowell in large numbers in the 1890s. The Holy Trinity Hellenic Orthodox Church on Lewis Street (1907), was the first church built in the United States to house Greek Orthodox worship. In the mid 1920s, political turmoil in Greece greatly affected the Greek community in Lowell. Events leading up to World War I had divided Greece between royalists and the liberals led by Eleftherios Venizelos. The division reached across the ocean to Lowell, where a faction split from Holy Trinity to form the Transfiguration Greek Orthodox Church (5 Clark Street) in 1922.

Further division occurred when the Holy Trinity Hellenic Parish of Lowell voted to change from the Julian calendar to the new revised calendar in 1928. A group wishing to follow the Julian calendar left Holy Trinity over the issue, and under Rev. Christopher Kondogeorge, they formed the St. George Hellenic Society and purchased the former Worthen Baptist Church, a Romanesque building at 213-217 Worthen Street. The newly formed St. George Hellenic Church renovated and then occupied the Worthen Street building from 1928 until 1973. On the morning of April 30, 1973, a church attendant was lighting a candle when a cloth caught fire, the blaze quickly spread throughout the church. The parish had spent the past seven years and close to \$50,000 renovating the church, which was completely destroyed by the fire.

For the next few months, the St. George Hellenic Parish held services in St. Anne's Church on Merrimack Street, until they purchased the Grace Unitarian Universalist Church on October 29, 1973. The church was converted for use as an Orthodox Church by the addition of an iconostasis, and decoration of the interior dome and walls with Orthodox iconography (described in section 7). In 1977, the church purchased the abutting ca. 1890 house at 24 South Canton Street, which was used as a parsonage from at least 1979 to 1981, when it was occupied by Reverend Theo Vaggalis and his wife. In November 1981, the church demolished the house to create the present parking lot.

Today, the St. George Hellenic Orthodox parish holds services in the church and uses the vestry for church functions. The historic George Stevens organ (ca. 1838) is still in the church, and plans have been made to hold concert recitals once the organ is repaired. The pews were slightly rearranged in the 1970s, and a central aisle was created for the Orthodox procession to the sanctuary.

The Guastavino Fireproof Company: 1889-1962

Rafael Guastavino y Moreno was a successful architect and builder in Spain when he emigrated to America in 1881 with his young son Rafael Guastavino y Exposito. One in the United States, Guastavino Sr. patented a type of structural tiling as the "Tile Arch System" in 1885. The Guastavino Fireproof Company, founded in 1889 and renamed the R. Guastavino Company in 1897, was responsible for designing the vaulted tile ceilings of many historic landmarks, including the Boston Public Library and two Vanderbilt family estates—the Breakers in Newport, R.I., and the Biltmore Estate in Asheville, North Carolina. The Boston Public Library (1888-1895), designed by architect Charles Follen McKim of McKim, Mead, and White of New York, was the first major commission for Rafael Guastavino, Sr., who applied the ancient art of Catalan vaulting using his system of interlocking terra-cotta tiles.

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The use of tile vaulting allowed buildings to have the large, dramatic spans desired by many of the Beaux-Arts architects. The Guastavino Fireproof Co. had worked on many projects with Carrère & Hastings, two architects who had been employed by McKim, Mead & White from 1883 to 1885. Their works include the Central Congregational Church in Providence, Rhode Island (1892), a Neo-Renaissance church that boasts an impressive 54-foot-diameter tiled dome, which was the first Guastavino dome in the United States.⁶ Carrère & Hastings employed William Chester Chase for a period of time before Chase was chosen to design the Grace Universalist Church of Lowell. Chase was familiar with Guastavino and his work, and recommended the company for the dome of the Lowell church. The dome of the Grace Universalist Church in Lowell is the largest masonry dome in Massachusetts, and one of the earliest domes built by the Guastavino Company.

The elder Guastavino remained in Asheville after completing the vaulted ceilings of the Biltmore Estate, and his son took a leading role in the company. Rafael Guastavino, Jr. supervised the construction of the dome of the Grace Universalist Church when he was 22 years old. The Grace Universalist dome was one of his earliest projects, and at the time was one of the thinnest domes ever built, having only three courses of tile at its crown⁷. When the dome for Grace Universalist was constructed, the Spanish terra-cotta tile used was manufactured by the W.H. Mullins Architectural Company, based in Salem, Ohio, but with an office in New York. The Guastavino Fireproof Company had problems finding tiles that were affordable and of a good quality, so by 1900 they were producing the tiles in an old wooden church in Woburn, Massachusetts.⁸ In 1906 the Guastavino Tile Factory, "La Cerámica," was erected at 660 Main Street in Woburn to produce the high-quality tiles the company required for its projects.

Rafael Guastavino Jr. later worked on other projects, including the dome over the crossing of the Cathedral of St. John the Divine in New York (1911) and the ceiling of the Registry Hall at Ellis Island (1917). He was also well known for his acoustical tiles. With Wallace C. Sabine, Guastavino Jr. patented Akoustolith tiles in 1910, which were designed to absorb sound inside large ecclesiastical spaces.

Several buildings in Lowell are mentioned in the Guastavino Company records, which are housed in the Avery Library at Columbia University in New York. Southwick Hall (1897, Textile Avenue), on the University of Massachusetts-Lowell campus, has an impressive Guastavino vaulted tile ceiling in its entrance portico. While a few of the buildings mentioned in the records have been demolished, extant buildings in Lowell that may have Guastavino tile work include Lowell City Hall and the Pollard Memorial Library, both built in 1893 (both NRDIS). There were no other large masonry domes constructed by the Guastavino Company in Lowell, but the Costello Tomb, a small chapel in St. Patrick's Cemetery, may be a much smaller example. Guastavino tiled vaults can be found in many major buildings on the East Coast and several in other parts of the country, such as the Nebraska State Capital (1922-1932) and the Rockefeller Chapel at the University of Chicago (1918-1924).

Both for structural and aesthetic reasons, the Guastavino vaults and domes were popular with leading architects from 1890s to the 1940s. Beaux-Arts designers used the Tile Arch system extensively until after the Great Depression, when the International Style emerged in American architecture. The Guastavino Company remained active until Raphael Guastavino Jr sold the company in 1943. He died in 1950, and the company closed its doors in 1962.

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⁶ Ochsendorf, John. *Guastavino Vaulting: The Art of Structural Tile*. (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2009). Chapter 3.

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ *Ibid.* *Woburn Daily Times*, June 18, 1907.

George Filippakis. Iconographer

George Filippakis, an internationally known Byzantine Iconographer, has decorated more than 80 churches in the United States, Canada, Hong Kong, Australia, and Greece. He currently has a studio in Woodbury, New York. Filippakis was born in Heraklion, on the island of Crete, in 1949. As a child, he attended the Cathedral of St. Minas in Heraklion. By age eleven, he was a pupil of the master iconographer Stylianos Kartakis of the Crete School of Iconography. Filippakis came to America a year after he graduated from the School of Fine Arts in Athens, in 1969. George Filippakis wrote the mural icons for the St. George Hellenic Church ca. 1973. In Orthodox art, icons are considered "written" because they are not seen as an imagined composition by the iconographer, but a literal transcribing of the truth in the Holy Bible. The Greek word *eikonographia* translates as "image writer."

(end)

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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
- _____
Name of repository:

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): MHC# LOW.4010

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property less than one acre
(Do not include previously listed resource acreage)

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

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Zone Easting Northing

3 _____
Zone Easting Northing

2 _____
Zone Easting Northing

4 _____
Zone Easting Northing

Verbal Boundary Description (describe the boundaries of the property)

The church stands on a 19,152 square-foot parcel of land on the south side of Princeton Boulevard. Beginning at the intersection of Princeton and South Canton Street, the property line runs easterly on Princeton Boulevard 100 feet, then southerly along land owned by TRS Willow Associates 204.89 feet; westerly by a parcel of land (the parking lot) also owned by the church 99.92 feet to South Canton Street, then northerly on South Canton Street 208.38 feet to the point of beginning. The Lowell Assessors data card records the parcel as #0104-4770-0040-0000 (4770-40). Note that the church owns the parking lot to the south, but that lot is not included in this nomination. The church bought the parcel in 1977, and demolished a house on it in 1981 to create the parking lot.

Boundary Justification (explain why the boundaries were selected)

The parcel of land the former Grace Universalist Church stands upon is the parcel historically associated with the church.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Kim Zunino, Assistant Administrator, with Betsy Friedberg, National Register Director
organization Massachusetts Historical Commission date January 2011
street & number 220 Morrissey Boulevard telephone 617-727-8470
city or town Boston state MA zip code 02138
e-mail kzunino@lowellma.gov

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Continuation Sheets**
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Photographs:

Submit clear and descriptive black and white photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map.

Photographer: Kim Zunino, Assistant Administrator of the Lowell Historic Board

Date: 2009

1. Exterior, facing southeast toward the northwest corner of the church
2. Interior, facing the sanctuary in the southeast corner of the church
3. Interior, facing north, the choir loft containing the ca.1838 organ

Historic Images:

1. Original interior of Grace Universalist Church
2. Grace Universalist Church, ca. 1900.

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, PO Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

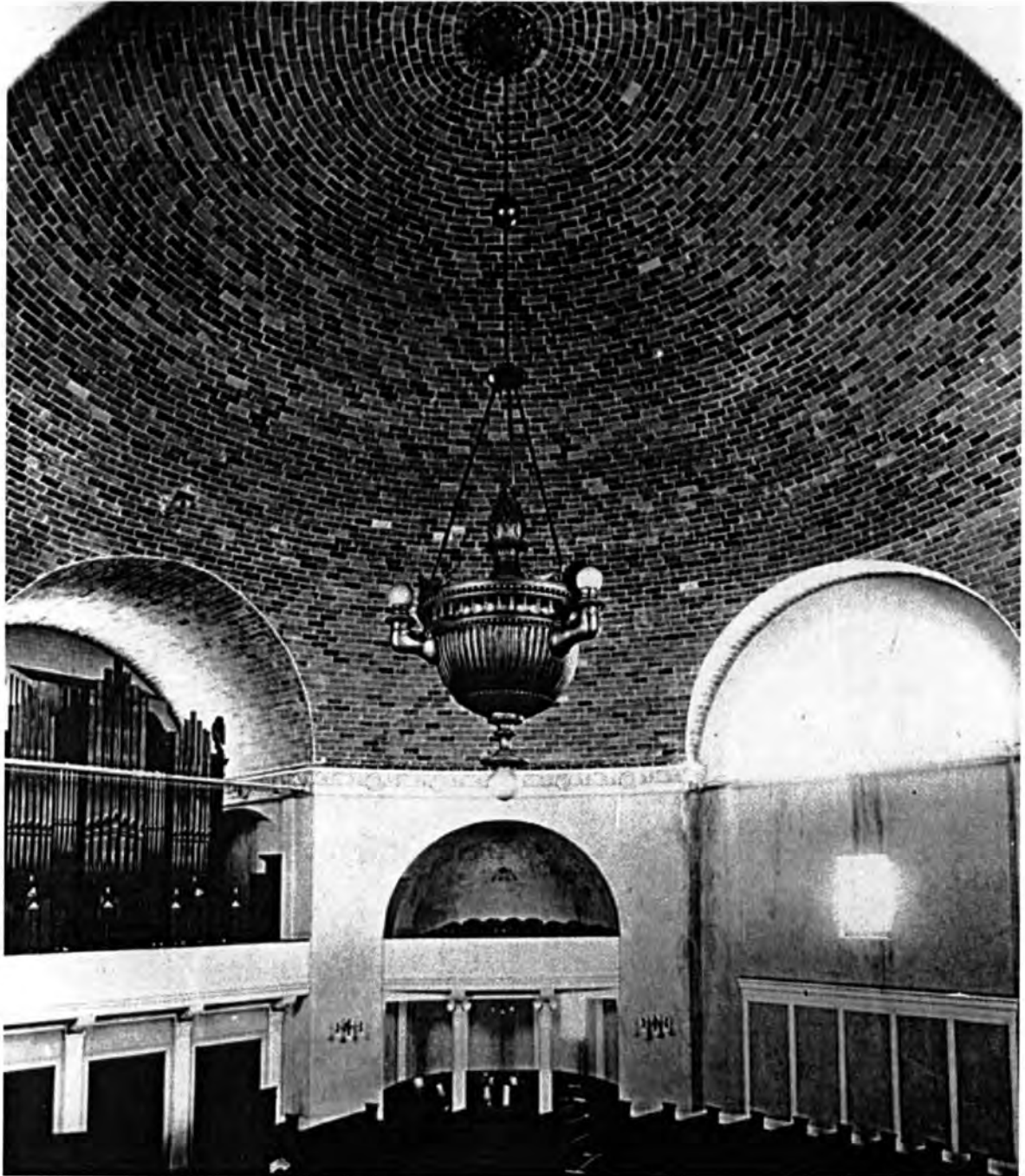


Figure 1 **Original interior of Grace Universalist Church**

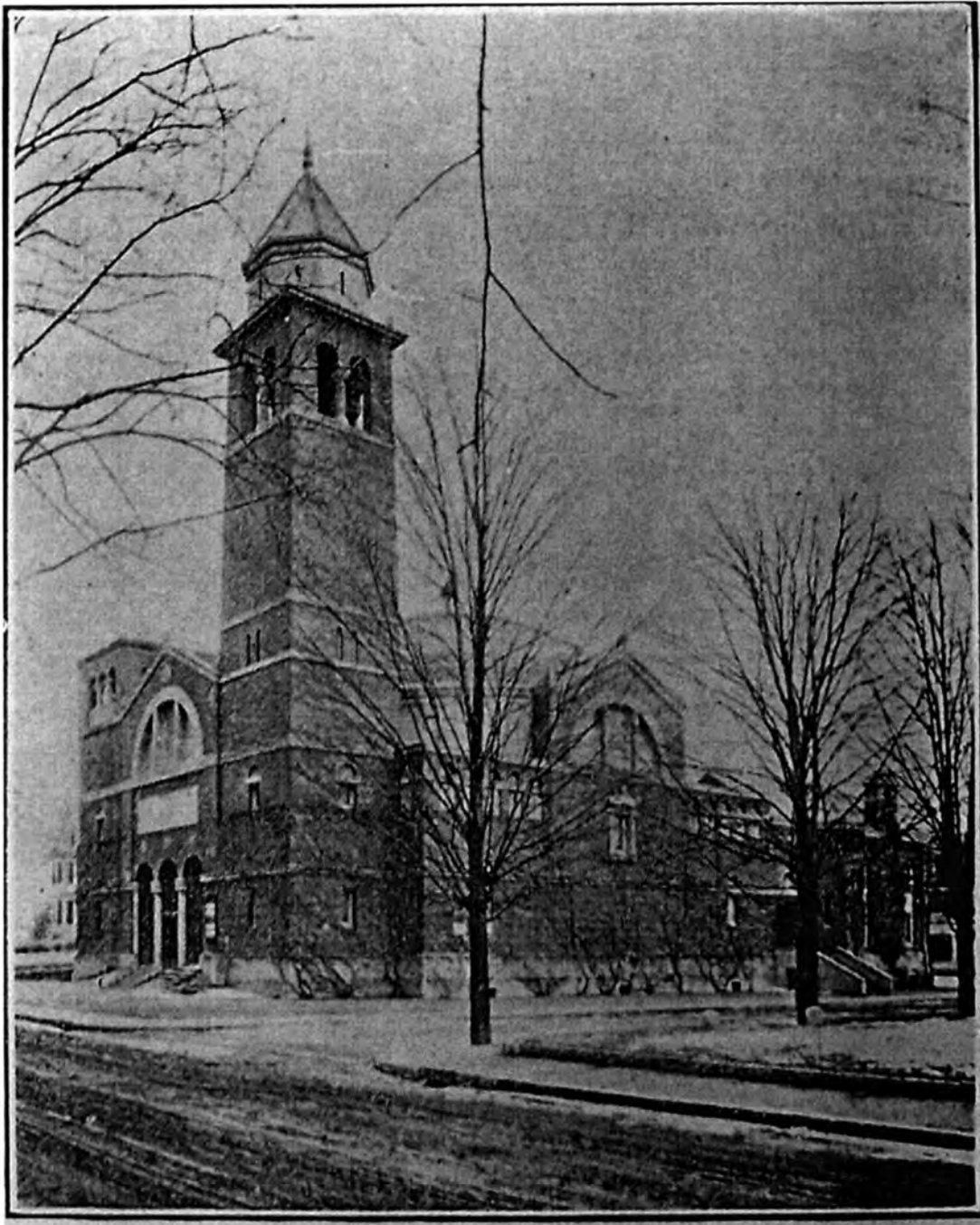
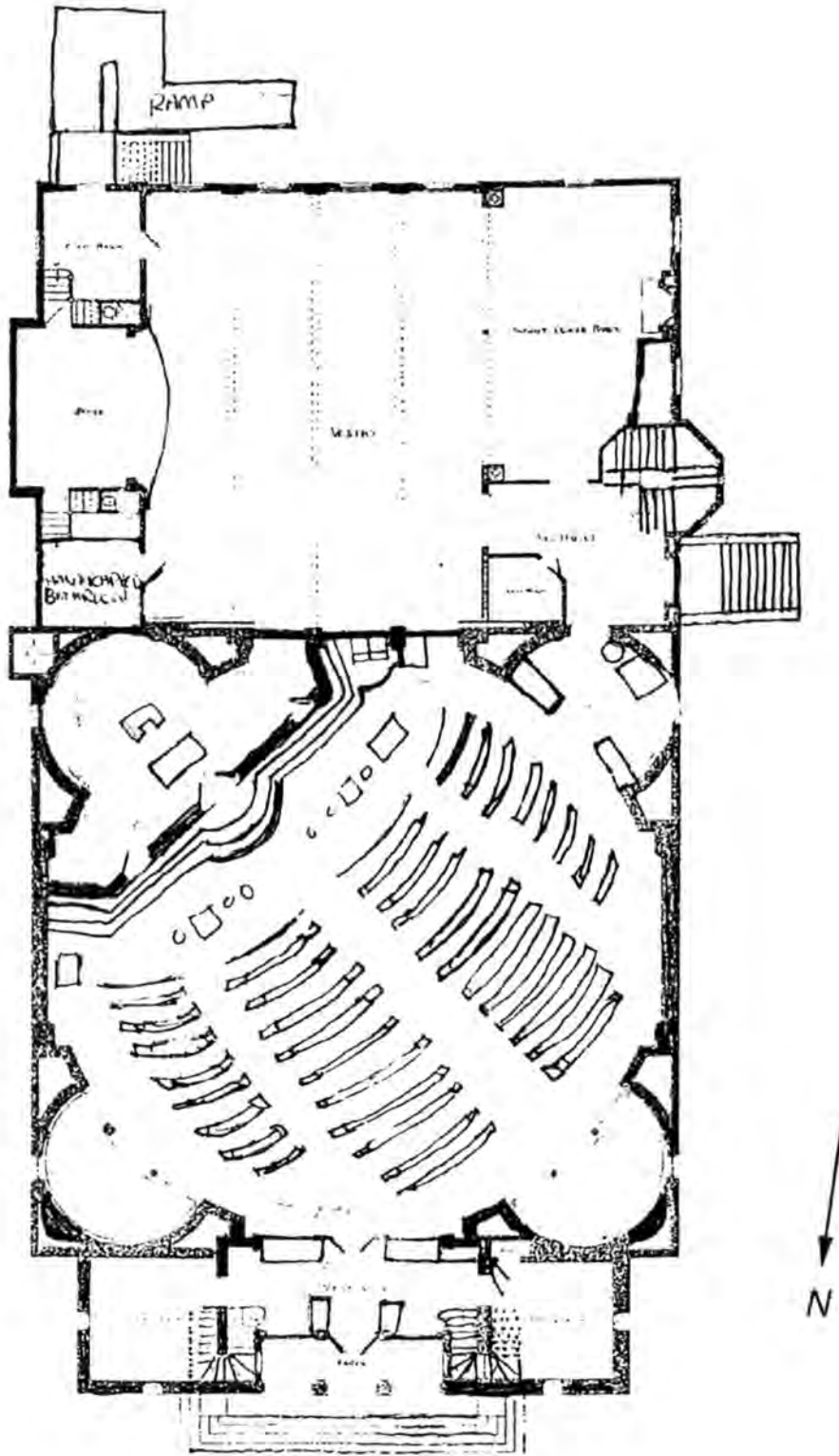
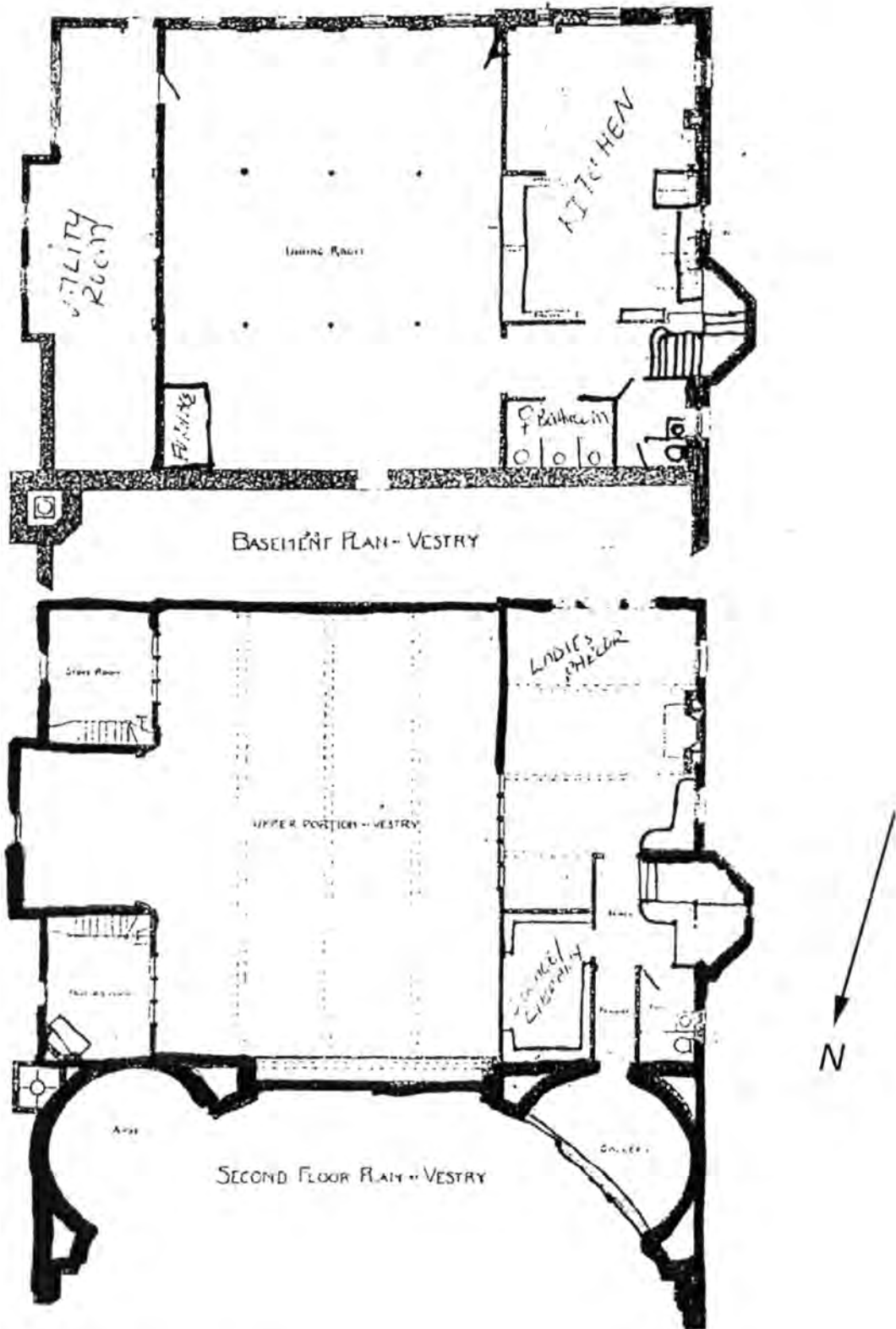


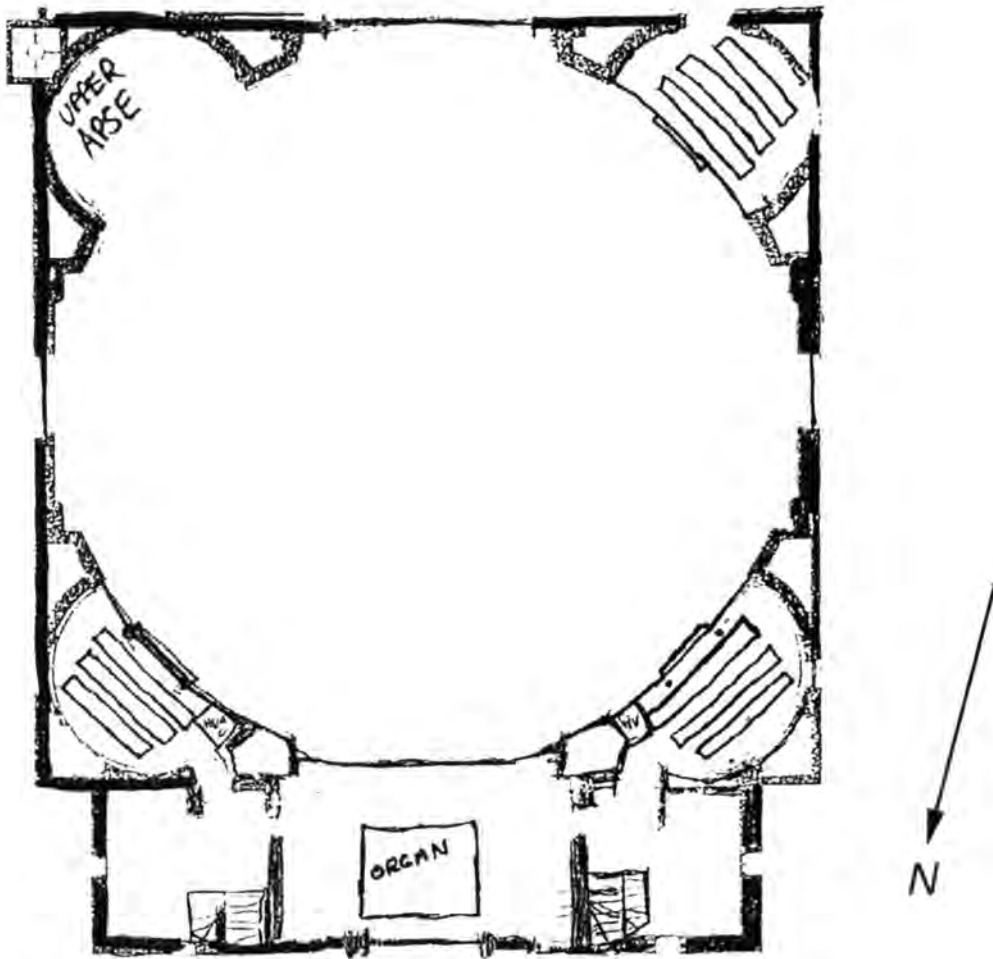
Figure 2 Grace Universalist Church, ca. 1900



Ground floor plan



Basement and second-floor plans



Galleries (Upper floor of Auditorium)



City of Lowell, MA Assessor's Map
Obtained from <http://gis.lowellma.gov>
GIS ID# 4770-40 PARCEL # 0104-4770-0040 44 Princeton Boulevard

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY NAME: Grace Universalist Church

MULTIPLE
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: MASSACHUSETTS, Middlesex

DATE RECEIVED: 1/14/11 DATE OF PENDING LIST:
DATE OF 16TH DAY: DATE OF 45TH DAY: 3/01/11
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 11000069

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 3.1.11 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

**Entered in
The National Register
of
Historic Places**

RECOM./CRITERIA _____

REVIEWER _____ DISCIPLINE _____

TELEPHONE _____ DATE _____

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

If a nomination is returned to the nominating authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the NPS.



Grace Universalist Church
44 Princeton Blvd
Lowell, MA 01851
Middlesex County - 017

EXTERIOR - PHOTO #1

CT-X 02598 <Exter- MA.tif> @ AUX
3502 235 N N N-5---- AC+01 2206.7/100.0



Grace Universalist Church
44 Princeton Blvd
Lowell MA 01851
Middlesex- 017

Photo #2 - Interior #1
view facing SE corner of church

CT-X 02598 <Inter- MA.TIF> @ AUX
3502 235 N N-3--- AC+01 2206.7/100.0



Grace Universalist Church, 44 Princeton Blvd, Lowell MA 01851
Middlesex County - 017

PHOTO #3 - INTERIOR #2

Looking at north - barrel vault
Choir loft w/ 1838 organ

CT-X 02598 <Inter- MA.TIF> © AUX
3502 235 N N N-2--- AC+01 2206.7/100.0

Lowell MASSACHUSETTS-NEW HAMPSHIRE 1:25 000-scale metric topographic map LOWELL, MIDDLESEX, MA



7.5 X 15 MINUTE QUADRANGLE SHOWING

- Contours and elevations in meters
- Highways, roads and other manmade structures
- Water features
- Woodland areas
- Geographic names



1987

Produced by the United States Geological Survey in cooperation with Massachusetts Department of Public Works

Control by USGS, NOS/NOAA, and Commonwealth of Massachusetts agencies

Compiled by photogrammetric methods from aerial photographs taken 1963. Field checked 1965. Map edited 1987. This area also covered by 7.5-minute 1:24,000-scale maps: Nashua South 1965 and Lowell 1966

Projection and 1000-meter grid, zone 19 Universal Transverse Mercator, Massachusetts coordinate system, and New Hampshire coordinate system, and 1927 North American Datum

To place on the predicted North American Datum 1983, move the projection lines 6 meters south and 40 meters west as shown by dashed corner ticks

There may be private inholdings within the boundaries of the National or State reservations shown on this map

CONTOUR INTERVAL 3 METERS
NATIONAL GEODETIC VERTICAL DATUM OF 1929
CONTOUR ELEVATIONS SHOWN TO THE NEAREST 0.1 METER
OTHER ELEVATIONS SHOWN TO THE NEAREST 0.5 METER

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS FOR SALE BY U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY DENVER, COLORADO 80225, OR RESTON, VIRGINIA 22092

CONVERSION TABLE		DECLINATION DIAGRAM		ADJOINING MAPS	
Meters	Feet	MAGNETIC DECLINATION		MAP SHEET NUMBERS	
1	3.2808		28° 15' W	1	2
2	6.5617			4	5
3	9.8425			6	7
4	13.1234			8	8
5	16.4042				
6	19.6850				
7	22.9659				
8	26.2467				
9	29.5275				
10	32.8084				

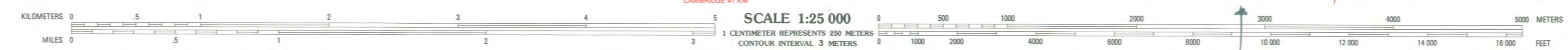


Topographic Map Symbols

- Primary highway, hard surface
- Secondary highway, hard surface
- Light-duty road, hard or improved surface, section
- Unimproved road, trail
- Railroad: standard gauge, narrow gauge
- Bridge: drawbridge
- Footbridge; overpass; underpass
- Build-up area: only selected landmark buildings shown
- House; barn; church; school; large structure
- Industry
- National, with monument
- State
- County, parish
- City, town, village, incorporated city, village, town
- National or State reservation; small park
- Land grant with monument; found section corner
- U. S. public lands survey; range, township, section
- Range, township, section line; location approximate
- Fence or field line
- Power transmission line, located tower
- Dam; dam with lock
- Canary; gate
- Campground; picnic area, U. S. location monument
- Windmill; water well; spring
- Mine shaft; prospect; old or new
- Contour: horizontal station; vertical station; spot elevation
- Contours: index; intermediate; supplementary; depression
- Distorted surface: strip mine, lava, sand
- Bathymetric contours: index; intermediate
- Personal lake and stream; intermittent lake and stream
- Rapid, large and small; falls, large and small
- Swamp; marsh
- Submerged marsh; land subject to controlled inundation
- Wooded; scattered trees
- Shrub; mangrove
- Orchard; vineyard

A pamphlet describing topographic maps is available on request

GRACE UNIVERSALIST CHURCH
LOWELL (MIDDLESEX)
MA





The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

William Francis Galvin, Secretary of the Commonwealth
Massachusetts Historical Commission

January 7, 2011

Mr. J. Paul Loether, Chief
National Register of Historic Places
Department of the Interior
National Park Service
1201 Eye Street, NW 8th floor
Washington, DC 20005

Dear Mr. Loether:

Enclosed please find the following nomination form:

Grace Universalist Church, 44 Princeton Boulevard, Lowell (Middlesex), MA

The nomination has been voted eligible by the State Review Board and has been signed by the State Historic Preservation Officer. The owners of the property in the Certified Local Government community of Lowell were notified of pending State Review Board consideration 60 to 90 days before the meeting and were afforded the opportunity to comment.

One letter of support has been received.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Betsy Friedberg".

Betsy Friedberg
National Register Director
Massachusetts Historical Commission

Enclosure

cc: Stephen Stowell, Lowell CLG Coordinator
Kim Zunino, Lowell Historic Board
Father Anastasios Coulouras, St. George's Hellenic Orthodox Church
Edward Caulfield, Mayor, City of Lowell
Adam Baacke, Lowell Planning and Development

Massachusetts Historical Commission Digital Image Submission Form

MASS. HIST. COMM

Please submit one form for each group of digital images

About your digital files:

Camera Used (make, model): Olympus Camedia C-4040 Zoom

Resolution of original image capture (camera setting including resolution and file format):

5.50MB - 1600 pixels x 1200 pixels TIF image 72 (horizontal) dpi x 72 (vertical) resolution

File name(s) (attach additional sheets if necessary) check here to refer to attached photo log:

① Photo 1 Exterior
Grace Universalist Church.
Lowell, Middlesex

③ Photo 3 Interior 2
Grace Universalist Church.
Lowell, Middlesex

② Photo 2 Interior 1
Grace Universalist Church.
Lowell, Middlesex

About your prints:

Printer make and model: Noritsu 3101

Paper: brand & type (i.e., Epson Premium Glossy Photo)

Kodak

Ink: photographic - light paper non-ink 100yr. archival

Signature: (By signing below you agree that the information provided here is true and accurate.)

Signature: Kim M Zunino

Date: 3/31/10



RECEIVED

APR 28 2009

St. George

MASS. HIST. COMM

Greek Orthodox Church of Lowell

44 Princeton Blvd. Lowell, Mass. 01851

Parish Priest: Very Reverent Archimandrite Anthimos Konstantopoulos
Tel: 978 459 9147



Betsy Friedberg
Massachusetts Historical Commission
220 Morrissey Boulevard
Boston, MA 02125

April 17, 2009

RE: Saint George Hellenic
Orthodox Church, 44 Princeton
Blvd. Lowell, MA 01851

Dear Ms. Friedberg,

We, the Officers and Parish Council Members, support the nomination of St. George Hellenic Orthodox Church, 44 Princeton Blvd, to the National Register of Historic places.

Sincerely

Nicholas Doulamis

George Panidis

President

Vice- President