

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination FormSee instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

For NPS use only

received MAY 23 1983

date entered

1. Name

historic Orthodox Congregational Church

and/or common Pleasant Street Congregational Church (preferred)

2. Location

street & number 75 Pleasant Street N/A not for publication

city, town Arlington N/A vicinity of

state Massachusetts code 025 county Middlesex code 017

3. Classification

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

4. Owner of Property

name Pleasant Street Congregational Church of Arlington

street & number 75 Pleasant Street

city, town Arlington N/A vicinity of state Massachusetts

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Middlesex County Courthouse - South District Registry of Deeds

street & number 208 Cambridge St.

city, town East Cambridge state Massachusetts

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Inventory of the Historic Assets
of the Commonwealth, #360has this property been determined eligible? ☐ yes ☒ nodate 1981 ☐ federal ☒ state ☐ county ☐ local

depository for survey records Massachusetts Historical Commission

city, town Boston state Massachusetts

7. Description Pleasant Street Congregational Church, Arlington, Massachusetts

Condition		Check one	Check one
☐ excellent	☐ deteriorated	☐ unaltered	☒ original site
☒ good	☐ ruins	☒ altered	☐ moved date <u>N/A</u>
☐ fair	☐ unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Pleasant Street Congregational Church (1844) occupies a corner lot at the intersection of Pleasant and Maple Streets near the civic core of Arlington. The immediate neighborhood is primarily residential, characterized by generously spaced single family houses of the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

The main body of the wood-frame church is rectangular in plan with a pedimented frontispiece with a large three-stage tower and spire. The building is sheathed in clapboard with horizontal boarding on the raised basement and flushboarding on the frontispiece and tower, except where rusticated siding appears on the first stage. The entire structure is painted white as it was originally.

The ornamentation of the building is predominately Greek Revival, but exhibits eclecticism in the use of some Adamesque and Egyptian Revival forms. The main block is trimmed on all elevations with a dentilled cornice, wide frieze and fascia at the eaves line, framed by channelled corner pilasters and capped by a low pitch gable roof.

The focal point of the Pleasant Street Congregational Church is its monumental pedimented entrance pavilion and tower. The trim details of the main block are repeated on the frontispiece which is further articulated by a group of more exuberant architectural forms. A pair of fluted and tapered Egyptian Revival columns with flared capitals support the pediment and divide the facade into three bays, the center wider than the peripheral ones. The central entry is probably a ca. 1930 remodelling of the original. Its double doors are flanked by pilasters and surmounted by engaged Ionic columns and a projecting arch moulding. A pair of narrow roundhead windows, separated by a single colonette and trimmed with voussoirs and keystone marks the gallery level. The flanking bays are articulated by simple inset rectangular panels and blind roundhead windows above.

The vertical emphasis of the building displayed by the frontispiece is further accentuated in the tower which rises above. Constructed in three stages, the tower has a rusticated square base (on the main and side elevations) with a central inset flushboarded panel containing a roundhead window and flanking Ionic colonettes supported on an engaged low balustrade. A raking modillion course completes the cornice of the first stage. The octagonal second stage is short, flushboarded, and decorated on alternate faces by one upright volute or a raised rectangular moulding. The elongated third stage is also octagonal with pilasters at each corner, louvered roundhead openings in the four major elevations topped by a wide frieze and projecting cornice. The tower culminates in an octagonal wooden spire with clapboarding.

The original 130-foot high spire, constructed in 1845 a year after the church was completed, was demolished in the 1871 cyclone. Its replacement, subsequently damaged and removed following the 1938 hurricane, was eventually followed in 1964 by the present spire. Although the new spire is slightly different in detailing, it retains the same scale and proportions as its predecessors.

(Continued)

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

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Pleasant Street Congregational

Continuation sheet Church, Arlington, Massachusetts Item number 7

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date entered

Page 1

The side elevations are five bays wide with a one bay, set back section at the rear of the building added in 1883. Fenestration treatment consists of 12/12 windows with simple projecting lintels at the nave level and 8/8 windows at the basement level. The present clear glass of the nave windows replaced earlier, but not original stained glass (see below).

In addition to the above mentioned spire work, the Pleasant Street Congregational Church has undergone several other alterations. These alterations were confined mostly to the interior; the exterior remains substantially as it was when first built. Major renovations of 1883 reflected current Victorian tastes and included painting of the exterior "Bismark Brown and olive, bringing out the mass of fine work on the steeple which was hidden by plain color before"; lengthening the rear by 28 feet; dividing the basement into five rooms; and the addition of interior frescoe work by H. M. Batchelder and "large squares of amber tint ripple glass" to the windows.

In 1909, the church was returned to its original light color scheme and appropriate redecoration of the interior occurred. A two-story Colonial Revival brick parish house added to the southwest (rear) corner in 1955 does not compromise the original design of the church.

8. Significance Pleasant Street Congregational Church, Arlington, Massachusetts

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 1844

Builder/Architect Joseph Sanger (Contractor)

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Pleasant Street Congregational Church possesses integrity of design, materials, workmanship, location and association. It is significant as a distinctive local example of Greek Revival ecclesiastical architecture, as one of the few remaining major buildings of that style in Arlington, and for its Egyptian Revival detailing, a rarely employed style. Further, it stands as the sole surviving early church structure in the town still occupied by its original congregation, and possesses strong associations with the rapid expansion and development of Arlington in the 19th century. The Pleasant Street Congregational Church thus meets criteria A and C of the National Register of Historic Places.

Conformity in religious matters was demanded of the earliest settlers in Menotomy (later West Cambridge and now current-day Arlington). Any 'free man' must have been an "orthodox member of the church, at least twenty years old, worth 200, and taken an oath to be a true and faithful subject and yield assistance and support to the church and Commonwealth"¹. For a full 150 years, between 1630 and 1780, the "First Parish" was the only recognized, legally sanctioned congregation in Arlington. Until 1732 the house of worship itself was in present-day Harvard Square, Cambridge. That year, after over a decade of petitions, Menotomy was granted its own "2d Precinct" parish, which in its turn usurped the fiefdom of all residents of the Village who were compelled to attend worship services except for "just cause."

The first church structure in Arlington was constructed by the residents of Menotomy and first opened for services in February of 1735. It measured 36 feet x 46 feet and contained 18 pews. Seating priority was a function of wealth and prestige within the Village, contributions to the minister's annual stipend, and "age and honor," in that order. The 2d Precinct Parish was formally organized in 1739 and the Reverend Samuel Cooke of Cambridge was installed as minister.

By the year 1790, the Baptists, who had been agitating for religious autonomy since the first quarter of the 18th century, had finally broken with the First Parish Church and had established their own meeting house. Those remaining in the "mother church" were by no means in complete harmony with each other. The rigid Calvinism which had endured for almost two centuries in the precinct of West Cambridge was subject to re-examination by the congregation during the period of enlightenment in the 1820s. Upon the retirement of the Reverend Thaddeus Fiske on April 13, 1828, the sentiments for and against a more liberal pastorate were so intense that Fiske's sermon was distributed in print; he was not allowed to deliver it personally.

(Continued)

¹ Arlington Past and Present, by Charles S. Parker, 1907.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Arlington Advocate. News articles, Feb. 24, 1883; Sept. 14, 1894; Aug. 23, 1895; Oct. 23, 1909; Aug. 24, 1923; Sept. 19, 1938.

Barber, Rev. Laurence. "One Hundredth Anniversary of the Orthodox Congregational Church," (dedication pamphlet, June 7-14, 1942).

(Continued)

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 22,430 square feet

Quadrangle name Lexington

Quadrangle scale 7.5 Minute
1:25000

UTM References

A 19 32251710 4691771610
Zone Easting Northing

B
Zone Easting Northing

C

D

E

F

G

H

Verbal boundary description and justification

The nomination includes the small lot presently and historically associated with the Church. Please see attached assessor's map.

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

state	code	county	code
N/A			

state	code	county	code
-------	------	--------	------

11. Form Prepared By

Virginia A. Fitch, Preservation Planner with Frederick W. Lyman, American
name/title Landmarks, Inc. and Jeffery A. Luxenberg, City Planning and Urban Design Consultant

organization Massachusetts Historical Commission date February 1983

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

city or town Boston state Massachusetts

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 National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

Patricia L. Weselowski

State Historic Preservation Officer

title Massachusetts Historical Commission

date 4/28/83

For NPS use only

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

Entered in the
National Register

date 6/23/83

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service****National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

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received

date entered

Continuation sheet Pleasant Street Congregational
Church, Arlington, Mass. Item number 8

Page 1

After examination by a committee appointed for the purpose of choosing a new minister, and which met at the hotel (Arlington House, now gone), Mr. Frederic H. Hedge was chosen minister. Hedge, a Unitarian, was not popular with the Universalists, who decried his liberal views, eschewing those of Rev. Mr. Fiske. Hedge struggled to keep the congregation together without success. He resigned under pressure in 1835. Hedge's successor, Mr. David Damon, himself a Unitarian, could not heal the rift and in 1840 the conservative Universalists, after a bitter dispute as to which faction should stay and which should leave, departed to found their own parish. Changing their name from Universalists to Congregationalists, or Trinitarians, they acquired land opposite Academy Street on Massachusetts Avenue, and set about constructing their own church structure which survives to this day (in somewhat altered form) as the Greek Orthodox Church of St. Athanasius the Great (1841; NR proposed).

The fractionalization of the First Parish took an additional interesting twist in 1842 when a small group of disaffected Universalists, faithful to the extreme conservatism of Thaddeus Fiske, brought the old preacher out of retirement, forming their own church. Meeting secretly at various homes throughout West Cambridge, this group, who usurped the name Orthodox Congregationalists, built their own church structure (now known as the Pleasant Street Congregational Church, the subject of this nomination) at the corner of Maple and Pleasant Streets in 1844, and installed Fiske as minister. Built on land once owned by Rev. Samuel Cooke (first minister of the First Parish Church), his granddaughter Miss Anna Bradshaw oversaw the establishment of this final splinter group from the original First Parish Church. The Cooke House was willed to the Orthodox Congregationalists upon Miss Bradshaw's death in 1869. The house, however, was later relocated to another site on Pleasant Street where it survived until 1960 when it was torn down; Miss Bradshaw's land was subdivided for houselots to generate funds in support of the church and parsonage.

Thus, the four separate sub-units of the original First Parish Church co-existed in relative harmony for the duration of the 19th century, a period of relative colorless religious observance in the town. The Baptists went on to construct several buildings, the most recent of which was built in 1903 and occupies a site at the corner of Ramsdell Court and Massachusetts Avenue. The First Parish Church's fourth tabernacle on the site of the first church of 1804 was destroyed in a spectacular fire on March 7, 1975 while it was being repainted for the American Bicentennial. The other two church structures, both built during the early 1840s, are proposed for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places. The Orthodox Congregational Church at Maple and Pleasant Streets, now known simply as the Congregational Church alone retains the descendants of its original congregation.

The Pleasant Street Congregational Church was dedicated on November 29, 1844. The churchwright was Mr. Joseph Sanger. It is not known whether the design was also his. However, the use of Egyptian Revival detailing on a building predominately Federal

(Continued)

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National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
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Continuation sheet Church, Arlington, Mass.

Item number 8

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period in form and Greek Revival style in ornamentation is notable; the only other known extant example of a mid 19th century Egyptian Revival detailed church in the Boston area stands in Cambridge (see Historic and Archaeological Resources of the Boston Area, Massachusetts Historical Commission 1982, pp.157-158). Significant increases in the size of the congregation under a succession of strong ministers contributed to a steady growth of the church's influence. From the humble beginnings under Miss Anna Bradshaw, granddaughter of Arlington's famous First Parish preacher Samuel Cooke, the parish gained immediate acceptance from the conservative element in Christian doctrine. Enlargement of the church structure itself was carried out in 1856 under Rev. Daniel R. Cady, again in 1883 under Rev. Edward B. Mason when the nave was lengthened by twenty-eight feet and major repairs carried out. More recently (1955) a large brick parish house wing was constructed under Rev. Mark Freeman Strickland.

In recent years, the Pleasant Street Congregational Church has become known for its community orientation, sponsoring charity fairs, establishing the Rogers-Peirce Children's Center for inner-city minority youths, and promoting the hospice concept for care of the terminally ill. It continues a long tradition of community service and is a mainstay in the religious life of the Town of Arlington.

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National Park Service**

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Pleasant Street Congregational

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Page 1

Massachusetts Historical Commission. Historic and Archaeological Resources of the Boston Area. Boston, 1982.

Orthodox Congregational Church. Constitution, By-Laws, Records of Arlington Orthodox Congregational Society 1842-1880, June 12, 1884.

Parker, Charles S. Town of Arlington Past and Present 1637 to 1907. Arlington, MA: C. S. Parker & Sons, Publishers, 1907.

Self Study Program History Committee Report. Lida Barber, Chairman. Arlington, MA: Pleasant Street Congregational Church.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

Pleasant Street Congregational Church
Middlesex County
MASSACHUSETTS

Working No. MAY 23 1983

Fed. Reg. Date: 2-7-84

Date Due: 6/23/83 - 7/7/83

Action: ACCEPT 6/23/83
Entered in the RETURN
National Register REJECT

Federal Agency: _____

☐ 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	☐ original site
☐ fair	☐ unexposed	☐ 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

Address of nominated property _____

Quadrangle name _____

USIT References

Verbal boundary description and justification

11. Form Prepared By

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

_____ national _____ state _____ local

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

Title _____ date _____

13. Other

- _____ Maps
- _____ Photographs
- _____ Other

Questions concerning this nomination may be directed to _____

Signed _____ Date _____ Phone: 202 272-3504

Comments for any item may be continued on an attached sheet



Pleasant St. Congregational
Church
Arlington, MA

PHOTOGRAPH IDENTIFICATION

Community: Arlington, MA

Photographer: Jeffery A.
Luxenberg

Date of Photo: 10/16/80

Location of Neg.: Arlington
Historical Commission

View: South-West Elevation
(Inc. Parish House Add.)

PHOTO # 1 of 5.



Pleasant Street Congregational
Church

Arlington, MA

PHOTOGRAPH IDENTIFICATION

Community: Arlington, MA

Photographer: Jeffery A.
Luxenberg

Date of Photo: 10/16/80

Location of Negative: Arlington
Historical Commission

View: Front (South-East)
Facade

PHOTO #2 of 5.



Pleasant St. Congregational
Church
Arlington, MA

PHOTOGRAPH IDENTIFICATION

Community: Arlington, MA

Photographer: Jeffery A.
Luxenberg

Date of Photo: 10/16/80

Location of Neg.: Arlington

Historical Commission

View: Interior (looking
South-East)

PHOTO #3 of 5.



Pleasant St. Congregational
Church
Arlington, MA

PHOTOGRAPH IDENTIFICATION

Community: Arlington, MA

Photographer: Jeffery A.
Luxenberg

Date of Photo: 10/16/80

Location of Neg.: Arlington
Historical Commission

View: North-West and North-
East Elevations

PHOTO #4 of 5.



Pleasant St. Congregational Church
Arlington, MA

PHOTOGRAPH IDENTIFICATION

Community: Arlington, MA

Photographer: Jeffery A.
Luxenberg

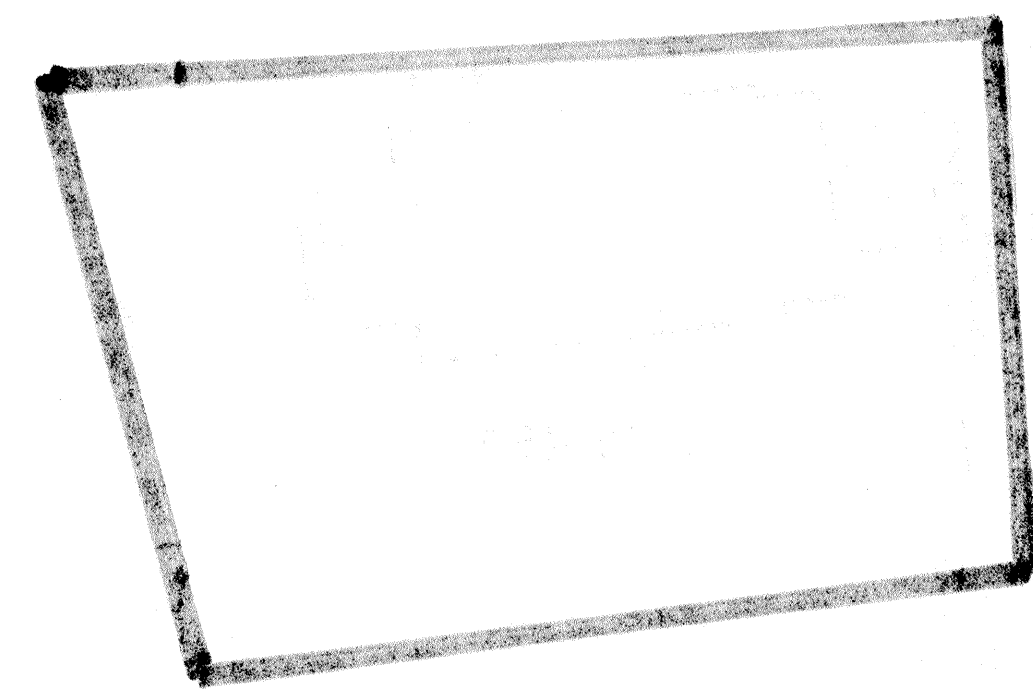
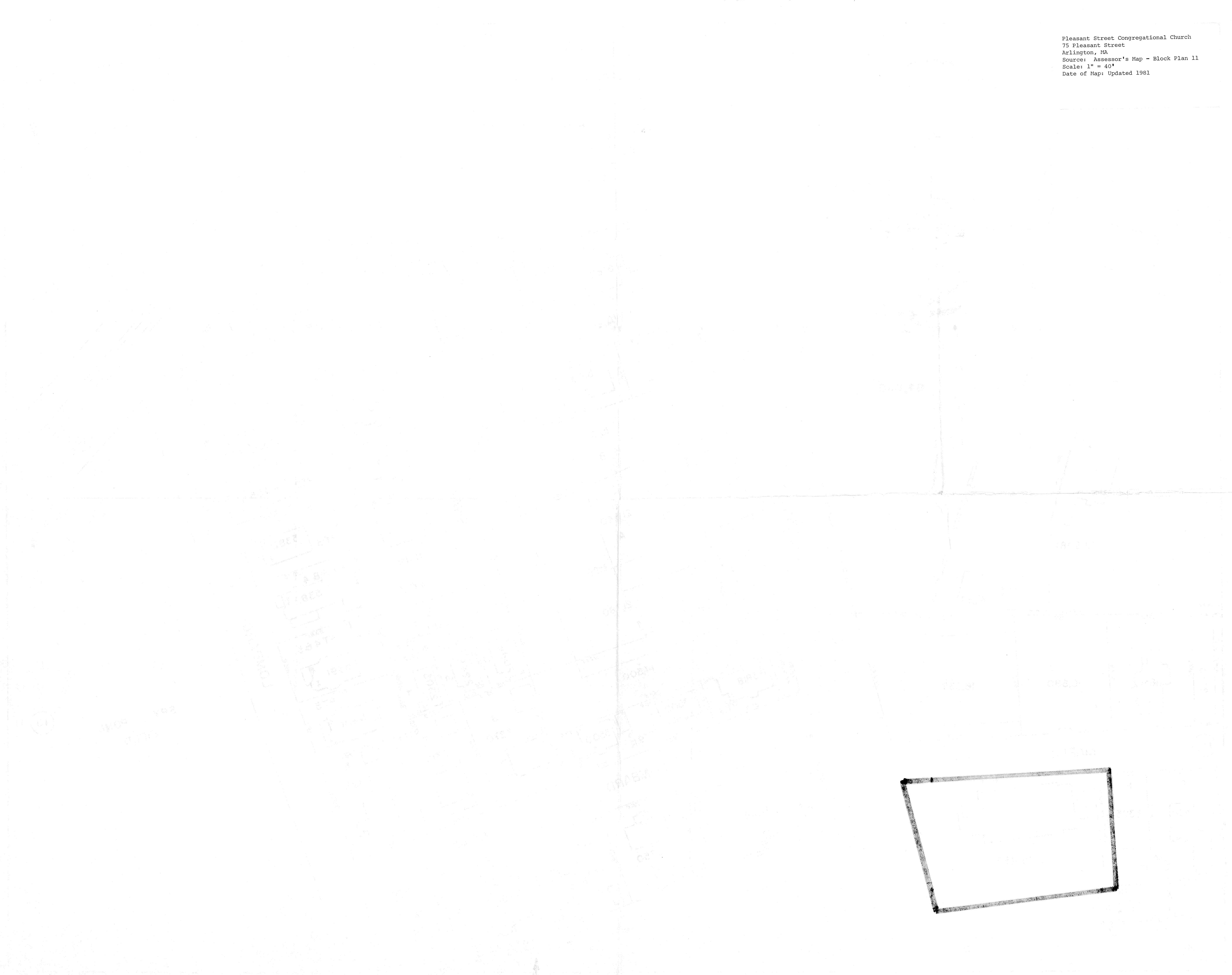
Date of Photo: 10/16/80

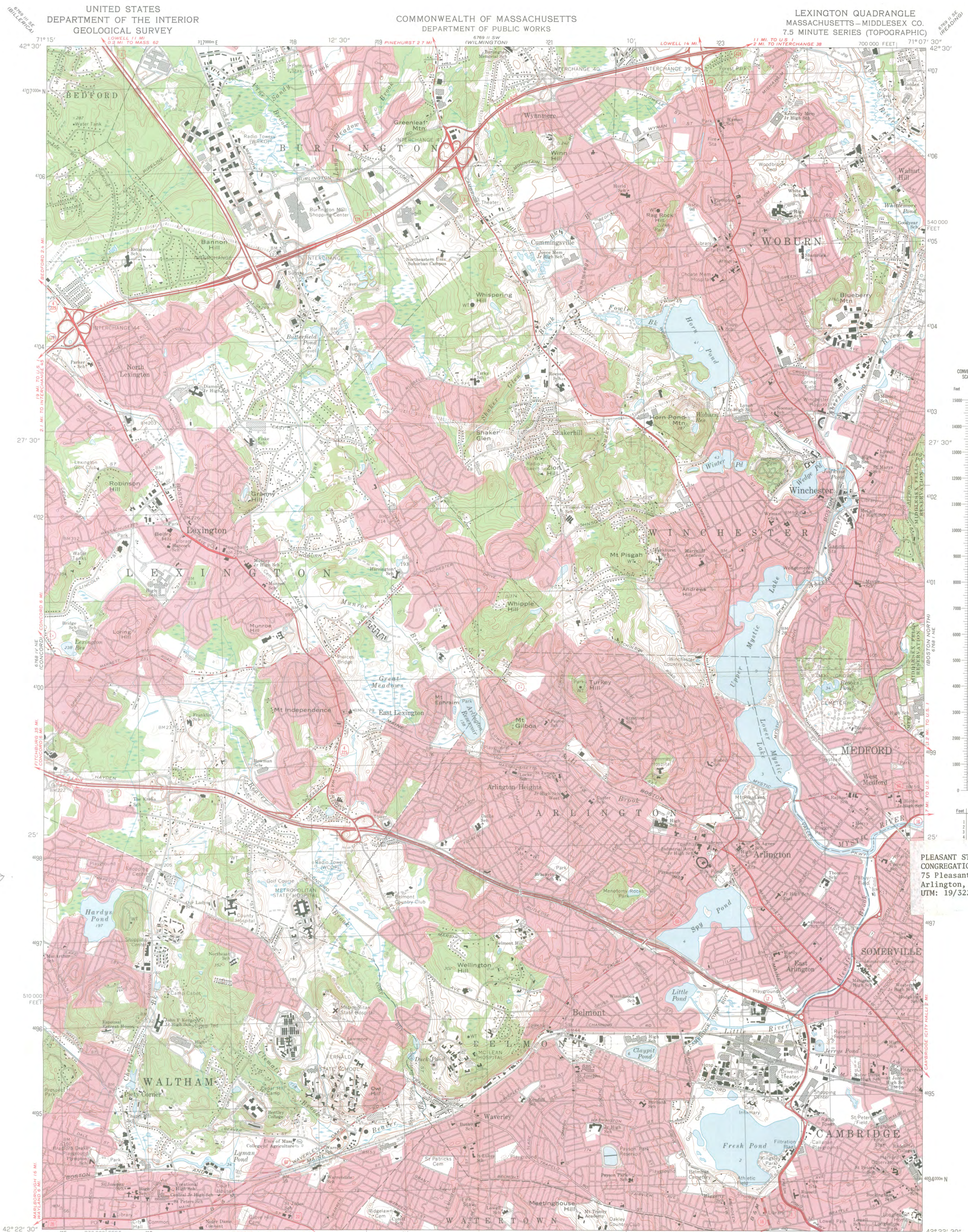
Location of Negative: Arlington
Historical Commission

View: Parish House- South-
East Elevation

PHOTO #5 of 5

Pleasant Street Congregational Church
75 Pleasant Street
Arlington, MA
Source: Assessor's Map - Block Plan 11
Scale: 1" = 40'
Date of Map: Updated 1981





UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
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 1971

Polyconic projection. 1927 North American datum
10,000-foot grid based on Massachusetts coordinate system,
mainland zone

1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid,
zone 19

Red tint indicates areas in which only landmark
buildings are shown

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

SCALE 1:25 000

CONTOUR INTERVAL 10 FEET
NATIONAL GEODETIC VERTICAL DATUM OF 1929

UTM GRID AND 1971 MAGNETIC NORTH
DECLINATION AT CENTER OF SHEET

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

LEXINGTON QUADRANGLE
MASSACHUSETTS-MIDDLESEX CO.
7.5 MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC)

CONVERSION
Scales

Feet Meters

1 3048
2 6096
3 9144
4 12192

PLEASANT STREET
CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
75 Pleasant Street
Arlington, MA
UTM: 19/322570/4697760

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

LEXINGTON, MASS.
N4222.5-W7107.5/7.5

1971

AMS 6768 I NW-SERIES V814

Pleasant St. Congregational
Church
Arlington, Middlesex, MA
USGS Lexington quadrangle -
1971
7.5 Minute Scale: 1:25 000