

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



**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 How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. 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 entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

**1. Name of Property**

historic name Rogers Memorial Church

other names/site number Unitarian Memorial Church

**2. Location**

street & number 102 Green Street N/A not for publication

city or town Fairhaven N/A vicinity

state Massachusetts code MA county Bristol code 005 zip code 02719

**3. State/Federal Agency Certification**

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, 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  nationally  statewide  locally. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Judith B. McDonough / BSS October 15, 1996  
Signature of certifying official/Title Judith B. McDonough, Executive Director Date  
Massachusetts Historical Commission, State Historic Preservation Officer

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. ( See continuation sheet for additional Comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

State or Federal agency and bureau \_\_\_\_\_

**4. National Park Service Certification**

I, hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register  See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register  See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain): \_\_\_\_\_

Edson H. Beall  
Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action \_\_\_\_\_

**Entered in the  
National Register**

Unitarian Memorial Church  
Name of Property

Bristol County, Massachusetts  
County and State

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**

(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

**Category of Property**

(Check only one box)

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

**Number of Resources within Property**

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing                  Noncontributing

\_\_\_\_\_ building

\_\_\_\_\_ sites

\_\_\_\_\_ structures

\_\_\_\_\_ objects

\_\_\_\_\_ 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**

0

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

RELIGION / religious facility

/ church-related residence

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

RELIGION / religious facility

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Late Gothic Revival

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Materials**

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation STONE / granite

walls STONE / granite, limestone;

BRICK; STUCCO

roof METAL / copper; STONE / slate

other TERRA COTTA (chimney)

\_\_\_\_\_

**Narrative Description**

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

See attached.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 1

Unitarian Memorial Church  
Fairhaven (Bristol County), Massachusetts

### 7. DESCRIPTION

Occupying a landscaped two-acre square bounded by four streets in the center of Fairhaven are the Unitarian Memorial Church, Parish House, and former parsonage (now Harrop Center), a complex of masonry structures inspired by the medieval architecture of England. The buildings are sited on the east half of the square, which is landscaped with grass, scattered trees, and granolithic walks leading to the various entrances into the buildings. Defining the boundaries of the square are quarter-round granite curbstones and brick sidewalks. The square is bounded by Centre, Walnut, Union and Green streets. Facing the square are wood-frame, single-family homes dating from the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Within a block of the church on a side street are the library and town hall, two masonry structures designed by the same architect as the church. Thus, the style and siting of the nominated property calls to mind the relationship between a great European cathedral dominating a small medieval town.

Two of the structures, the church and parish house, are linked by a cloister and are in the Decorated style of Gothic architecture. The church sanctuary is two stories and runs east to west, with a corner tower at the northeast end. An entrance porch is on the opposite south east corner. Extending from the north side of the tower is a cloister that leads to the parish house, also a two-story building. The latter is perpendicular to the sanctuary with its principal facade facing east. Behind this building is the third contributing structure, the former parsonage, a T-shaped building of 2 1/2 stories.

#### Unitarian Memorial Church

As the focal point of the entire complex, the sanctuary and tower is the most dominant building on the property. Constructed of brick bearing walls and faced with ashlar granite obtained from a local quarry, it is two stories high with a gable roof of standing seam copper. All of the carved stone ornament is Indiana limestone. The nave extends 115 feet and is flanked by one story ambulatories. Each ambulatory is divided into five bays by buttresses. These buttresses extend up to the clerestory in non-structural flying buttresses. The east end of the nave features a large ogee arched window with Gothic tracery and stained glass windows. This window is framed by buttresses which, like those on the sides, have pinnacles richly ornamented with carved stone crockets.

The east elevation, which is the principal facade of the sanctuary, includes the 156-foot-high bell tower. This tower has small windows at the first, second, and third stages and lacks extensive ornamentation below the open belfry at the fifth stage. The belfry has lancet-arched apertures and is also embellished with tracery, crockets, and finials. There are carved stone animals, birds, and foliage on the cornice and the stops for the label moldings.

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places  
Continuation SheetSection number 7 Page 2Unitarian Memorial Church  
Fairhaven (Bristol County), Massachusetts

The roof of the tower has a pierced balustrade consisting of crenelation and trefoils. At three corners are pinnacles embellished with crockets. The engaged stairtower occupies the northeast corner, and it has a small lantern, which extends higher than the three pinnacles on the other corners. This lantern is polygonal rather than square and includes unfilled niches at each angle. There is little ornamentation on the body of the tower except for two beltcourses with carved stone panels and buttresses ornamented with gablets.

The principal entrance to the sanctuary is through the south porch. This is the most richly ornamented feature of the exterior of the church and includes a portal with large paneled doors with carved wood figures. The stone buttresses at each corner have niches containing limestone figures sheltered by an elaborate carved limestone canopy.

A second major entrance to the sanctuary is gained through the west end facing the rear of the complex. This elevation also supports a large ogee-arched window with tracery that is ornamented with decorative stone crockets and a finial. This window is framed by small towers in the form of buttresses capped with pinnacles, and niches ornamented with crockets. Below the window is an entrance vestibule with a crenelated parapet consisting of carved Gothic panels. The doorway also features ogee-arched stone trim ornamented with crockets.

The interior of the sanctuary is no less ornate than the exterior. All of the walls are faced with limestone. The nave extends into a choir at the west end of the sanctuary, where there is a massive Gothic arch framing the stained glass window. On either side of the nave are smaller Gothic arches below clerestory windows, which also have stained glass and tracery. The ceiling is supported on a series of wood trusses, each having elaborate Gothic carving and a large six-foot wood angel. Directly above is a tie beam ceiling.

Intricately carved wood paneling is also used for two organ cases flanking the altar, and for the octagonal pulpit, which is oak. The remainder of the Gothic ornament, including the ceilings to the ambulatories, are limestone with stellar ribs. Of particular note is the baptistery, which is marble and surmounted by a carved oak canopy. Directly above is a limestone ceiling in a Gothic fan design. The floors, pulpit base, and platform are marble, and there are thirty-two pews with backs and ends decorated with carved ornament.

Similar Gothic ornament is found on the cloister linking the sanctuary to the Parish House. An outstanding feature here is the bronze double gates, intricately fashioned into Gothic motifs. The roof of the walkway is flat, with the paneled crenelation and finials with crockets found elsewhere on the church. Inside the cloister are carved stone corbel heads.

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United States Department of the Interior  
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places  
Continuation SheetSection number 7 Page 3Unitarian Memorial Church  
Fairhaven (Bristol County), MassachusettsParish House

Like the church, the Parish House is of brick construction with limestone trim on the exterior. This structure has a long gable roof covered with red slate, which runs north to south. Paired gable end wings project from each side. On the east side, these gable ends terminate in polygonal bay windows. Between these wings, in the center of the elevation, is an entrance vestibule with an ogee-arched doorway and oak doors. The two gable ends on the reverse, or west, side flank a wooden porch under a shed roof. The windows on the Parish House are square headed, with limestone Gothic hood moldings in the upper floor of each gable end. The principal decorative elements are the chimneys, which have very ornate terracotta pots, and the pinnacles at the bottom of each raking cornice. At the exterior corners of the roof, these pinnacles are larger than on the gable ends and are capped with lanterns having ogee roofs.

The interior of the Parish House features plaster walls and oak floors, and includes major decorative spaces in the auditorium and the dining hall. The large auditorium has a ceiling with wood trusses that are molded and terminate in pendants. These trusses also have angel heads carved into the beam ends. The panels in the tie beam ceiling are canvas and have stencil borders in a Gothic design on a plain background. At one end is a stage framed by a proscenium arch surmounted by a Gothic arch filled with a painting illustrating Psalm 150. The dining hall has a coved ceiling, which also has molded wood paneling embellished with painted Gothic borders. On one wall is a limestone fireplace with a massive stone mantel supporting two carved stone medieval figures. This room has allegorical designs painted on panels midway up the wall.

The Parsonage (Harrop Center)

The Parsonage (now the Harrop Center) was built as a residence and was inspired by English Tudor domestic architecture. The granite first story matches the church and Parish House, but the upper story and a half is faced with stucco and wood half timbering with an overhang in a manner characteristic of medieval residential architecture. There are five gable ends and three dormers, each with decorative vergeboard and finials. The roof is red slate and the chimneys have ornamented terracotta chimney pots like those on the Parish House. The windows are all diamond paned and in a variety of sizes consisting of large single units, or groups of twos, threes, or fours divided by mullions. The windows have limestone surrounds, except for the bay windows, which are constructed entirely of that material. An open porch recessed beneath the gable end on the northeast corner is entered through an ogee-arched opening to the main entrance. At the rear, or southwest, corner of the house is a polygonal porch supported on wood posts, with balustrades on the roof and deck. The deck balustrade has neo-classical turned balusters, an alteration from the original pierced Gothic design for the railing. The interior of the building includes an entrance hall with carved Tudor-style woodwork.

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 4

Unitarian Memorial Church  
Fairhaven (Bristol County), Massachusetts

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### Alterations

There are no significant alterations to the buildings in this complex.

### Archaeological Description

While no prehistoric sites are currently recorded on the church property or in the general area, sites may be present. The church is located in close proximity to New Bedford Harbor and Buzzards Bay, both estuarine environments originally containing numerous resource types exploited by Native Americans. In general, however, the locational characteristics of the nominated property, particularly its distance of over 1000' from wetlands, are not favorable for prehistoric site locations. Given the above information, the generally urban context of the area, construction of the four nineteenth century homes which predate the church and the church complex itself, the potential for significant prehistoric survivals is low. The potential for historic archaeological resources on the church property may range from moderate to high depending on the extent of impacts from church construction. Archaeological resources consisting of structural remains and occupational related features (trash areas, wells, privies) may survive from four mid 19th century homes and outbuildings which were cleared from the property in 1901 prior to church construction. It is unknown at present to what extent these resources were demolished and, the effects construction of the Sanctuary, Parish House and Harrop Center had on any surviving resources.

(END)

Unitarian Memorial Church  
Name of Property

Bristol County, Massachusetts  
County and State

## 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.

### Criteria Considerations

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

Property is:

- A** Owned by 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 of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

### Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

### 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 # \_\_\_\_\_

### Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE

SOCIAL HISTORY

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND PLANNING

### Period of Significance

1901 - 1946

### Significant Dates

1901 - 1904, 1911

### Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Henry Huttleston Rogers

### Cultural Affiliation

N/A

### Architect/Builder

Charles Brigham

### Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

Massachusetts Historical Commission

Unitarian Memorial Church  
Name of Property

Bristol County, Massachusetts  
County and State

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 1.94 acres

### UTM References See continuation sheet.

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

1. 19	341520	4610630	3.		
Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
2.			4.		
Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing

     See continuation sheet

### Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

### Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Roger G. Reed, Preservation Consultant, with Betsy Friedberg, National Register Director, MHC

organization Massachusetts Historical Commission date September 1996

street & number 220 Morrissey Boulevard telephone (617) 727-8470

city or town Boston state MA zip code 02125

### Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

#### Continuation Sheets

#### 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.

#### Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

**Additional items** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

### Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name \_\_\_\_\_

street & number \_\_\_\_\_ telephone \_\_\_\_\_

city or town \_\_\_\_\_ state \_\_\_\_\_ zip code \_\_\_\_\_

**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. 470 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the 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, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places  
Continuation SheetSection number 8 Page 1Unitarian Memorial Church  
Fairhaven (Bristol County), Massachusetts**8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE**

The Unitarian Memorial Church property in Fairhaven, a small town on Buzzards Bay in Bristol County, Massachusetts, forms one of the great masterpieces of early 20th century Gothic Revival architecture in the state. The church, with its attached parish house, and the former parsonage (Harrop Center) are a major commission of an important Boston architect, Charles Brigham. The complex survives in excellent condition and with remarkably little alteration since its completion in 1904. Representing exceptional skills in architecture, art, and craftsmanship, the Unitarian Memorial Church and Harrop Center are eligible for listing in the National Register under criterion C. The property is also eligible under criterion B, based on its association with the donor, Henry Huttleston Rogers, whose contributions to Fairhaven included a number of major public buildings.

No small town in Massachusetts has benefited more from one man donating so many major architectural monuments than has Fairhaven. The Unitarian Memorial Church is the largest and most ornate among several prominent building projects donated by Henry Huttleston Rogers, a Fairhaven native who had become a leading executive at Standard Oil Company. When Henry Rogers was born in 1840, the town of Fairhaven was a village of under 5,000 located on the Acushnet River opposite the more prosperous city of New Bedford. During Rogers' youth Fairhaven's economy was based primarily upon shipbuilding, farming and fishing, and afforded few opportunities for a person of exceptional entrepreneurial drive. He left town for the west in 1860, settling in the Pennsylvania oilfields at the time when John D. Rockefeller was beginning his career there. With an apparent natural aptitude for inventiveness, Henry Rogers developed several improvements in the method of oil refining, the most important of which was his process to separate naphtha from crude, patented in 1871. This brought him into contact with Rockefeller during the early years of the founding of Standard Oil, which was organized in 1874. Rogers' skills were not just scientific, as he was equal to his contemporaries in his abilities as an organizer and an aggressive, speculative capitalist. His positions as a trustee of the Standard Oil Trust between 1885-1892, and a director from 1899-1909, merely suggest the extent of his involvement in what became the largest trust company in America. He was also heavily involved in the copper and natural gas industries, and in 1901 became a director of U.S. Steel Corporation. By the time of his death in 1909, Henry Rogers was one of the leading capitalists in the country. Unlike the cantankerous J.P. Morgan, or the aloof John D. Rockefeller, all accounts testify that Rogers was a man of great charm and warmth when he was not engaged in moneymaking ventures, and this explains the close contacts he maintained with his former townsmen throughout his life.

Rogers had been absent from Fairhaven for twenty-five years before he made his first major contribution to his native town, the Rogers Grammar School of 1885. This was followed by the Millicent Library (1891-92-NR), the Town Hall (1893-94-NR), a Masonic lodge and commercial block (1901), remodeling the old Unitarian church for a school (1901), the new Unitarian Church (1901-04), the Tabitha Inn (1905-06), and the High School (1906-NR). In addition, he was

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places  
Continuation SheetSection number 8 Page 2Unitarian Memorial Church  
Fairhaven (Bristol County), Massachusetts

responsible for the Fairhaven Water Works (1893), laying out several streets and sidewalks (1895+), subsidizing a new factory for the Atlas Tool Co. (1902), and filling in the millpond for Cushman Park (1903). Also, he built a family mausoleum in 1889 and a large summer home in 1895.

The most prominent of these building projects were designed by Charles Brigham (1841-1925), a Boston architect whom Rogers consistently favored for his Fairhaven projects. Charles Brigham was born in Watertown, Mass., a year after Henry Rogers. He was educated in local schools and apprenticed under an architect named Calvin Ryder. He then worked as draftsman under Gridley J.F. Bryant, who is often credited with having the largest firm in New England at the middle of the 19th century. After service in the Civil War, Brigham joined the office of John Hubbard Sturgis. In 1866 the two men formed a twenty-year partnership, Sturgis & Brigham, which lasted until the senior man's death in 1886. Among the major projects by this firm were the first Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, begun in 1872, and the Church of the Advent at the foot of Beacon Hill, begun in 1876. In 1889 Brigham and his partner at the time, John C. Spofford, were chosen to design the west wing of the Massachusetts State House. It was at this point in his career that he designed the library in Fairhaven for Henry Rogers.

Brigham's design for the Millicent Library is a granite building in the Richardson Romanesque style and is exceptionally picturesque in character. In contrast the next project, the town hall, employed XIII century French Gothic motifs. This building sets the stage for the Unitarian Church, an English Gothic design in the Decorated style. During its construction between 1901-04 Brigham employed two men who would become his partners. Charles C. Coveney (1874-1945) was born in Brookline and worked for Brigham as a draftsman before taking time to study in Europe. He can be credited with an important role in the design of the Memorial Church as ecclesiastical architecture was a specialization throughout his career. Less is known about Henry V. Bisbee(?-?), who was a Fairhaven native and apparently worked in the office as a construction supervisor. A major project which followed the church in Fairhaven was the First Church of Christ, Scientist (NR-), in Boston, begun in 1904 and finished in 1906 by the newly established firm of Brigham, Coveney & Bisbee.

The death of Henry Rogers' mother in 1899 led to his plans to build a new Unitarian church as her memorial. Land was purchased and four houses were cleared from the site in 1901. The cornerstone ceremony was August 9, 1901, with Samuel Clemens (Mark Twain) as the principal speaker. He was a close friend of Henry Rogers and had already spoken at the cornerstone ceremonies for the town hall. The parish hall was completed first and dedicated on January 6, 1903. On October 4, 1904, the church was dedicated, although work probably continued on the interior. The entire cost was borne by Henry Rogers.

In addition to the architects, the names of some of the artists and craftsmen have been identified. The twenty stained glass windows were designed and executed over a five-year period by Robert Reid (1863-1920), a prominent muralist and portrait artist. Reid had studied and exhibited in France before

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United States Department of the Interior  
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places  
Continuation SheetSection number 8 Page 3Unitarian Memorial Church  
Fairhaven (Bristol County), Massachusetts

settling in New York City. Important public projects by this artist included murals in the main building of the Columbia Exposition in Chicago, the Library of Congress building in Washington, D.C., and in the west wing of the Massachusetts State House. In the latter project he would have worked closely with Charles Brigham. In addition to the stained glass windows, Reid painted "the Adoration of the Magi" in the Fairhaven Church, and may have been responsible for other artwork in the complex. Another artist, Charles Mills of Dedham, painted the mural representing Psalm 150 in the Parish House. The stone, bronze, and wood carvings were executed by the firm of John Evans & Co. of Boston. According to a 1971 newspaper article, much of the actual wood carving was done by two German-born Cambridge craftsmen, John Kirchmayer and Adelbert Zwink. These men, who were half brothers, brought to the project the traditions of wood carvings in their native Bavaria. They also provided the models for the bronze castings, Mr. Kirchmayer having been responsible for the doors to the sanctuary. The overall decorating for the interior of the Parish House was by A.B. Cutter Co. of Boston. L.D. Wilcut & Son, also of Boston, served as general contractor for all three structures. No landscape architect has been identified, although the name of Sullivan, a local landscaping firm, survives in the church records.

The Rogers family continued to provide some support to the church after its completion, starting with the memorial tablet to Henry Rogers designed by Brigham, Coveney & Bisbee in 1911. Descendants of Henry Rogers still attend annual family memorial gatherings at the church. The burden of the support, however, falls upon the small Unitarian Congregation. (Organized in 1819, this congregation had originally built a traditional wood meetinghouse. Constructed in 1832 and called the Washington Street Christian Church, it is located at 32 Washington Street. When construction on the new church was begun, Rogers had the old building converted for use as a school by Brigham's firm. In 1944 it was much altered for a boy's club, and in 1984 it became the Fairhaven Activity Center.) Due to the munificence of one extraordinary individual, the Unitarians of Fairhaven have the responsibility to maintain one of the most architecturally magnificent churches in the Commonwealth.

Archaeological Significance

Historic archaeological resources described above have the potential to provide detailed information on mid to late 19th century residential life in Fairhaven during a period in which the town grew from a village opposite the city of New Bedford to a more urban community. Structural remains from pre-existing residences (4) can provide specific details on the homes which were demolished prior to construction of the church. Detailed analysis of occupational related features can also provide information on the residents of the homes and the community at large during the time the homes were extant.

(END)

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 9 Page 1

Unitarian Memorial Church  
Fairhaven (Bristol County), Massachusetts

### 9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

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United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 10 Page 1

Unitarian Memorial Church  
Fairhaven (Bristol County), Massachusetts

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### 10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

#### Verbal Boundary Description

The boundary of the nominated property is shown as lot 46 on the accompanying detail of the Fairhaven Assessor's map sheet #386. This is the property described in deeds filed with the Bristol County Registry of Deeds, Book 1944, add. 1937. The total lot area is 1.94 acres

#### Boundary Justification

The boundary includes the entire parcel of land belonging to the Unitarian Society of Fairhaven. It includes the church, parish house, and former rectory constructed in 1901-1904, and the entire parcel of land originally donated with the church and bounded by Green, Centre, Union, and Walnut streets.

(END)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY NAME: Rogers Memorial Church

MULTIPLE NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: MASSACHUSETTS, Bristol

DATE RECEIVED: 10/22/96      DATE OF PENDING LIST: 11/05/96  
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 11/21/96      DATE OF 45TH DAY: 12/06/96  
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 96001374

NOMINATOR: STATE

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    11-22-96 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

Entered in the  
**National Register**

RECOM./CRITERIA \_\_\_\_\_

REVIEWER \_\_\_\_\_ DISCIPLINE \_\_\_\_\_

TELEPHONE \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

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



Unitarian Memorial Church  
102 Green St., Fairhaven  
Bristol Co., MA  
Willoughby Elliott  
May, 1995  
Unitarian Soc. of Fairhaven  
No. 1 Church from SE

Sanctuary - Tower from cr. Green + Union  
(Southeast)



Sanctuary - Tower  $\frac{1}{2}$  Cloister from  
Green Street (East)

Unitarian Memorial Church

102 Green St., Fairhaven

Bristol Co. MA

Willoughby Elliott

May, 1975

Unitarian Soc. of Fairhaven

No. 2, Tower from NE



# Sanctuary (South) Bronze Doors

Unitarian Memorial Church

102 Green St., Fairhaven

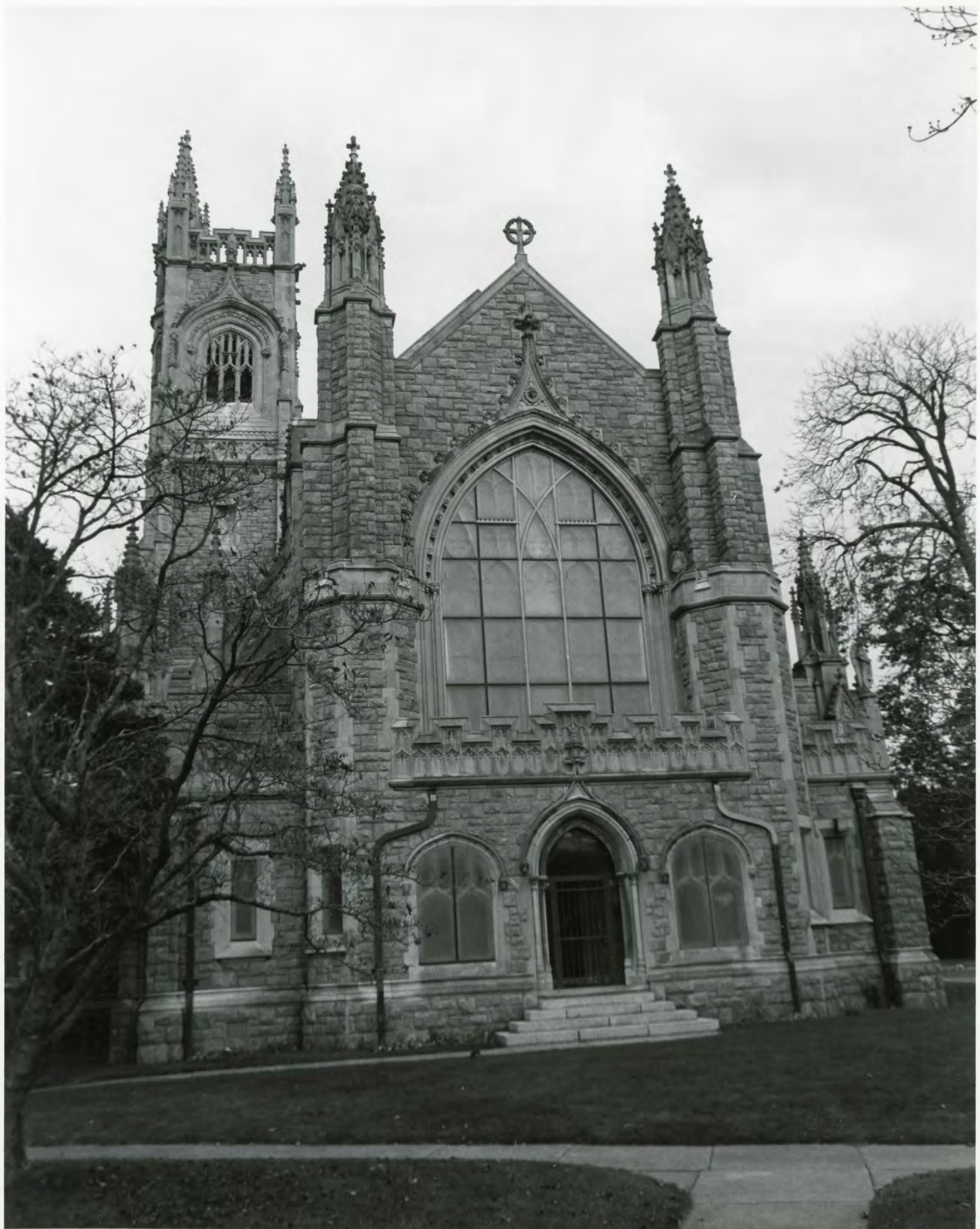
Bristol Co. MA

Willoughby Elliott

May, 1995

Unitarian Society of Fairhaven

No. 3 Doors to Sanctuary, south elevation



Sanctuary - West

Sanctuary - West

Unitarian Memorial Church

102 Green St., Fairhaven

Bristol Co., MA

Willoughby Elliott

May, 1995

Unitarian Soc. of Fairhaven

No. 4, Sanctuary, west elevation



Unitarian Memorial Church  
102 Green St. Fairhaven  
Bristol Co. MA → Willoughby Elliott  
May, 1915  
Unitarian Soc F Fairhaven  
No. 5 Church complex from NE

Sanctuary - Tower & Parish House (NE)



Unitarian Memorial Church  
102 Green St., Fairhaven  
Bristol Co. MA  
Willoughby Elliott  
May 1995  
Unitarian Soc. of Fairhaven  
No. 6 Parish House, east elevation

Parish House - East



Unitarian Memorial Church

102 Green St, Fairhaven

Bristol Co., MA

Willoughby Elliott

May, 1995

Unitarian Soc of Fairhaven

No. 7 Parish House, from NW

Parish House - Northwest



Unitarian Memorial Church

102 Green St, Fairhaven

Bristol Co., MA

Willoughby Elliott

May 1995

Unitarian Soc F Fairhaven

No. 8 Parish House, West elevation

Parish House - West



Unitarian Memorial Church

102 Green St, Fairhaven

Bristol Co, MA

Willoughby Elliott

May, 1995

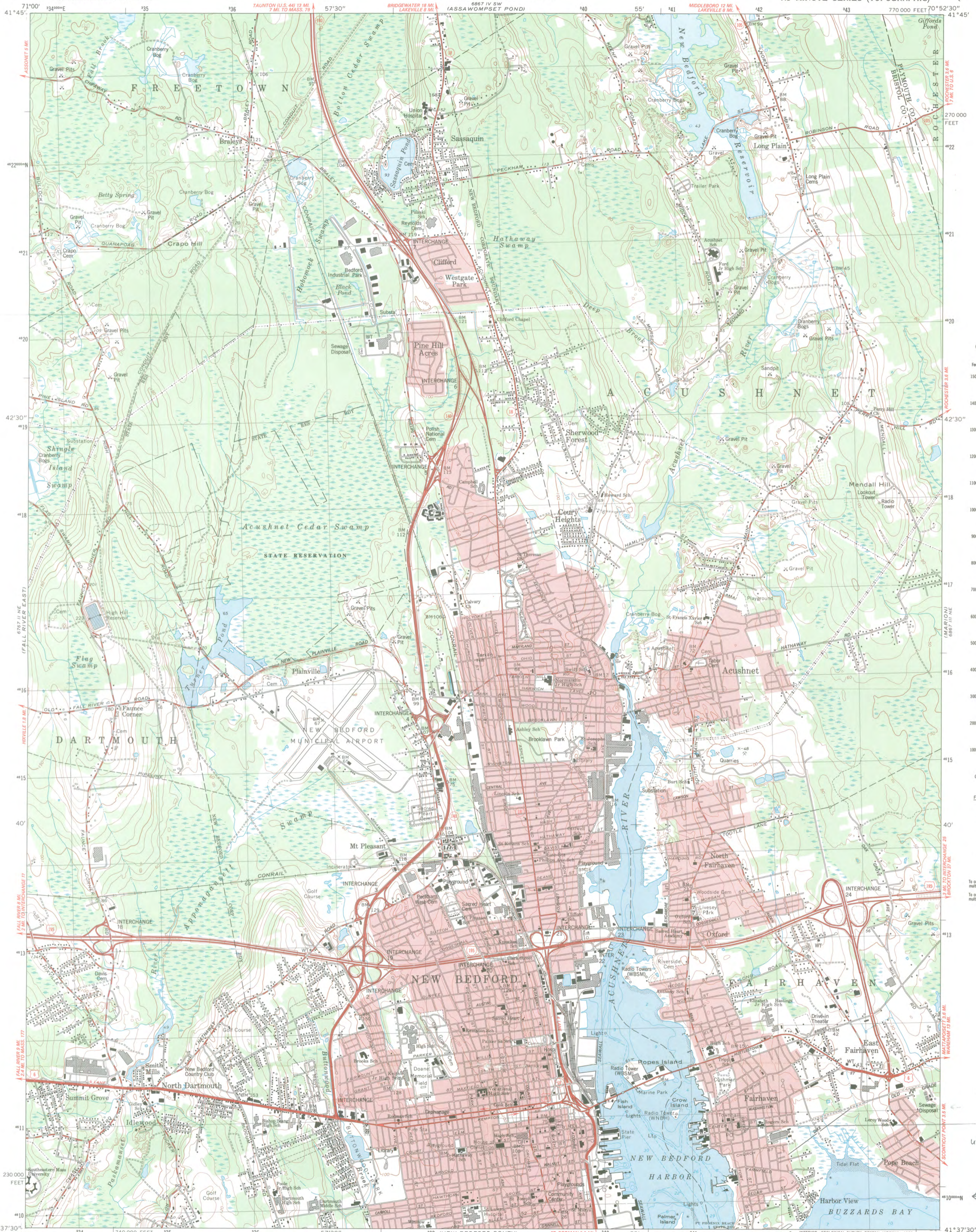
Unitarian Soc. of Fairhaven

No. 9 Passage (Harrop Center) from NE

Harrop Center - North & East

687 1/2 SE  
ASSONNET 8 MI

687 1/2 SE  
BRISTOL 11 MI

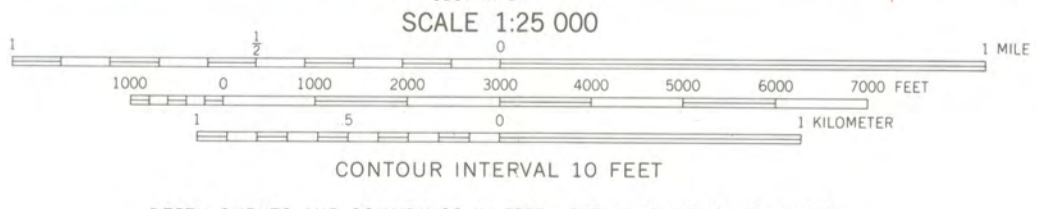


Feet	Meters
1	0.3048
2	0.6096
3	0.9144
4	1.2192
5	1.5240
6	1.8288
7	2.1336
8	2.4384
9	2.7432
10	3.0480

To convert feet to meters multiply by 0.3048  
To convert meters to feet multiply by 3.2808

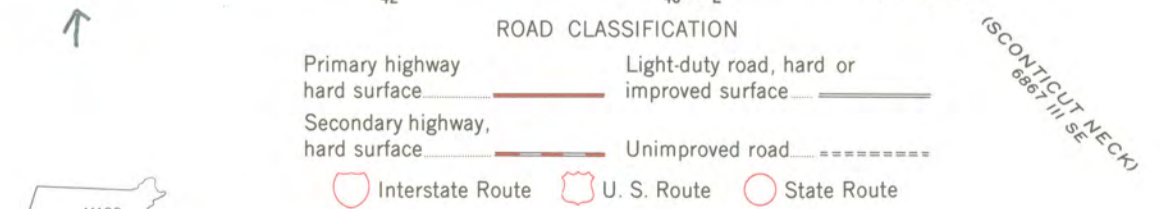
Union Memorial Church  
102 Green St Fairhaven  
Bristol Co. MA  
utm = 19 341520 4610630

Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey  
Control by USGS, NOS/NOAA, and Massachusetts Geodetic Survey  
Topography by planetable surveys 1936. Revised 1964  
Revised 1975 from aerial photographs taken 1974  
Field checked 1975. Map edited 1979  
Selected hydrographic data compiled from NOS 353 (1973)  
This information is not intended for navigational purposes  
Polyconic projection. 1927 North American Datum  
To place on the predicted North American Datum 1983  
move the projection lines 6 meters south and  
42 meters west as shown by dashed corner ticks  
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  
Boundaries in tidewater areas from information furnished by  
Massachusetts Department of Public Works  
There may be private inholdings within the boundaries of  
the National or State reservations shown on this map



DEPTH CURVES AND SOUNDINGS IN FEET—DATUM IS MEAN LOW WATER  
SHORELINE SHOWN REPRESENTS THE APPROXIMATE LINE OF MEAN HIGH WATER  
THE MEAN RANGE OF TIDE IS APPROXIMATELY 3.7 FEET

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



NEW BEDFORD NORTH, MASS.  
N4137.5—W7052.5/7.5

1979  
DMA 6867 11 NW—SERIES V814

382

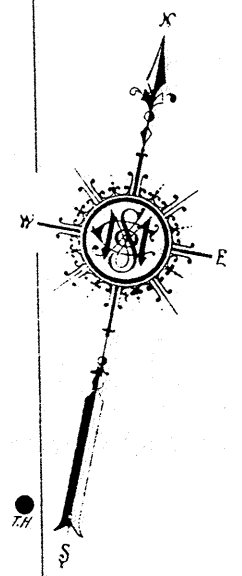
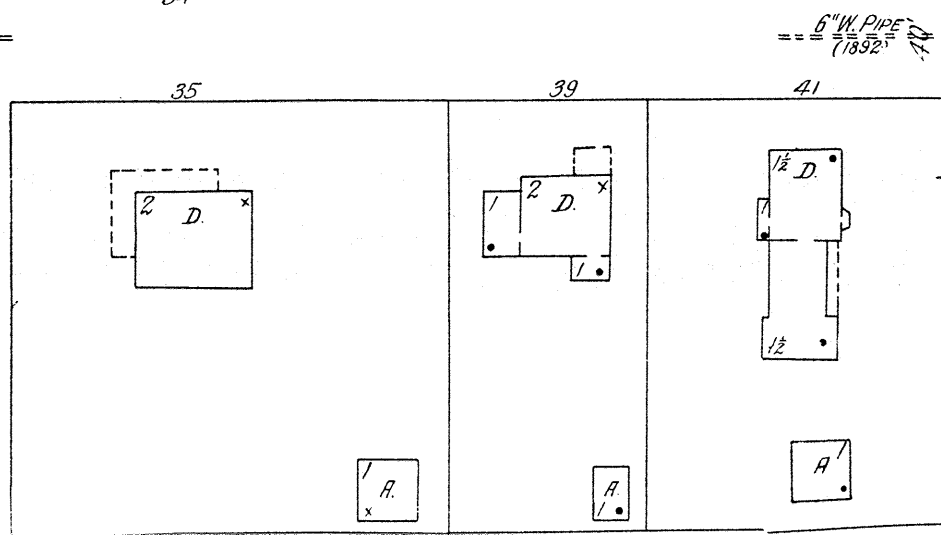
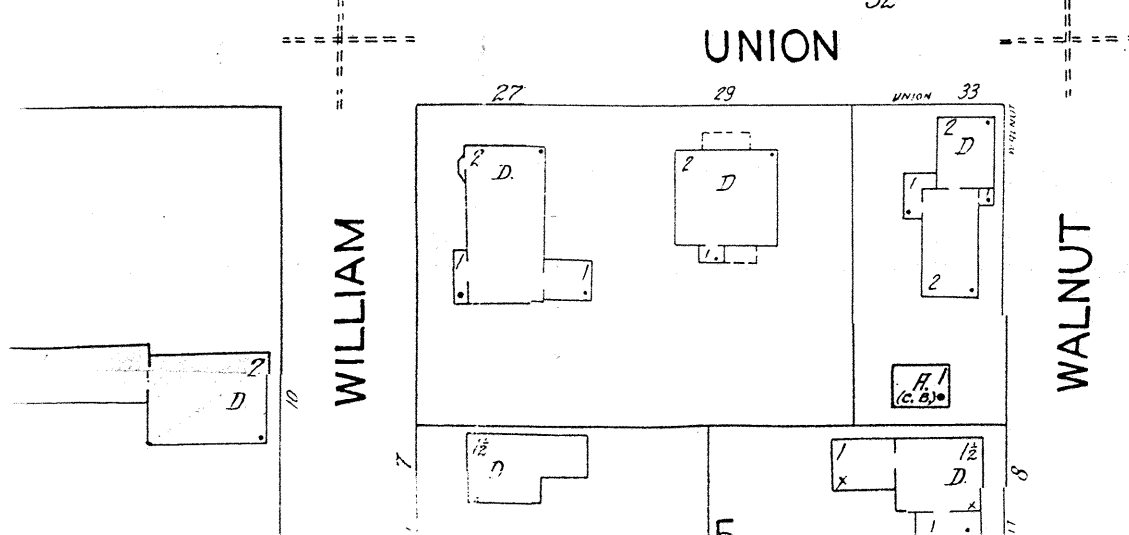
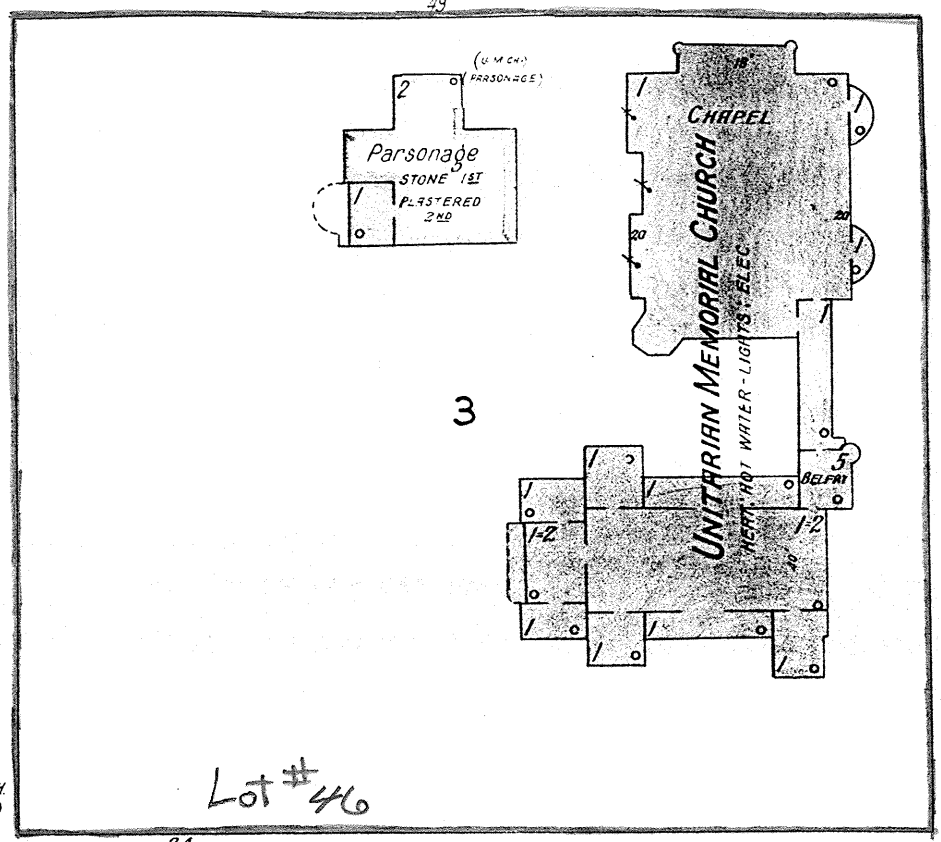
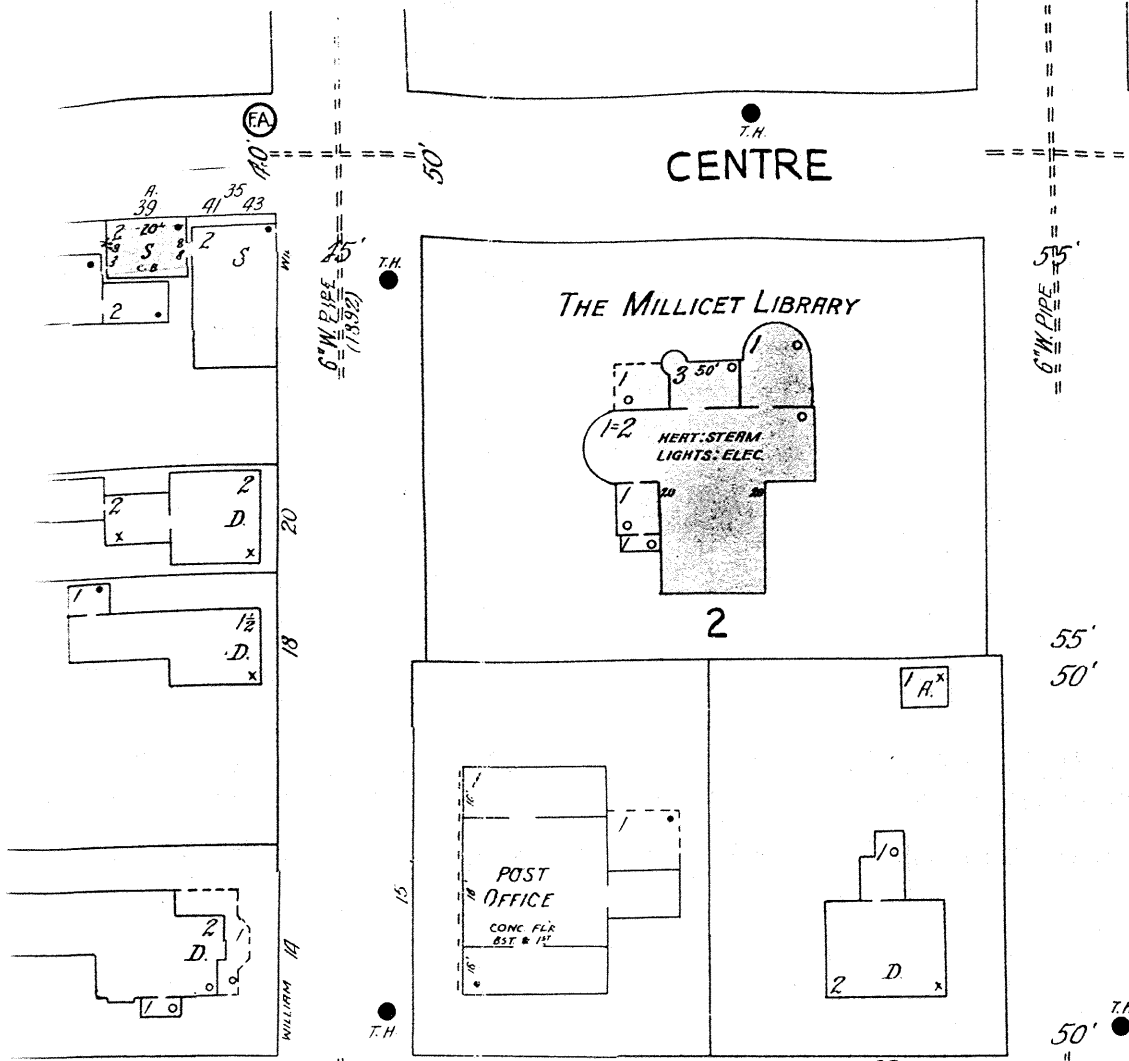
386

(102)

39

CENTRE

FAIRHAVEN



Town of Fairhaven  
Assessor's Map # 386



**The Commonwealth of Massachusetts**

William Francis Galvin, Secretary of the Commonwealth  
Massachusetts Historical Commission

15 October 1996

Carol Shull  
Keeper  
National Register of Historic Places  
Department of the Interior  
National Park Service  
P. O. Box 37127  
Washington, D. C. 20013-7127



Dear Ms. Shull:

Enclosed please find the following nomination form:

Rogers Memorial Church, 102 Green Street, Fairhaven (Bristol County),  
Massachusetts, 02719

The nomination has been voted eligible by the State Review Board and has been signed by the State Historic Preservation Officer. Owners were notified of pending State Review Board consideration 30-75 days before the meeting and were afforded the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

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

Betsy Friedberg  
National Register Director  
Massachusetts Historical Commission

enclosure

cc: Donald Despres, Chairperson, Fairhaven Historical Commission  
Rev. Robert A. Thayer  
Roger G. Reed, Preservation Consultant  
John R. Roderiques, Chairperson, Board of Selectmen  
Debbie Charpentier, Historian, Millicent Library

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

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 How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. 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 entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Rogers Memorial Church

other names/site number Unitarian Memorial Church (preferred)

2. Location

street & number 102 Green Street

N/A not for publication

city or town Fairhaven

N/A vicinity

state Massachusetts

code MA

county Bristol

code 005

zip code 02719

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, 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  nationally  statewide  locally. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Judith B. McDonough / BSS

October 15, 1996

Signature of certifying official/Title Judith B. McDonough, Executive Director Date  
Massachusetts Historical Commission, State Historic Preservation Officer

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. ( See continuation sheet for additional Comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register

See continuation sheet.

determined eligible for the National Register

See continuation sheet.

determined not eligible for the National Register

removed from the National Register

other (explain): \_\_\_\_\_

[Signature]

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

Edson H. Ball

9/3/97

Additional Documentation Accepted

Unitarian Memorial Church  
Name of Property

Bristol County, Massachusetts  
County and State

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**  
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

**Category of Property**  
(Check only one box)

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

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>3</u>		<u>                    </u> building
		<u>                    </u> sites
		<u>                    </u> structures
		<u>                    </u> objects
<u>3</u>		<u>                    </u> Total

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

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**

N/A

0

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

RELIGION / religious facility

                    / church-related residence

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

RELIGION / religious facility

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Late Gothic Revival

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Materials**

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation STONE / granite

walls STONE / granite, limestone;

BRICK; STUCCO

roof METAL / copper; STONE / slate

other TERRA COTTA (chimney)

\_\_\_\_\_

**Narrative Description**

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

See attached.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 1

Unitarian Memorial Church  
Fairhaven (Bristol County), Massachusetts

### 7. DESCRIPTION

Occupying a landscaped two-acre square bounded by four streets in the center of Fairhaven are the Unitarian Memorial Church, Parish House, and former parsonage (now Harrop Center), a complex of masonry structures inspired by the medieval architecture of England. The buildings are sited on the east half of the square, which is landscaped with grass, scattered trees, and granolithic walks leading to the various entrances into the buildings. Defining the boundaries of the square are quarter-round granite curbstones and brick sidewalks. The square is bounded by Centre, Walnut, Union and Green streets. Facing the square are wood-frame, single-family homes dating from the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Within a block of the church on a side street are the library and town hall, two masonry structures designed by the same architect as the church. Thus, the style and siting of the nominated property calls to mind the relationship between a great European cathedral dominating a small medieval town.

Two of the structures, the church and parish house, are linked by a cloister and are in the Decorated style of Gothic architecture. The church sanctuary is two stories and runs east to west, with a corner tower at the northeast end. An entrance porch is on the opposite south east corner. Extending from the north side of the tower is a cloister that leads to the parish house, also a two-story building. The latter is perpendicular to the sanctuary with its principal facade facing east. Behind this building is the third contributing structure, the former parsonage, a T-shaped building of 2 1/2 stories.

#### Unitarian Memorial Church

As the focal point of the entire complex, the sanctuary and tower is the most dominant building on the property. Constructed of brick bearing walls and faced with ashlar granite obtained from a local quarry, it is two stories high with a gable roof of standing seam copper. All of the carved stone ornament is Indiana limestone. The nave extends 115 feet and is flanked by one story ambulatories. Each ambulatory is divided into five bays by buttresses. These buttresses extend up to the clerestory in non-structural flying buttresses. The east end of the nave features a large ogee arched window with Gothic tracery and stained glass windows. This window is framed by buttresses which, like those on the sides, have pinnacles richly ornamented with carved stone crockets.

The east elevation, which is the principal facade of the sanctuary, includes the 156-foot-high bell tower. This tower has small windows at the first, second, and third stages and lacks extensive ornamentation below the open belfry at the fifth stage. The belfry has lancet-arched apertures and is also embellished with tracery, crockets, and finials. There are carved stone animals, birds, and foliage on the cornice and the stops for the label moldings.

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 2

Unitarian Memorial Church  
Fairhaven (Bristol County), Massachusetts

The roof of the tower has a pierced balustrade consisting of crenelation and trefoils. At three corners are pinnacles embellished with crockets. The engaged stairtower occupies the northeast corner, and it has a small lantern, which extends higher than the three pinnacles on the other corners. This lantern is polygonal rather than square and includes unfilled niches at each angle. There is little ornamentation on the body of the tower except for two beltcourses with carved stone panels and buttresses ornamented with gablets.

The principal entrance to the sanctuary is through the south porch. This is the most richly ornamented feature of the exterior of the church and includes a portal with large paneled doors with carved wood figures. The stone buttresses at each corner have niches containing limestone figures sheltered by an elaborate carved limestone canopy.

A second major entrance to the sanctuary is gained through the west end facing the rear of the complex. This elevation also supports a large ogee-arched window with tracery that is ornamented with decorative stone crockets and a finial. This window is framed by small towers in the form of buttresses capped with pinnacles, and niches ornamented with crockets. Below the window is an entrance vestibule with a crenelated parapet consisting of carved Gothic panels. The doorway also features ogee-arched stone trim ornamented with crockets.

The interior of the sanctuary is no less ornate than the exterior. All of the walls are faced with limestone. The nave extends into a choir at the west end of the sanctuary, where there is a massive Gothic arch framing the stained glass window. On either side of the nave are smaller Gothic arches below clerestory windows, which also have stained glass and tracery. The ceiling is supported on a series of wood trusses, each having elaborate Gothic carving and a large six-foot wood angel. Directly above is a tie beam ceiling.

Intricately carved wood paneling is also used for two organ cases flanking the altar, and for the octagonal pulpit, which is oak. The remainder of the Gothic ornament, including the ceilings to the ambulatories, are limestone with stellar ribs. Of particular note is the baptistery, which is marble and surmounted by a carved oak canopy. Directly above is a limestone ceiling in a Gothic fan design. The floors, pulpit base, and platform are marble, and there are thirty-two pews with backs and ends decorated with carved ornament.

Similar Gothic ornament is found on the cloister linking the sanctuary to the Parish House. An outstanding feature here is the bronze double gates, intricately fashioned into Gothic motifs. The roof of the walkway is flat, with the paneled crenelation and finials with crockets found elsewhere on the church. Inside the cloister are carved stone corbel heads.

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 3

Unitarian Memorial Church  
Fairhaven (Bristol County), Massachusetts

### Parish House

Like the church, the Parish House is of brick construction with limestone trim on the exterior. This structure has a long gable roof covered with red slate, which runs north to south. Paired gable end wings project from each side. On the east side, these gable ends terminate in polygonal bay windows. Between these wings, in the center of the elevation, is an entrance vestibule with an ogee-arched doorway and oak doors. The two gable ends on the reverse, or west, side flank a wooden porch under a shed roof. The windows on the Parish House are square headed, with limestone Gothic hood moldings in the upper floor of each gable end. The principal decorative elements are the chimneys, which have very ornate terracotta pots, and the pinnacles at the bottom of each raking cornice. At the exterior corners of the roof, these pinnacles are larger than on the gable ends and are capped with lanterns having ogee roofs.

The interior of the Parish House features plaster walls and oak floors, and includes major decorative spaces in the auditorium and the dining hall. The large auditorium has a ceiling with wood trusses that are molded and terminate in pendants. These trusses also have angel heads carved into the beam ends. The panels in the tie beam ceiling are canvas and have stencil boarders in a Gothic design on a plain background. At one end is a stage framed by a proscenium arch surmounted by a Gothic arch filled with a painting illustrating Psalm 150. The dining hall has a coved ceiling, which also has molded wood paneling embellished with painted Gothic boarders. On one wall is a limestone fireplace with a massive stone mantel supporting two carved stone medieval figures. This room has allegorical designs painted on panels midway up the wall.

### The Parsonage (Harrop Center)

The Parsonage (now the Harrop Center) was built as a residence and was inspired by English Tudor domestic architecture. The granite first story matches the church and Parish House, but the upper story and a half is faced with stucco and wood half timbering with an overhang in a manner characteristic of medieval residential architecture. There are five gable ends and three dormers, each with decorative vergeboard and finials. The roof is red slate and the chimneys have ornamented terracotta chimney pots like those on the Parish House. The windows are all diamond paned and in a variety of sizes consisting of large single units, or groups of twos, threes, or fours divided by mullions. The windows have limestone surrounds, except for the bay windows, which are constructed entirely of that material. An open porch recessed beneath the gable end on the northeast corner is entered through an ogee-arched opening to the main entrance. At the rear, or southwest, corner of the house is a polygonal porch supported on wood posts, with balustrades on the roof and deck. The deck balustrade has neo-classical turned balusters, an alteration from the original pierced Gothic design for the railing. The interior of the building includes an entrance hall with carved Tudor-style woodwork.

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 4

Unitarian Memorial Church  
Fairhaven (Bristol County), Massachusetts

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### Alterations

There are no significant alterations to the buildings in this complex.

### Archaeological Description

While no prehistoric sites are currently recorded on the church property or in the general area, sites may be present. The church is located in close proximity to New Bedford Harbor and Buzzards Bay, both estuarine environments originally containing numerous resource types exploited by Native Americans. In general, however, the locational characteristics of the nominated property, particularly its distance of over 1000' from wetlands, are not favorable for prehistoric site locations. Given the above information, the generally urban context of the area, construction of the four nineteenth century homes which predate the church and the church complex itself, the potential for significant prehistoric survivals is low. The potential for historic archaeological resources on the church property may range from moderate to high depending on the extent of impacts from church construction. Archaeological resources consisting of structural remains and occupational related features (trash areas, wells, privies) may survive from four mid 19th century homes and outbuildings which were cleared from the property in 1901 prior to church construction. It is unknown at present to what extent these resources were demolished and, the effects construction of the Sanctuary, Parish House and Harrop Center had on any surviving resources.

(END)

Unitarian Memorial Church  
Name of Property

Bristol County, Massachusetts  
County and State

### 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.

#### Criteria Considerations

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

Property is:

- A** Owned by 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 of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

#### Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

### 9. Major Bibliographical References

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

#### 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 # \_\_\_\_\_

#### Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE

SOCIAL HISTORY

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND PLANNING

#### Period of Significance

1901 - 1946

#### Significant Dates

1901 - 1904, 1911

#### Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Henry Huttleston Rogers

#### Cultural Affiliation

N/A

#### Architect/Builder

Charles Brigham

#### Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

Massachusetts Historical Commission

Unitarian Memorial Church  
Name of Property

Bristol County, Massachusetts  
County and State

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreage of Property 1.94 acres

**UTM References See continuation sheet.**

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

1. 19            341520            4610630  
Zone            Easting            Northing

2.                                                                    
Zone            Easting            Northing

3.                                                                    
Zone            Easting            Northing

4.                                                                    
Zone            Easting            Northing

   See continuation sheet

**Verbal Boundary Description**

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

**Boundary Justification**

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Roger G. Reed, Preservation Consultant, with Betsy Friedberg, National Register Director, MHC

organization Massachusetts Historical Commission date September 1996

street & number 220 Morrissey Boulevard telephone (617) 727-8470

city or town Boston state MA zip code 02125

**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

**Continuation Sheets**

**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.

**Photographs**

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

**Additional items** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

**Property Owner**

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name \_\_\_\_\_

street & number \_\_\_\_\_ telephone \_\_\_\_\_

city or town \_\_\_\_\_ state \_\_\_\_\_ zip code \_\_\_\_\_

**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. 470 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the 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, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 1

Unitarian Memorial Church  
Fairhaven (Bristol County), Massachusetts

### 8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Unitarian Memorial Church property in Fairhaven, a small town on Buzzards Bay in Bristol County, Massachusetts, forms one of the great masterpieces of early 20th century Gothic Revival architecture in the state. The church, with its attached parish house, and the former parsonage (Harrop Center) are a major commission of an important Boston architect, Charles Brigham. The complex survives in excellent condition and with remarkably little alteration since its completion in 1904. Representing exceptional skills in architecture, art, and craftsmanship, the Unitarian Memorial Church and Harrop Center are eligible for listing in the National Register under criterion C. The property is also eligible under criterion B, based on its association with the donor, Henry Huttleston Rogers, whose contributions to Fairhaven included a number of major public buildings.

No small town in Massachusetts has benefited more from one man donating so many major architectural monuments than has Fairhaven. The Unitarian Memorial Church is the largest and most ornate among several prominent building projects donated by Henry Huttleston Rogers, a Fairhaven native who had become a leading executive at Standard Oil Company. When Henry Rogers was born in 1840, the town of Fairhaven was a village of under 5,000 located on the Acushnet River opposite the more prosperous city of New Bedford. During Rogers' youth Fairhaven's economy was based primarily upon shipbuilding, farming and fishing, and afforded few opportunities for a person of exceptional entrepreneurial drive. He left town for the west in 1860, settling in the Pennsylvania oilfields at the time when John D. Rockefeller was beginning his career there. With an apparent natural aptitude for inventiveness, Henry Rogers developed several improvements in the method of oil refining, the most important of which was his process to separate naphtha from crude, patented in 1871. This brought him into contact with Rockefeller during the early years of the founding of Standard Oil, which was organized in 1874. Rogers' skills were not just scientific, as he was equal to his contemporaries in his abilities as an organizer and an aggressive, speculative capitalist. His positions as a trustee of the Standard Oil Trust between 1885-1892, and a director from 1899-1909, merely suggest the extent of his involvement in what became the largest trust company in America. He was also heavily involved in the copper and natural gas industries, and in 1901 became a director of U.S. Steel Corporation. By the time of his death in 1909, Henry Rogers was one of the leading capitalists in the country. Unlike the cantankerous J.P. Morgan, or the aloof John D. Rockefeller, all accounts testify that Rogers was a man of great charm and warmth when he was not engaged in moneymaking ventures, and this explains the close contacts he maintained with his former townsmen throughout his life.

Rogers had been absent from Fairhaven for twenty-five years before he made his first major contribution to his native town, the Rogers Grammar School of 1885. This was followed by the Millicent Library (1891-92-NR), the Town Hall (1893-94-NR), a Masonic lodge and commercial block (1901), remodeling the old Unitarian church for a school (1901), the new Unitarian Church (1901-04), the Tabitha Inn (1905-06), and the High School (1906-NR). In addition, he was

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 2

Unitarian Memorial Church  
Fairhaven (Bristol County), Massachusetts

responsible for the Fairhaven Water Works (1893), laying out several streets and sidewalks (1895+), subsidizing a new factory for the Atlas Tool Co. (1902), and filling in the millpond for Cushman Park (1903). Also, he built a family mausoleum in 1889 and a large summer home in 1895.

The most prominent of these building projects were designed by Charles Brigham (1841-1925), a Boston architect whom Rogers consistently favored for his Fairhaven projects. Charles Brigham was born in Watertown, Mass., a year after Henry Rogers. He was educated in local schools and apprenticed under an architect named Calvin Ryder. He then worked as draftsman under Gridley J.F. Bryant, who is often credited with having the largest firm in New England at the middle of the 19th century. After service in the Civil War, Brigham joined the office of John Hubbard Sturgis. In 1866 the two men formed a twenty-year partnership, Sturgis & Brigham, which lasted until the senior man's death in 1886. Among the major projects by this firm were the first Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, begun in 1872, and the Church of the Advent at the foot of Beacon Hill, begun in 1876. In 1889 Brigham and his partner at the time, John C. Spofford, were chosen to design the west wing of the Massachusetts State House. It was at this point in his career that he designed the library in Fairhaven for Henry Rogers.

Brigham's design for the Millicent Library is a granite building in the Richardson Romanesque style and is exceptionally picturesque in character. In contrast the next project, the town hall, employed XIII century French Gothic motifs. This building sets the stage for the Unitarian Church, an English Gothic design in the Decorated style. During its construction between 1901-04 Brigham employed two men who would become his partners. Charles C. Coveney (1874-1945) was born in Brookline and worked for Brigham as a draftsman before taking time to study in Europe. He can be credited with an important role in the design of the Memorial Church as ecclesiastical architecture was a specialization throughout his career. Less is known about Henry V. Bisbee(?-?), who was a Fairhaven native and apparently worked in the office as a construction supervisor. A major project which followed the church in Fairhaven was the First Church of Christ, Scientist (NR-), in Boston, begun in 1904 and finished in 1906 by the newly established firm of Brigham, Coveney & Bisbee.

The death of Henry Rogers' mother in 1899 led to his plans to build a new Unitarian church as her memorial. Land was purchased and four houses were cleared from the site in 1901. The cornerstone ceremony was August 9, 1901, with Samuel Clemens (Mark Twain) as the principal speaker. He was a close friend of Henry Rogers and had already spoken at the cornerstone ceremonies for the town hall. The parish hall was completed first and dedicated on January 6, 1903. On October 4, 1904, the church was dedicated, although work probably continued on the interior. The entire cost was borne by Henry Rogers.

In addition to the architects, the names of some of the artists and craftsmen have been identified. The twenty stained glass windows were designed and executed over a five-year period by Robert Reid (1863-1920), a prominent muralist and portrait artist. Reid had studied and exhibited in France before

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior  
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## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 3

Unitarian Memorial Church  
Fairhaven (Bristol County), Massachusetts

settling in New York City. Important public projects by this artist included murals in the main building of the Columbia Exposition in Chicago, the Library of Congress building in Washington, D.C., and in the west wing of the Massachusetts State House. In the latter project he would have worked closely with Charles Brigham. In addition to the stained glass windows, Reid painted "the Adoration of the Magi" in the Fairhaven Church, and may have been responsible for other artwork in the complex. Another artist, Charles Mills of Dedham, painted the mural representing Psalm 150 in the Parish House. The stone, bronze, and wood carvings were executed by the firm of John Evans & Co. of Boston. According to a 1971 newspaper article, much of the actual wood carving was done by two German-born Cambridge craftsmen, John Kirchmayer and Adelbert Zwink. These men, who were half brothers, brought to the project the traditions of wood carvings in their native Bavaria. They also provided the models for the bronze castings, Mr. Kirchmayer having been responsible for the doors to the sanctuary. The overall decorating for the interior of the Parish House was by A.B. Cutter Co. of Boston. L.D. Wilcut & Son, also of Boston, served as general contractor for all three structures. No landscape architect has been identified, although the name of Sullivan, a local landscaping firm, survives in the church records.

The Rogers family continued to provide some support to the church after its completion, starting with the memorial tablet to Henry Rogers designed by Brigham, Coveney & Bisbee in 1911. Descendants of Henry Rogers still attend annual family memorial gatherings at the church. The burden of the support, however, falls upon the small Unitarian Congregation. (Organized in 1819, this congregation had originally built a traditional wood meetinghouse. Constructed in 1832 and called the Washington Street Christian Church, it is located at 32 Washington Street. When construction on the new church was begun, Rogers had the old building converted for use as a school by Brigham's firm. In 1944 it was much altered for a boy's club, and in 1984 it became the Fairhaven Activity Center.) Due to the munificence of one extraordinary individual, the Unitarians of Fairhaven have the responsibility to maintain one of the most architecturally magnificent churches in the Commonwealth.

### Archaeological Significance

Historic archaeological resources described above have the potential to provide detailed information on mid to late 19th century residential life in Fairhaven during a period in which the town grew from a village opposite the city of New Bedford to a more urban community. Structural remains from pre-existing residences (4) can provide specific details on the homes which were demolished prior to construction of the church. Detailed analysis of occupational related features can also provide information on the residents of the homes and the community at large during the time the homes were extant.

(END)

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 9 Page 1

Unitarian Memorial Church  
Fairhaven (Bristol County), Massachusetts

### 9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

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United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 10 Page 1

Unitarian Memorial Church  
Fairhaven (Bristol County), Massachusetts

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### 10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

#### Verbal Boundary Description

The boundary of the nominated property is shown as lot 46 on the accompanying detail of the Fairhaven Assessor's map sheet #386. This is the property described in deeds filed with the Bristol County Registry of Deeds, Book 1944, add. 1937. The total lot area is 1.94 acres

#### Boundary Justification

The boundary includes the entire parcel of land belonging to the Unitarian Society of Fairhaven. It includes the church, parish house, and former rectory constructed in 1901-1904, and the entire parcel of land originally donated with the church and bounded by Green, Centre, Union, and Walnut streets.

(END)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION

PROPERTY Unitarian Memorial Church  
NAME:

MULTIPLE  
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: MASSACHUSETTS, Bristol

DATE RECEIVED: 8/08/97 DATE OF PENDING LIST:  
DATE OF 16TH DAY: DATE OF 45TH DAY: 9/22/97  
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 96001374

NOMINATOR: STATE

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 9/3/97 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

*Additional Documentation Accepted*

RECOM./CRITERIA Accept A.D.

REVIEWER Beall

DISCIPLINE \_\_\_\_\_

TELEPHONE \_\_\_\_\_

DATE \_\_\_\_\_

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



AD  
PER  
SABH



**The Commonwealth of Massachusetts**  
William Francis Galvin, Secretary of the Commonwealth  
Massachusetts Historical Commission

July 30, 1997

Ms. Carol Shull  
Keeper, National Register of Historic Places  
P.O. Box 37127  
Washington, DC 20013-7127

96-1374  
not  
Unitarian Memorial  
Church  
no 2nd copy if  
needed

Dear Ms. Shull:

Please find a technical correction for the recently listed nomination for the Rogers Memorial Church, Fairhaven (Bristol Co.), MA.

We are requesting that the preferred name for listing be the Unitarian Memorial Church rather than the Rogers Memorial Church. The name Unitarian Memorial Church was used throughout the nomination (and appears on the heading of every page) and is the appropriate name by which the property should be known. We have revised the cover page to reflect this change, enclosed.

If you have any questions about this change please give me a call. Thank you.

Sincerely,

*Betsy Friedberg / nb*

Betsy Friedberg  
National Register Director  
Massachusetts Historical Society

enclosure