

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICENATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS**1 NAME**

HISTORIC Massachusetts Hall

AND/OR COMMON

Massachusetts Hall

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER Old Harvard Yard (off Massachusetts Avenue)

CITY, TOWN

Cambridge

VICINITY OF

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Eighth

STATE

Massachusetts

CODE

025

COUNTY

Middlesex

CODE

017

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE <input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL <input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL <input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT <input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME President and Fellows of Harvard College

STREET & NUMBER

Office of Government and Community Affairs, Harvard University

CITY, TOWN

Cambridge 02138

VICINITY OF

STATE

Massachusetts

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTIONCOURTHOUSE Middlesex Registry of Deeds, Southern District
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Cambridge 02141

STATE

Massachusetts

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYSTITLE Survey of Architectural History in Cambridge: Report Four - Old
Cambridge

DATE

published 1973

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

Cambridge Historical Commission

CITY, TOWN

57 Inman Street, Cambridge 02139

STATE

Massachusetts

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Massachusetts Hall stands near Massachusetts Avenue on the western side of the Old Yard, the original campus of Harvard College. Its long front facade faces north toward nearby Harvard Hall (built 1764; enlarged 1842 and 1870). At its rear and set at right angles to it are Straus and Matthews Halls (both 19th century). Near the western end of Massachusetts Hall is the Johnson Gate, an imposing neo-Georgian structure designed by McKim, Mead and White and erected in 1889.

Early Georgian in style, Massachusetts Hall is a simple rectangular building measuring approximately 95 by 40 feet (12 by 4 bays); it is three stories high with a fourth under the broad gambrel roof. The roof is broken by dormers on its lower front and rear slopes and by six interior chimneys arranged in pairs at the center and at either end of the building. Those at the ends are connected by parapets and shaped by recessed channels on their outer faces. The break of the gambrel is marked by wooden balustrades which run along either side of the roof between the parapets.

The walls of Massachusetts Hall are plainly treated, marked only by brick belt courses between stories; the brick masonry is laid in English bond below the watertable and in Flemish bond above, except at the ends where there is a mixture of English and common bonds. Windows in the building are 12/12 sash with the exception of those in the center two bays on the front and rear facades, which have 6 lights over 6 in a vertical arrangement. Entrances consist of panelled doors topped by five-light transoms in simple molded surrounds; those on the front and rear facades are surmounted by full entablatures with projecting cornices.

Built to serve solely as a dormitory, Massachusetts Hall originally followed a two-entry plan with no connection between entries on the individual floors; however, the interior plan of the building has been altered repeatedly (see significance). The most recent changes were made in 1939 when the first two floors were remodeled to serve as administrative offices. Despite these numerous alterations, a good deal of the 18th century character of the building's interior has been restored, particularly on the ground floor in panelled dados, fireplace surrounds, wide window reveals and interior shutters. The exterior has remained remarkably unaltered and it is in this that the primary architectural significance of the building lies.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
	<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION	Development of the English Colonies, 1700-1775		

SPECIFIC DATES 1718-1720

BUILDER/ARCHITECT John Leverett

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Massachusetts Hall, a four-story brick building with gambrel roof, stands just off Massachusetts Avenue on the western side of the Old Yard of Harvard College. Erected in 1718-1720, it is the oldest surviving building of the first Colonial institution for higher learning. As such, it possesses great significance, not only in the history of American education but in the story of the development of England's North American colonies during the 18th century.

Massachusetts Hall now houses administrative offices of Harvard University and, above the second floor, also serves as a freshman dormitory. The restored building, maintained in excellent condition, is not open to the general public.

Historical Background

Harvard College was established in 1636 although it did not receive its name and begin its active existence until two years later. While the founding and early years of the college belong to the seventeenth century, Massachusetts Hall, built in the early years of the 18th century, notably exemplifies the striving for intellectual development and the first groping toward educational liberalism in the century which saw the English colonies become the United States of America. The college was intended primarily to supply clergymen for the colonies but its graduates entered all walks of Colonial life. Its liberal arts course was patterned on that of Oxford and Cambridge and both of those institutions recognized Harvard degrees. The college was the site of the first laboratory for experimental physics prior to the Revolution and it developed a strong curriculum in mathematics and physical sciences. While most of its students in the eighteenth century were from New England, the college rolls show a scattering of young men from the other colonies, Bermuda and the West Indies.

Massachusetts Hall was the fifth major building erected for Harvard College and is the oldest of its buildings that survives. The structure was designed in Early Georgian style by John Leverett, who had become president of the college in 1708; a floor plan attributed to Leverett is preserved in the Harvard University Archives. Some sources indicate that Benjamin Wadsworth, who later became president of the college, was also involved in planning the building. Construction was begun in 1718, after the Massachusetts provincial legislature appropriated £ 3,500 for that purpose and was completed two years later.

(Continued)

1 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

(See Continuance Sheet)

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY less than one

UTM REFERENCES

A	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING	B	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C				D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The National Historic Landmark designation for Massachusetts Hall applies only to the building itself. Boundaries for the designation follow a line parallel to and ten feet beyond the foundation line of Massachusetts Hill.

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME/TITLE Polly M. Rettig, Historian, Landmark Review Project: original form prepared by Charles W. Snell, Historian, 12/19/67

ORGANIZATION	DATE
<u>Historic Sites Survey, National Park Service</u>	<u>3/3/75</u>
STREET & NUMBER	TELEPHONE
<u>1100 L Street NW.</u>	<u>202-523-5464</u>
CITY OR TOWN	STATE
<u>Washington 20240</u>	<u>D.C.</u>

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.

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE

TITLE N/A National Historic Landmark DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY	
I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER	DATE
DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION	DATE
ATTEST: <i>[Signature]</i>	DATE <u>2/10/77</u>
KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER	