

1548

AREA

FORM NO.

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
80 BOYLSTON STREET  
BOSTON, MA 02116

AUG 21 1989

105

WALTHAM, MA MRA

NATIONAL REGISTER

Town Waltham

Address 730 Main Street

Historic Name First Congregational Church

Use: Present church

Original same

DESCRIPTION

Date 1870-71/1925

Source Waltham Public Library

Style Romanesque/Georgian Revival

Architect Thomas W. Silloway

Exterior Wall Fabric aluminum, wood trim

Outbuildings none

Major Alterations (with dates) Georgian

Revival style remodeling--1925

Condition good

Moved no Date n/a

Acreage 43,200 sq. ft. <sup>0.99A</sup> 60-16-Z

Setting Main Street commercial center--

faces Waltham Public Library (#106)

Recorded by Rupert Davis/Ed Gordon

Organization Waltham Historical Comm.

Date June, 1986

revised by C. Jenkins 3/88

Photo (3"x3" or 3"x5", black and white) Indicate address of property on back of photo. Staple to left side of form.

Sketch Map: Draw map showing property's location in relation to nearest cross streets and/or geographical features. Indicate all buildings between inventoried property and nearest intersection(s). Indicate north

1898



CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH.

UTM REFERENCE 19/315580/4693700

USGS QUADRANGLE LEXINGTON

SCALE 1:25,000

## **NATIONAL REGISTER CRITERIA STATEMENT (if applicable)**

The First Congregational Church of Waltham possesses integrity of location, design, materials, workmanship, feeling and associations. It is significant as the second religious body formed in the town, known as the Second Religious Society; as such it has a strong relationship to the population explosion in the present town center triggered by the prosperity of the Boston Manufacturing Company in the early 19th century. The church also possesses architectural significance as a harmonious blend of Romanesque and Georgian Revival elements. The original design was by noted church architect and ordained (1862) Unitarian clergyman, Thomas W. Silloway of Boston; much remains intact. The church thus meets criteria A and C of the National Register of Historic Places.

## **ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE Describe important architectural features and evaluate in terms of other buildings within the community.**

The First Congregational Church stands on the south side of Main Street two blocks west of City Hall (Area A). Unlike its commercial neighbors, it is set back from the street and is fronted by a lawn. Its present appearance results from a 1925 Georgian Revival style remodeling of an 1870 Italianate style structure. The facade of this imposing church building consists of a gable-end nave flanked by a bell tower to the east and a two story wing to the west. Original elements include the bracketed sanctuary gable and its fascia enframingent, the segmental arched entry with paneled door, and the basic configuration of the tower. Later Georgian Revival style features include the large Palladian window with balcony over the entry, as well as the alteration of window openings and the addition of classical cornices and pilasters to the tower. The tower is surmounted by an octagonal spire, and presumably, the same weathervane that originally belonged to the First Society of Waltham. The interior of the sanctuary has also been altered with Georgian Revival style features such as a coffered nave ceiling and paired Ionic columns carrying round-headed arches.

## **HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE Explain the role owners played in local or state history and how the building relates to the development of the community.**

The First Congregational Church traces its origins to 1820 when the Second Religious Society was set off from the original First Parish Church (see form #100). The demand for another parish was precipitated by the 1813 establishment of the Boston Manufacturing Company whose success led to major population increases, especially in the vicinity of the present town center. A meetinghouse was constructed on Church Street. Five years later, the controversy between Unitarian and Trinitarian beliefs broke out in New England, leading to a break in the newly formed Society. The first minister Sewell Harding was dismissed and part of the congregation went with him to form the Trinitarian Congregational Church; they built a church at the corner of Main and Heard Streets (opposite Lyman Street H.D.-Area D). This church formed the first Sunday School in Waltham in 1822.

By 1868, the church had outgrown its site and the cornerstone of the present church was laid on July 19, 1870. The wood-frame building was constructed at an estimated cost of \$50,000. The original Romanesque Revival style design was by T.W. Silloway of Boston, with Clement & Creay of Lawrence as contractors. In 1899, the interior was remodeled and new windows were installed.

In 1906 the schism between the Second Religious Society and the Trinitarian Congregational Church was healed. The Society was dissolved and the church was incorporated as the First Congregational Church of Waltham.

(cont)

## **BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES**

- Arnold, Earl J. "Down Memory Lane, A One Mile Walking Tour of Waltham's Landmarks" 1967.  
Castner, Elizabeth: personal notes (card file) Waltham Public Library.  
"First Congregational Church, Anniversary Bulletin" 1945.  
Sanderson, Edmund L. Waltham 1630-1884. Waltham Historical Society. 1936.  
"First Congregational Church, Waltham, Mass: 1820-1970. 150th Anniversary" 1970.

INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
Office of the Secretary, Boston

Community:

Waltham

Form No:

105

Property Name: First Congregational Church

Indicate each item on inventory form which is being continued below.

Historical Significance (cont)

In 1925, the church, which was undergoing renovation, was damaged by fire. The present harmonious Georgian Revival style elements were added to facade, tower and nave at that time. In 1955, the church became part of the merger of the Congregational and evangelical reformed churches to form the United Church of Christ.



CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, MAIN STREET.

Staple to Inventory form at bottom

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

AUG 21 1989

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number \_\_\_\_\_ Page \_\_\_\_\_

Multiple Resource Area  
Thematic Group

Name Waltham MRA  
State Middlesex County, MASSACHUSETTS

Nomination/Type of Review

Date/Signature

21. Colburn, Gilbert, House *Entered in the  
National Register*

*for* Keeper *Aelores Byers* 9/28/89

Attest \_\_\_\_\_

22. Company F State Armory *Entered in the  
National Register*

*for* Keeper *Aelores Byers* 9/28/89

Attest \_\_\_\_\_

23. Dow, Lenoir, House *Entered in the  
National Register*

*for* Keeper *Aelores Byers* 9/28/89

Attest \_\_\_\_\_

*see* 24. Dunbar--Stearns House *Substantive Review*

*for* Keeper *Beth L. Savage* 3/9/90

Attest \_\_\_\_\_

25. East Main Street Historic District  
*Entered in the  
National Register*

*for* Keeper *Aelores Byers* 9/28/89

Attest \_\_\_\_\_

26. Eastern Middlesex County Second  
District Court *Entered in the  
National Register*

*for* Keeper *Aelores Byers* 9/28/89

Attest \_\_\_\_\_

*see* 27. First Congregational Church *Substantive Review*

*for* Keeper *Beth L. Savage* 9/28/89

Attest \_\_\_\_\_

*see* 28. First Parish Church *Substantive Review*

*for* Keeper *Beth L. Savage* 9/28/89

Attest \_\_\_\_\_

29. Fisher, Henry N., House *Entered in the  
National Register*

*for* Keeper *Aelores Byers* 9/28/89

Attest \_\_\_\_\_

30. Fiske, Elijah, House *Entered in the  
National Register*

*for* Keeper *Aelores Byers* 9/28/89

Attest \_\_\_\_\_

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number \_\_\_\_\_ Page \_\_\_\_\_

SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

NRIS Reference Number: 89001548

Date Listed: 09/28/89

First Congregational Church  
Property Name

Middlesex  
County

MA  
State

Waltham MRA  
Multiple Name

-----  
This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.

*Sw* *Bob J. Saurge*  
Signature of the Keeper

*9/28/89*  
Date of Action

Amended Items in Nomination:

Section 8: Criteria considerations

Criteria exception A is applicable for the property's religious function.

This information was confirmed with Ann Tait, Acting National Register Director, MASHPO, by telephone.

DISTRIBUTION:

- National Register property file
- Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY First Congregational Church  
NAME:

MULTIPLE Waltham MRA  
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: MASSACHUSETTS, Middlesex

DATE RECEIVED: 8/21/89 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 9/05/89  
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 9/21/89 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 10/05/89  
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 89001548

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: Y NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

ACCEPT  RETURN  REJECT 9/28/89 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

RECOM./CRITERIA Accept A+C  
REVIEWER Savast  
DISCIPLINE Architectural History  
DATE 9/28/89

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y  see attached SLR  N

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CLASSIFICATION

count       resource type

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STATE/FEDERAL AGENCY CERTIFICATION

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FUNCTION

historic       current

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DESCRIPTION

architectural classification  
 materials  
 descriptive text

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SIGNIFICANCE

Period      Areas 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

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BIBLIOGRAPHY

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GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

acreage       verbal boundary description  
 UTM's       boundary justification

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ACCOMPANYING DOCUMENTATION/PRESENTATION

sketch maps       USGS maps       photographs       presentation

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OTHER COMMENTS

Questions concerning this nomination may be directed to

\_\_\_\_\_  
Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

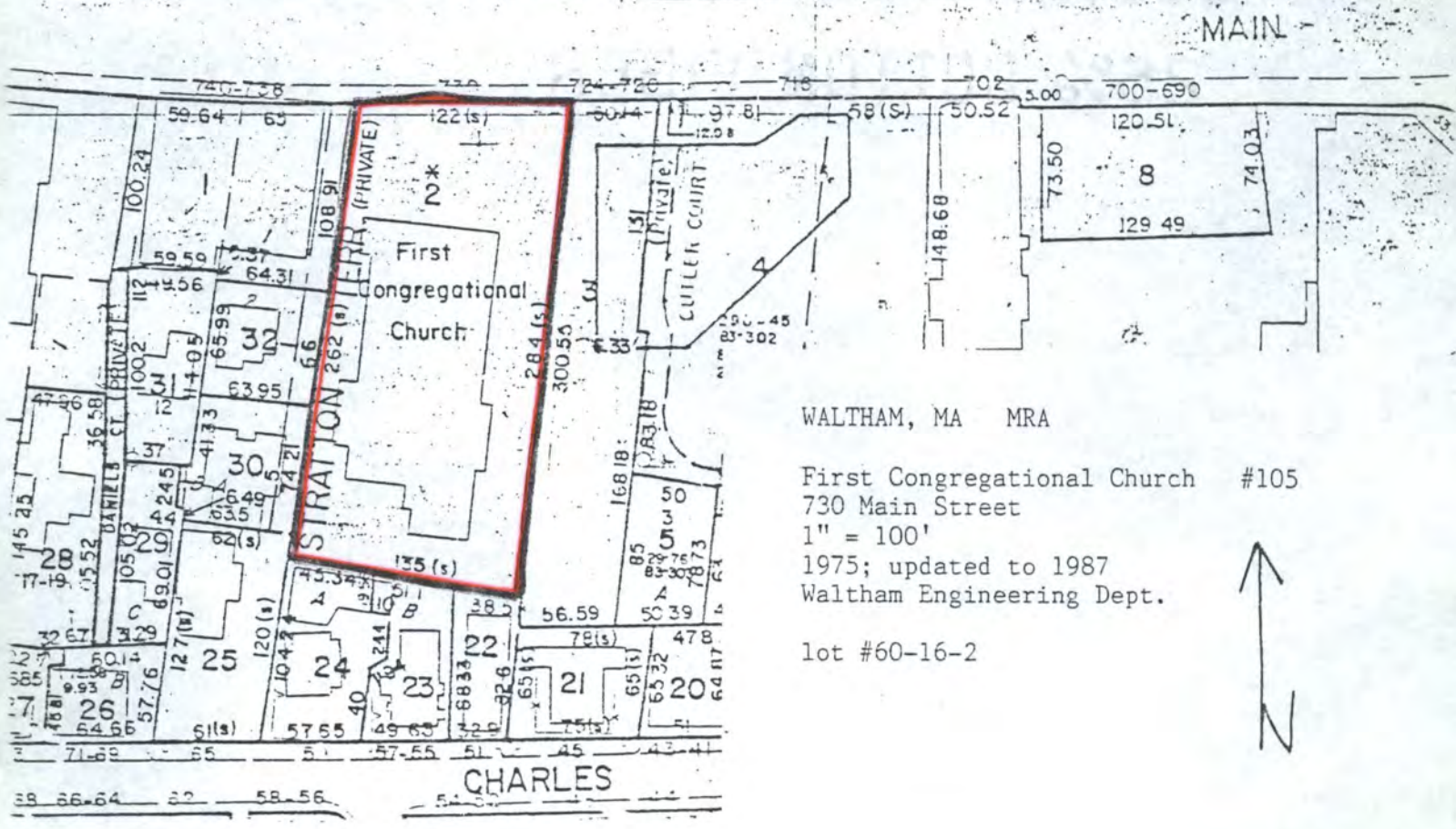
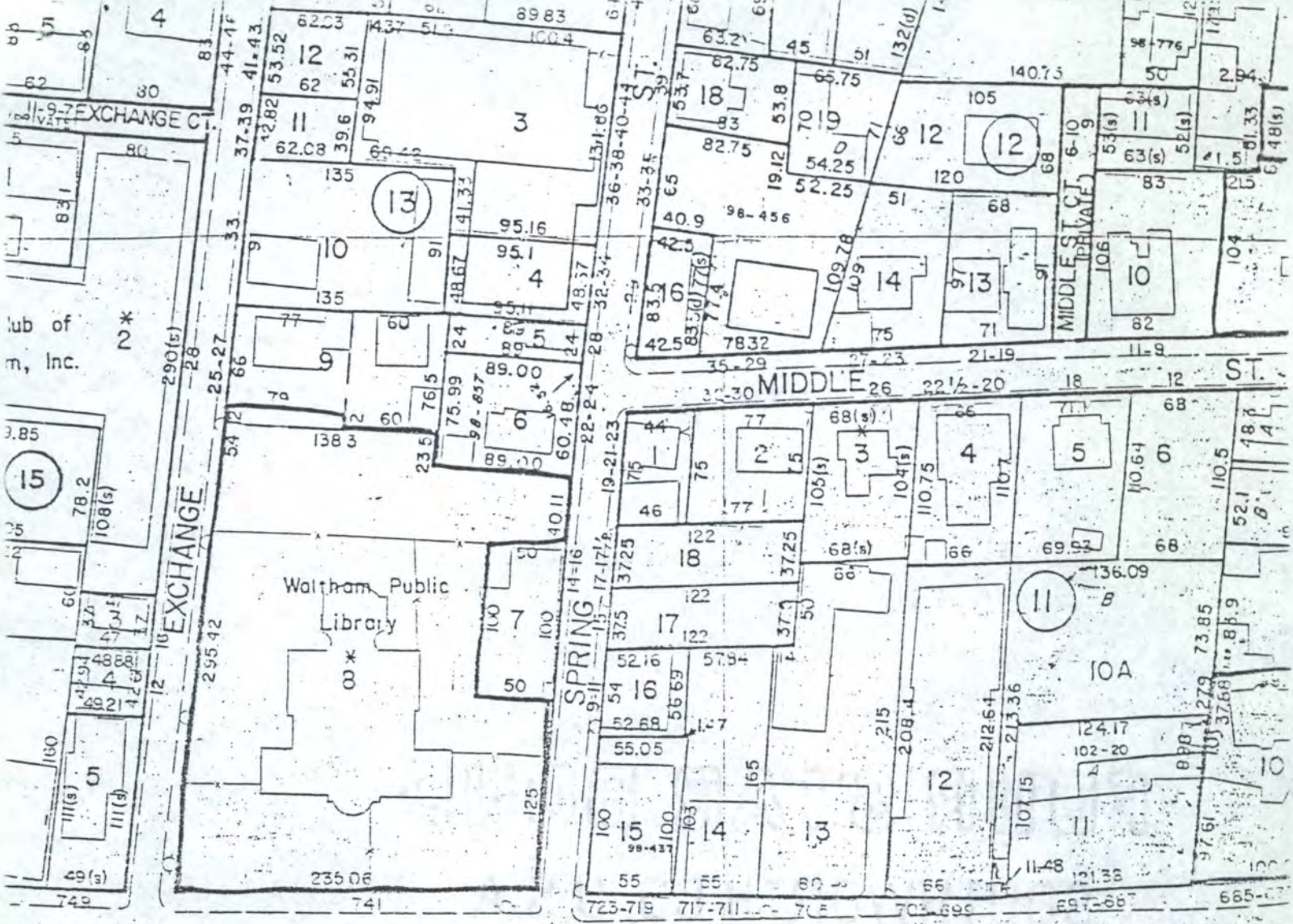


First Congregational Church

730 MAIN ST

MHC # 105

WATKINSON, MA MRA

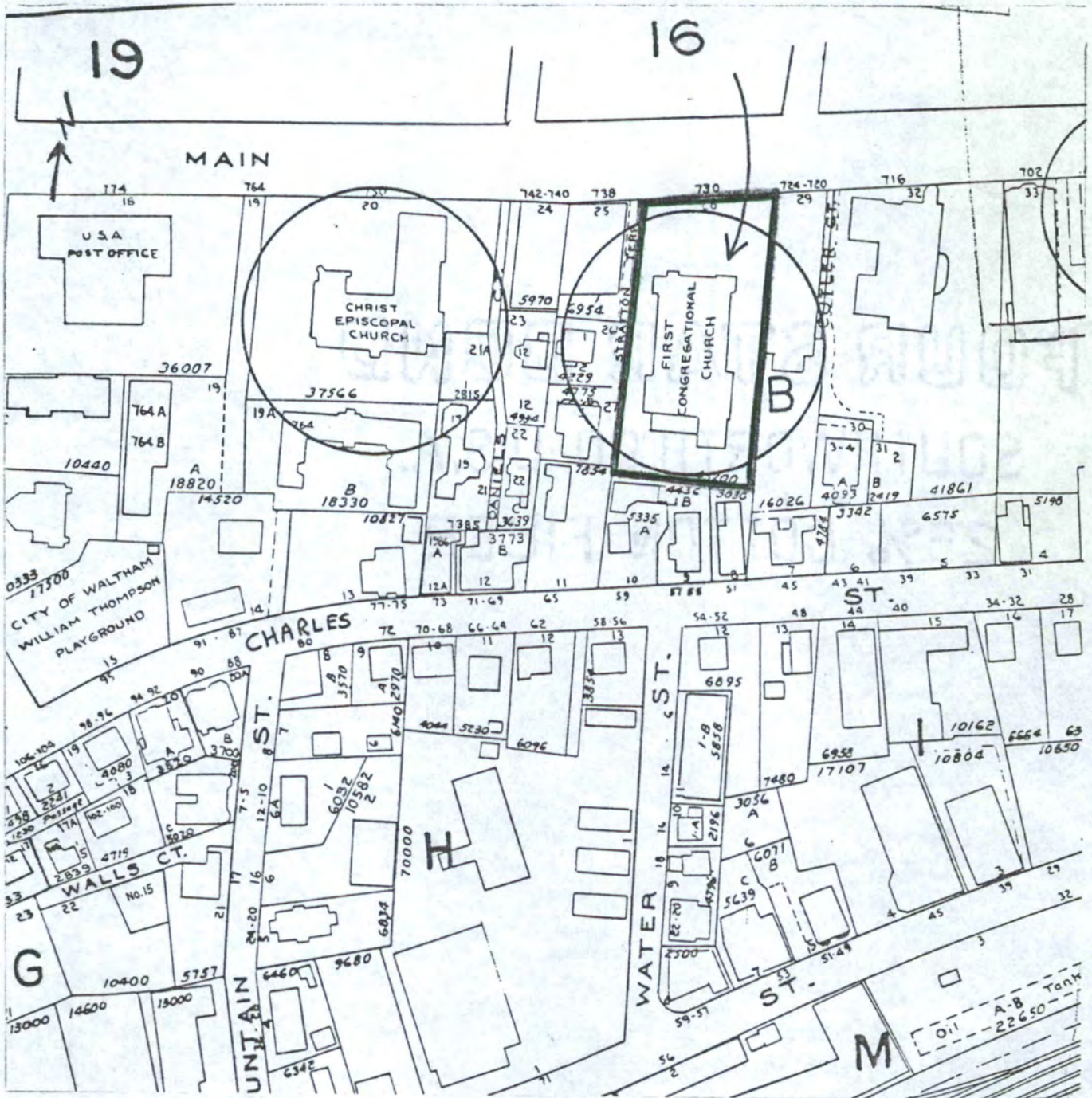


WALTHAM, MA MRA

First Congregational Church #105  
 730 Main Street  
 1" = 100'  
 1975; updated to 1987  
 Waltham Engineering Dept.

lot #60-16-2





1970 Atlas, City of Waltham  
 Compiled by the Waltham  
 Engineering Division  
 Scale: 1 inch = 140 feet

Waltham, Massachusetts MRA  
 730 Main Street  
 First Congregational Church  
 15-B-28 MTC #105

Please refer to the map in the  
Multiple Property Cover Sheet  
for this property

Multiple Property Cover Sheet Reference Number: 64000301