

JAN 02 1990

35

AREA

FORM NO.

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
80 BOYLSTON STREET
BOSTON, MA 02116

NO-064

Town Newton (Nonantum)

Address 168 Adams Street

Historic Name Agudas Achim Anshei Sfard

Synagogue

Use: Present synagogue

Original same

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

DESCRIPTION

Date 1912

Source water & building dept. records

Style Classical Revival

Architect unknown

Exterior Wall Fabric brick

Outbuildings none

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

Major Alterations (with dates) none

Condition good

see attached map

Moved no Date n/a

Acreage 6,000 sq.ft. C.14A

Setting densely developed, modest residential neighborhood south of village commercial area.

UTM REFERENCE 19/318700/4691780

USGS QUADRANGLE NEWTON

SCALE 1:25000

Recorded by Candace Jenkins/Susan Abele

Organization Newton Historical Comm.

Date 12/1986; rev. 12/1987

NATIONAL REGISTER CRITERIA STATEMENT (if applicable)

Congregation Agudas Achim Anshei Sfard Synagogue possesses integrity of location, design, setting, materials, and workmanship. As the oldest extant Jewish congregation in Newton, Massachusetts, it is significant under criterion A for its association with their early immigration to the city. It is also significant under criterion C as an intact example of a small scale early synagogue evocative of the size and means of a congregation in the early twentieth century.

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

The Agudas Achim Synagogue is located on the east side of Adams Street in a modest densely developed residential neighborhood just south of Nonantum's commercial district. It is a small, one story brick structure of rectangular plan set on a high concrete foundation and trimmed with cast stone; the facade is faced with pressed red brick while the other elevations display a reddish-brown brick of lesser quality. The three bay facade is articulated by corner quoins and is centered around an entry with double-leaf paneled doors, headed by a semi-circular fan. Above the entry is an oculus containing the Star of David, and flanking it are two elongated round arched windows containing 6/6 sash. All of these elements are highlighted by alternating red and white voussours. A
(see continuation sheet)

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

Jewish immigrants began settling in Newton, and particularly in Nonantum (along with the Irish, Italian and French Canadians) in the 1890s. However, there were no local congregations until a group known as Knesses Israel was incorporated in 1909. Knesses Israel worshiped in a house at 97 Dalby Street in Nonantum, but eventually disbanded, selling the Dalby Street house in 1914. The remaining members joined the congregation of Agudas Achim Anshei Sfard, which was chartered in October 1911, making Agudas Achim the oldest extant congregation in Newton.

Although small and far from wealthy, the congregants of Agudas Achim embarked on a campaign to build their own synagogue on Adams Street. Members gave "according to their means" and additional contributions came from outside the community - from Jacob Schiff of New York, and non-Jews such as the former Mayor of Newton, the Honorable John Wingate Weeks and local doctors Thomas Gallagher and Joseph Flanagan. The corner stone was laid in August 1912 at a ceremony attended by Mayor Hatfield and other local
(see continuation sheet)

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

City Atlases and Directories, Oral Histories
Agudas Achim: The Adams Street Synagogue, Newton Massachusetts
The Jackson Homestead, 1986.

INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
Office of the Secretary, Boston

Community:	Newton	Form No:
	(Nonantum)	NO-064
Property Name: Agudas Achim Anshei Sfard Synagogue		

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

ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE (cont.)

parapet containing the Star of David rises above the molded cornice. The side elevations are five bays long with the bays separated by shallow buttresses. The first bay on each side contains two 6/6 sash windows, one above the other; the three central bays contain round arched windows, a feature continued in the last bay of the north elevation, but replaced by an entry on the south.

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE (cont.)

officials as well as leading Boston area Rabbis and Cantors. This tiny early synagogue remained the only local Jewish house of worship until the incorporation of Temple Emanuel in 1935 (NC-B) and construction of that synagogue on Ward Street in Newton Centre in 1937.

There are no architectural plans and the architect and builder are unknown. Much of the work was done by the congregants themselves, some of whom were skilled artisans. The front steps were added in 1919, a gift from a member in gratitude for the safe return of his son from World War I. The interior was not completed until 1924 with the addition of the Holy Ark and bimah, which was designed by Samuel Katz, a Ukrainian cabinet maker from Chelsea, Massachusetts. Apart from the installation of plumbing, the building remains virtually unchanged.

The congregation of Agudas Achim remains small. It has never been able to retain a full-time rabbi, cantor or Hebrew teacher, but continues to function for Holidays. Until recently it also had no written record of its history. Several years ago, volunteers working under the direction of the Jackson Homestead, Newton's City Museum, began collecting oral histories from second generation members of the congregation. This effort culminated in an exhibit and a publication documenting the history of Agudas Achim. While there may be older congregations in the Greater Boston area, with very few exceptions, they no longer worship in their original synagogues. At Agudas Achim, children and grandchildren of the original members continue to worship in the synagogue and now support a revitalized congregation.

Staple to Inventory form at bottom

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number _____ Page _____

Multiple Resource Area
Thematic Group

Name Newton MRA
State Middlesex County, MA

- | Nomination/Type of Review | Date/Signature |
|---|--|
| 131. Old Chestnut Hill Historic District
(Boundary Increase) | Keeper <u>SPR [Signature]</u> 02-16-90
Attest _____ |
| 132. Pine Ridge Road--Plainfield Street
Historic District | Keeper <u>[Signature]</u> 2/16/90
Attest _____ |
| 133. Saco-Lowell Shope Housing Historic
District | Keeper <u>[Signature]</u> 2/16/90
Attest _____ |
| 134. West Newton Village Center Historic
District | Keeper <u>[Signature]</u> 2/16/90
Attest _____ |
| 135. Windsor Road Historic District | Keeper <u>[Signature]</u> 2/16/90
Attest _____ |
| 136. Agudas Achim Anshei Sfard Synagogue | Keeper <u>[Signature]</u> 2/16/90
Attest _____ |
| 137. Boston Edison Power Station | Keeper <u>[Signature]</u> 2/16/90
Attest _____ |
| 138. Bruner Mayall, House | Keeper <u>[Signature]</u> 2/16/90
Attest _____ |
| 139. Childs, Mayor Edwin O., House | Keeper <u>[Signature]</u> 2/16/90
Attest _____ |
| 140. City Stable and Garage | Keeper <u>[Signature]</u> 2/16/90
Attest _____ |

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY NAME: Agudas Achim Anshei Sfard Synagogue

MULTIPLE NAME: Newton MRA

STATE & COUNTY: MASSACHUSETTS, Middlesex

DATE RECEIVED: 1/02/90 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 1/16/90
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 2/02/90 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 2/16/90
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 90000035

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 2/16/90 DATE

Entered in the
National Register

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

RECOM./CRITERIA _____
REVIEWER _____
DISCIPLINE _____
DATE _____

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

CLASSIFICATION

count resource type

STATE/FEDERAL AGENCY CERTIFICATION

FUNCTION

historic current

DESCRIPTION

architectural classification
 materials
 descriptive text

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

BIBLIOGRAPHY

GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

acreage verbal boundary description
 UTM's boundary justification

ACCOMPANYING DOCUMENTATION/PRESENTATION

sketch maps USGS maps photographs presentation

OTHER COMMENTS

Questions concerning this nomination may be directed to

_____ Phone _____

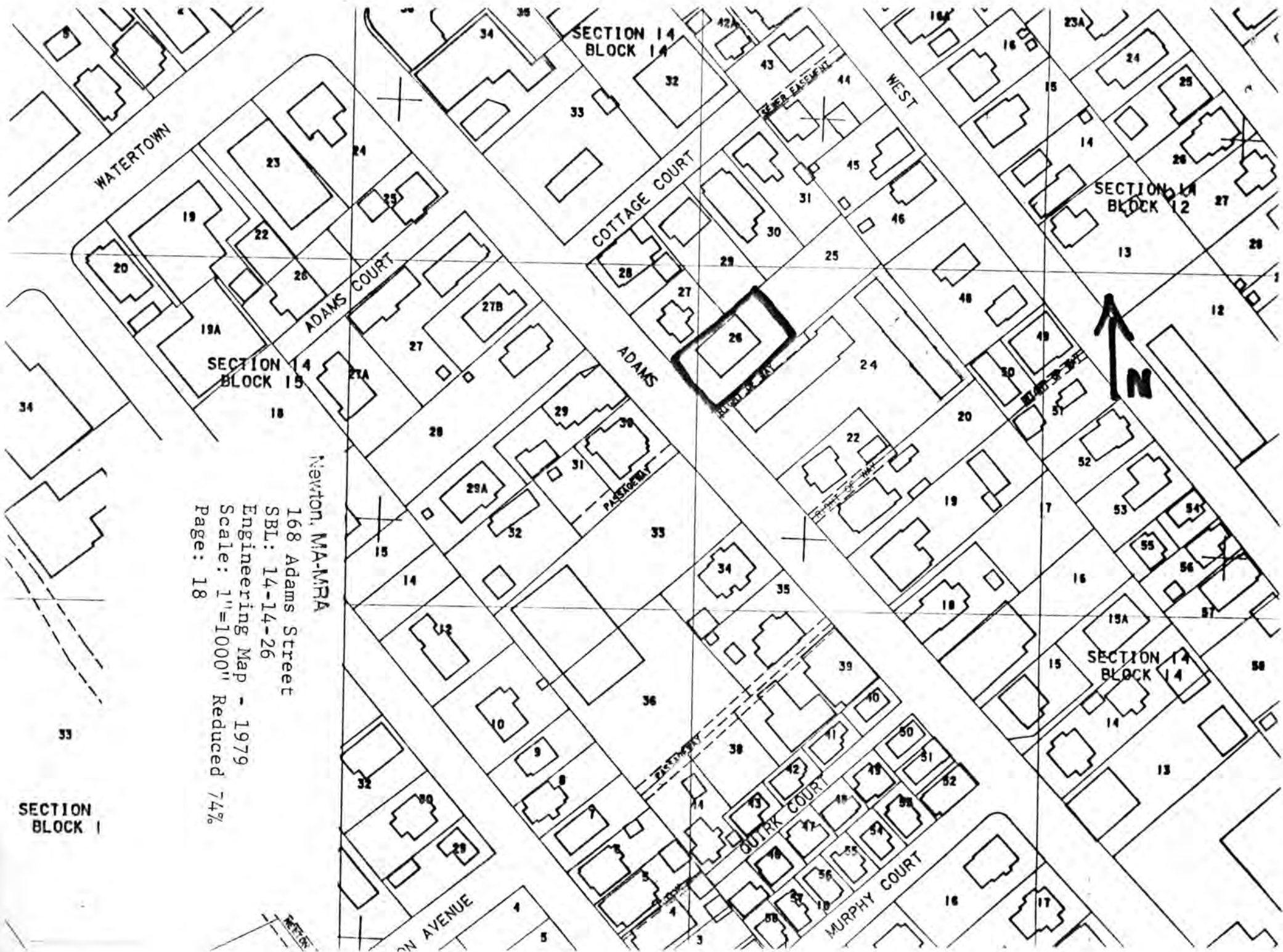
Signed _____ Date _____



Agudas Achim Anshei Sfard
168 Adams St
Newton, Ma

C. Jenkins 12/86
neg @ Jackson Homestead
New E

87/1 #20A



Newton, MA-MRA
168 Adams Street
SBL: 14-14-26
Engineering Map - 1979
Scale: 1"=1000" Reduced 74%
Page: 18

SECTION
BLOCK 1