

FORM B - BUILDING

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
Office of the Secretary, State House, Boston

In Area no. 26	Form no. 438
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1. Town Salem ✓

Address 284-296 Essex Street ✓

Name YMCA ✓

Present use Institutional

Present owner Salem YMCA  
288 Essex Street  
Salem, Mass. 01970

3. Description:

Date 1898

Source Newspapers

Style Classical Revival

Architect Walter J. Paine

Exterior wall fabric Brick & Limestone

Outbuildings (describe) N/A

Other features monumental entry, pilastered facade, frieze with swags

Altered removal of rooftop trellis Date 1950s

Moved no Date \_\_\_\_\_

5. Lot size: 35,985 sq. ft.

One acre or less X Over one acre \_\_\_\_\_

Approximate frontage 185 ft.

Approximate distance of building from street \_\_\_\_\_

Adjacent

6. Recorded by A. Crump/A. Van Ingen

Organization SRA/Historic Salem Inc.

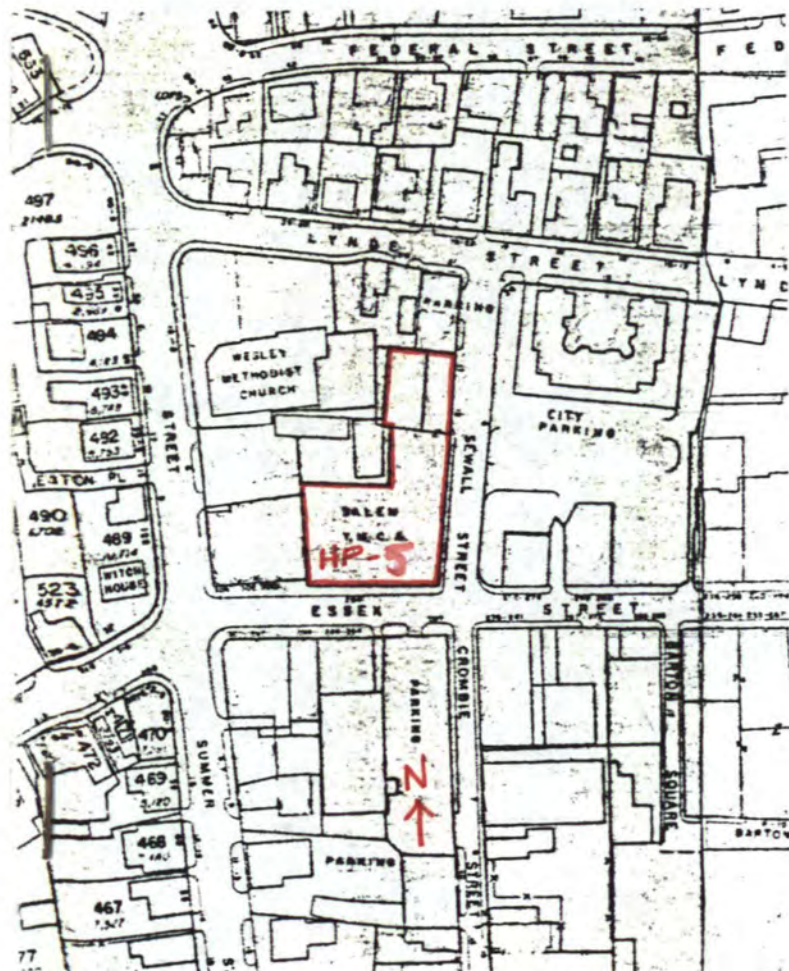
Date November 1979

UTM References: 19/344040/4709210

Assessor's Number: 26-438

2. Photo (3x3" or 3x5")  
Staple to left side of form  
Photo number \_\_\_\_\_

4. Map. Draw sketch of building location in relation to nearest cross streets and other buildings. Indicate north.



7. Original owner (if known) YMCA

Original use Institutional

Subsequent uses (if any) and dates \_\_\_\_\_

8. Themes (check as many as applicable)

Aboriginal	_____	Conservation	_____	Recreation	<u>x</u>
Agricultural	_____	Education	_____	Religion	_____
Architectural	<u>x</u>	Exploration/ settlement	_____	Science/ invention	_____
The Arts	_____	Industry	_____	Social/ humanitarian	<u>x</u>
Commerce	_____	Military	_____	Transportation	_____
Communication	_____	Political	_____		
Community development	_____				

9. Historical significance (include explanation of themes checked above)

The Salem Y.M.C.A. is the finest local example of the Classical Revival style popular in the late 19th century. Walter J. Paine of Beverly designed the new facility at 284-296 Essex Street in 1898, incorporating commercial space and a theater with the recreational and residential facilities of the Y.

The ground floor of the three-story building is articulated as an English basement, containing storefronts and the elaborate center frontispiece marking the main entrance to the Y.M.C.A. Each bay is defined by an interruption of the wall plane. The center bay is flanked by two-story brick pilasters above the entrance, and the second and sixth bays break forward to match the projection of the frontispiece. The basement and classically-detailed trim are limestone. Although the rooftop loggia has been removed, the building retains a strong sense of the original design.

Judging from those examples of his work that were published in the prestigious periodical, American Architect and Building News, Walter J. Paine worked comfortably in a variety of styles. Two contemporary church designs were devoid of classical influence, but fully expressed the Shingle Style and the Romanesque Revival. This eclecticism was typical of the late 19th century, when architects frequently pursued several stylistic directions simultaneously. Paine's published work is uniformly competent and sophisticated, creating a logical context for his capable treatment of the Y.M.C.A.

The monumental presence of the Y.M.C.A. acts as an anchor for the western end of Essex Street, Salem's major commercial corridor. Its architectural importance is representative of the Y.M.C.A.'s prominent role in the community at the time of construction, and the building remains a significant element in the fabric of downtown Salem. Bibliography and/or references (such as local histories, deeds, assessor's records, early maps, etc.)

(Continued)

Salem Evening News, April 11, 1898, February 3, 1899, and February 20, 1899.

INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
Office of the Secretary, Boston

Community: Salem	Form No: 438
Property Name: YMCA	

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

9. Historical Significance (Continued)

The YMCA was organized in Salem in 1858 and was originally housed in rented space at the old Custon House on Central Street. The first building purchased by the YMCA was at 20 Central Street in 1884. Twenty years later, the present location on Essex Street was constructed and opened for use. The original rooftop granite portico/trellis structure was removed in the late 1950s due to structural problems. The brick addition at the rear of the building was constructed at this time to house the present indoor pool.

In 1979-1980, the YMCA Trustees, realizing that the facility would have to be upgraded to increase the declining membership due to the growth of private health clubs, sold a portion of the second and third floors to the Salem Housing Authority, in order to raise the necessary capital for the improvements.

The Housing Authority renovated the two floors which formerly contained rental rooms, into fourteen units of elderly housing. With its own capital, and with grants from the Department of Interior's UPARR Program and the Salem Redevelopment Authority, the YMCA in undergoing more than a half million dollars of upgrading.

The YMCA building possesses integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship and association. It meets criteria A and C of the National Register of Historic Places.

Staple to Inventory form at bottom

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only  
received  
date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number

Page 2 of 2

Multiple Resource Area  
Thematic Group

Name Downtown Salem Multiple Resource Area

State Massachusetts

Nomination/Type of Review

Date/Signature

11. West Cogswell House

Entered in the  
National Register

for Keeper Alvina Byers 7/29/83

Attest

12. YMCA

Entered in the  
National Register

for Keeper Alvina Byers 7/29/83

Attest

13.

Keeper

Attest

14.

Keeper

Attest

15.

Keeper

Attest

16.

Keeper

Attest

17.

Keeper

Attest

18.

Keeper

Attest

19.

Keeper

Attest

20.

Keeper

Attest

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

EVALUATION / RETURN SHEET

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

Y M C A (Downtown Salem MRA)  
Essex County  
MASSACHUSETTS

Working No. JUN 14 1983  
Fed. Reg. Date: 2.2.84  
Date Due: 7/14/83 - 7/29/83  
Action:  ACCEPT 7/29/83  
 RETURN  
 REJECT

- resubmission
- nomination by person or local government
- owner objection
- appeal

Entered in the National Register  
Federal Agency: \_\_\_\_\_

Substantive Review:  sample  request  appeal  NR decision

Reviewer's comments:

Recom./Criteria \_\_\_\_\_  
Reviewer \_\_\_\_\_  
Discipline \_\_\_\_\_  
Date \_\_\_\_\_  
see continuation sheet

Nomination returned for:  technical corrections cited below  
 substantive reasons discussed below

1. Name

2. Location

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
	Public Acquisition	Accessible	

4. Owner of Property

5. Location of Legal Description

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

Has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> original site
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input 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

- summary paragraph
- completeness
- clarity
- alterations/integrity
- dates
- boundary selection

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## 8. Significance

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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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## 9. Major Bibliographical References

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## 10. Geographical Data

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Acreage of nominated property \_\_\_\_\_

Quadrangle name \_\_\_\_\_

USIT References \_\_\_\_\_

Verbal boundary description and justification \_\_\_\_\_

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## 11. Form Prepared By

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## 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

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The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national  state  local

State Historic Preservation Officer signature \_\_\_\_\_

Site \_\_\_\_\_ date \_\_\_\_\_

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## 13. Other

- Maps  
 Photographs  
 Other

Questions concerning this nomination may be directed to \_\_\_\_\_

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: 202 272-3504

Comments for any item may be continued on an attached sheet



HEALTH FOODS

GENERAL RETAIL EQUIPMENT

Downtown Salem MAA, Ma

YMCA

284-290 Essex St

NOV 1979



1-31

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

Multiple Property Cover Sheet Reference Number: 64000277