

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED NOV 28 1975

DATE ENTERED APR 30 1976

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORMSEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS**1 NAME**

HISTORIC

The Follen Community Church

AND/OR COMMON

Same

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

755 Massachusetts Avenue

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Lexington

VICINITY OF

5th

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

STATE

Massachusetts

CODE

025

COUNTY

Middlesex

CODE

017

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

☐ DISTRICT☒ BUILDING(S)☐ STRUCTURE☐ SITE☐ OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

☐ PUBLIC☒ PRIVATE☐ BOTH

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

☐ IN PROCESS☐ BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

☒ OCCUPIED☐ UNOCCUPIED☐ WORK IN PROGRESS

ACCESSIBLE

☒ YES: RESTRICTED☐ YES: UNRESTRICTED☐ NO

PRESENT USE

☐ AGRICULTURE☐ COMMERCIAL☐ EDUCATIONAL☐ ENTERTAINMENT☐ GOVERNMENT☐ INDUSTRIAL☐ MILITARY☐ MUSEUM☐ PARK☐ PRIVATE RESIDENCE☒ RELIGIOUS☐ SCIENTIFIC☐ TRANSPORTATION☐ OTHER:**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

The Follen Church Society

STREET & NUMBER

755 Massachusetts Avenue

CITY, TOWN

Lexington

VICINITY OF

STATE

Massachusetts 02173

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTIONCOURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

South Middlesex Registry of Deeds

STREET & NUMBER

208 Cambridge Street

CITY, TOWN

Cambridge

STATE

Massachusetts 02138

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

Inventory of the Historic Assets of the Commonwealth
Historic American Buildings Survey (MASS-590)

DATE

1967 (Mass.); 1930 (HABS)

☒ FEDERAL ☒ STATE ☐ COUNTY ☐ LOCALDEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

Massachusetts Historical Commission; Washington, DC

CITY, TOWN

Boston

STATE

Massachusetts 02108

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

☐ EXCELLENT
☒ GOOD
☐ FAIR

☐ DETERIORATED
☐ RUINS
☐ UNEXPOSED

CHECK ONE

☐ UNALTERED
☒ ALTERED

CHECK ONE

☒ ORIGINAL SITE
☐ MOVED DATE _____

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Follen Community Church faces west onto Massachusetts Avenue (formerly Main Street) in East Lexington. Next to it to the south stands the Stone Building (Cary Memorial Library) and to the north is a parsonage built around 1930.

The Follen Community Church was built in 1840/41 according to designs made in 1839 by the minister, Charles Theodore Christian Follen. The building is sheathed in clapboards, and its pointed arched windows display a Gothic influence. It is octagonal in shape, resting on a heavy granite foundation. As originally designed, the only deviation from the octagon was a front vestibule surmounted by a tall steeple, the spire of which was of lattice construction.

A unique feature of the roof over the sanctuary is the incorporation of a structurally massive ceiling (with eight 14-inch square chestnut rafters) hung from the apex of the eight-sided roof by a single heavy iron rod. The pulpit, still in use, was situated on the floor of the sanctuary to allow Reverend Follen to have his congregation spread half-way around him fan-wise. The original choir loft was set in the back of the church over the vestibule with access from the steeple.

In April 1857 the steeple was damaged by fire after being struck by lightning. The lattice spire was removed until eight years later when it was rebuilt and sheathed with wooden shingles. At this time a raised chancel was added to the back of the octagon to provide space for the choir in front of the congregation and for the pulpit to be raised to a more prominent position. A kitchen was added beneath the chancel.

In 1914 a village clock was added to the steeple under the following arrangement: The steeple was to be supplied by the church, the clock was to be the property of the "Citizens of the East Village," the clock was to be maintained and wound by the East Lexington Men's Club and was to be lighted by the Town of Lexington.

The only major modification to the outside of the church occurred in 1955 when a large, low, basement-level addition was built unobtrusively at the rear behind the chancel to provide church school and meeting space. A number of internal changes in the basement space directly under the sanctuary have been made from time to time as needs demand. As recently refurbished, it now provides office and church school rooms and a small meeting room appropriately named "the Follen Room" where original portraits of both Charles and Eliza Follen are displayed on the walls.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED *Mar. 22, 1976*

DATE ENTERED *April 30, 1976*

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 2 PAGE 1

The Follen Community Church, Lexington, Massachusetts (Middlesex County)

Correction:

The Follen Community Church is located in the Fourth Congressional District.



8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
☐ PREHISTORIC	☐ ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	☐ COMMUNITY PLANNING	☐ LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	☒ RELIGION
☐ 1400-1499	☐ ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	☐ CONSERVATION	☐ LAW	☐ SCIENCE
☐ 1500-1599	☐ AGRICULTURE	☐ ECONOMICS	☐ LITERATURE	☐ SCULPTURE
☐ 1600-1699	☒ ARCHITECTURE	☐ EDUCATION	☐ MILITARY	☐ SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
☐ 1700-1799	☐ ART	☐ ENGINEERING	☐ MUSIC	☐ THEATER
☒ 1800-1899	☐ COMMERCE	☐ EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	☐ PHILOSOPHY	☐ TRANSPORTATION
☐ 1900-	☐ COMMUNICATIONS	☐ INDUSTRY	☐ POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	☐ OTHER (SPECIFY)
		☐ INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1840-41

BUILDER/ARCHITECT Reverend Charles Follen

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Follen Community Church is significant as the first permanent home of the Religious Society of East Lexington and as the only octagonal structure in the town.

The Religious Society of East Lexington was formed in 1833 and in 1835 began holding its meetings in the Stone Building (Cary Memorial Library) in East Lexington. The pastor of the new religious society was the Reverend Charles Follen who had fled his native Germany because of opposition to his radical political activities. In America he became an ardent abolitionist before such views were acceptable in New England, and as a result he lost his position as professor of German at Harvard College. In order to give full expression to his religious, moral and political opinions, Follen turned to the ministry and preached to the Religious Society in East Lexington which was sympathetic to his views.

After four years of meeting in the Stone Building, the Society was desirous of building its own church. Follen designed the new church building which was to stand next to the hall (the Stone Building) formerly used by the worshippers, and he led the Society in conducting a fair to aid in financing the undertaking. The fair was held in August 1839 on Mt. Independence, and the proceeds amounted to about \$1200.

Ground was broken for the new church on July 4, 1840 and on January 15, 1841 the dedication was held. Dr. Follen was returning from a lecture tour to preside at the ceremonies when he was killed in the explosion of the steamship "Lexington" in Long Island Sound.

Ever since its founding in a town famous for its fight against "the establishment" on April 19, 1775, the Follen Church Society (as it is now called) has prided itself on liberal social and religious views and considers itself significant as a symbol of our democratic heritage. It continues to be an active force in Lexington's community life. The tradition of the East Village Fair, conducted each year on the church lawn, has lived on for over 125 years, making it one of the oldest yearly fairs in the area. The introduction by Follen of the German custom of Christmas to his Cambridge and Lexington neighbors is another event which the church yearly celebrates by selling Christmas trees under the rubric of the "Christmas Tree Church."

The Follen Church is the oldest church building now standing in Lexington, and together with its neighbor the Stone Building presents an important symbol of the fight of Reverend Follen and other Americans to preserve the freedoms of speech and worship.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Piper, Dr. Fred Smith. "Architectural Yesterdays in Lexington," Proceedings of the Lexington Historical Society, Vol. IV, Lexington, Mass. 1912.
Smith, A. Bradford. "History of the Stone Building," Proceedings of the Lexington Historical Society, Vol. II, Lexington, Mass. 1900.
Records in the home of Follen Church historian, Dr. Sanborn Brown, 37 Maple Street, Lexington, Mass.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY .347 acres

UTM REFERENCES

A 19 318400 46991640
ZONE EASTING NORTHING
C

B
ZONE EASTING NORTHING
D

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

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

Judy D. Dobbs, National Register Editor

ORGANIZATION

Massachusetts Historical Commission

STREET & NUMBER

294 Washington Street

CITY OR TOWN

Boston

DATE

November 24, 1975

TELEPHONE

617-727-8470

STATE

Massachusetts 02108

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL X

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.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

Elizabeth Reed Amadon

TITLE

Executive Director, Massachusetts Historical Commission

DATE

Nov. 25, 1975

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

DATE

4/30/96

ATTEST:

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

4.28.75

Property The Stone Building and the (Follen Community Church)

State Mass. Working Number 6.13.75.1084

TECHNICAL

Photos 2

Maps 2

UTM incorrect

CONTROL

cm

6.16.75

Agree - need 2 nominations

HISTORIAN

Return

W. R. Luce

6/18/75

AN ARCHITECTURAL VIEWPOINT, THESE BUILDINGS

BE NOMINATED SEPARATELY WITH BETTER STATEMENTS OF SIGNIFICANCE,

THE ONLY RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN THESE BUILDINGS ARE 1) THEY ARE ADJACENT AND 2) FOLLEN PREACHED
THE STONE BUILDING BEFORE THE CHURCH WAS BUILT.

ARCHITECTURAL HISTORIAN

RETURN

LEBOVICH

6-18-75

ARCHEOLOGIST

OTHER

HAER

Inventory _____

Review _____

REVIEW UNIT CHIEF

BRANCH CHIEF

KEEPER

Property The Fallen Community Church

Middlesex

State Mass.

Working Number 11,28,75,2098

TECHNICAL

Photos 2
Maps 1

CONTROL

OK pl
12.8.75

HISTORIAN

Accept
W.R. Luce
1/8/76

ARCHITECTURAL HISTORIAN

ACCEPT
H.W. Jander
1/9/76

ARCHEOLOGIST

OTHER

HAER

Inventory

Review

REVIEW UNIT CHIEF

Accept
Colz
4-27-76

BRANCH CHIEF

KEEPER

Hungate
4-28-76

National Register Write-up
Federal Register Entry 6-1-76

Send-back
Re-submit

Entered APR 30 1976

INT:2106-74



PROPERTY OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

NPS Number 4.30.76

Title: Follen Community Church
Middlesex Cty., Mass

Loc. Side view, facing north
Passage at left of
front. New addition (1965)
at right

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
PROPERTY PHOTOGRAPH FORM**

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED NOV 28 1975

DATE ENTERED APR 30 1976

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES ENCLOSE WITH PHOTOGRAPH

1 NAME

HISTORIC

Follen Community Church

AND/OR COMMON

Same

2 LOCATION

CITY, TOWN Lexington

____ VICINITY OF

COUNTY Middlesex STATE MA

3 PHOTO REFERENCE

PHOTO CREDIT J. March

DATE OF PHOTO 1975

NEGATIVE FILED AT Follen Community Church, 755 Massachusetts Avenue, Lexington, MA 02173

4 IDENTIFICATION

DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC. IF DISTRICT, GIVE BUILDING NAME & STREET

PHOTO NO 1

Side view of church looking north. Parsonage can be seen just to the left of the front of the church. New addition (1955) at extreme right.



PROPERTY OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

NPS Number

4.30.76

Title:

Follen Community Church
Middlesex Cty., Mass.

Loc.

view of front facing
east

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
PROPERTY PHOTOGRAPH FORM**

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DATE ENTERED APR 30 1976

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES ENCLOSE WITH PHOTOGRAPH

1 NAME

HISTORIC Follen Community Church

AND/OR COMMON

Same

2 LOCATION

CITY, TOWN Lexington VICINITY OF COUNTY Middlesex STATE MA

3 PHOTO REFERENCE

PHOTO CREDIT J. March

DATE OF PHOTO 1975

NEGATIVE FILED AT Follen Community Church, 755 Massachusetts Avenue, Lexington, MA 02173

4 IDENTIFICATION

DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC. IF DISTRICT, GIVE BUILDING NAME & STREET

Front view facing east.

PHOTO NO 2 ¹²

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
PROPERTY MAP FORM**

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED NOV 28 1975

DATE ENTERED APR 30 1976

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- ENCLOSE WITH MAP

1 NAME

HISTORIC Follen Community Church

AND/OR COMMON Same

2 LOCATION

CITY, TOWN Lexington

____ VICINITY OF

COUNTY Middlesex

STATE MA

3 MAP REFERENCE

SOURCE USGS, Lexington Quadrangle

SCALE 1:24000

DATE 1971

4 REQUIREMENTS

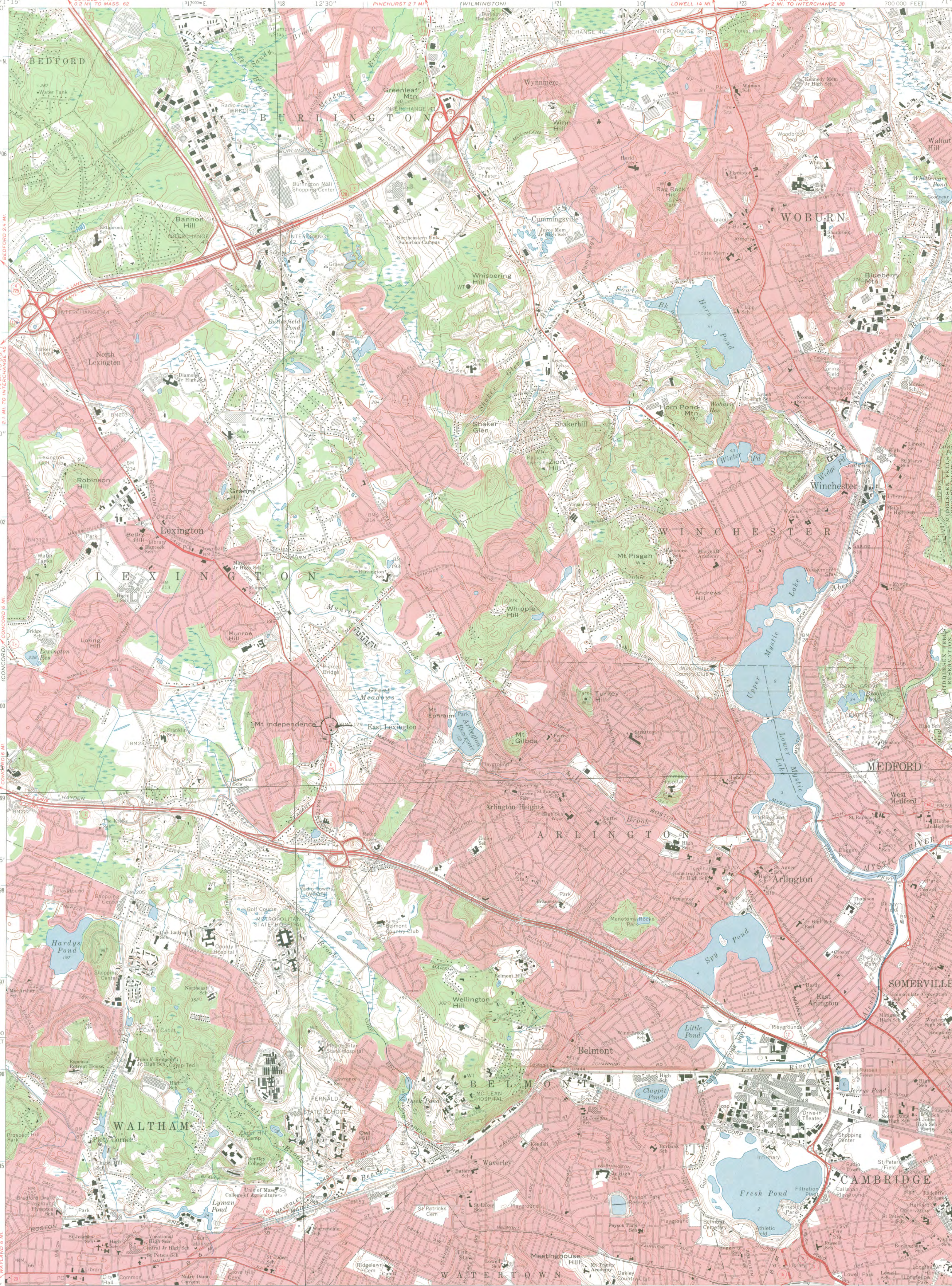
TO BE INCLUDED ON ALL MAPS

1. PROPERTY BOUNDARIES
2. NORTH ARROW
3. UTM REFERENCES

Lexington:
Follen Community Church

UTM Reference:

19/318400/4699640

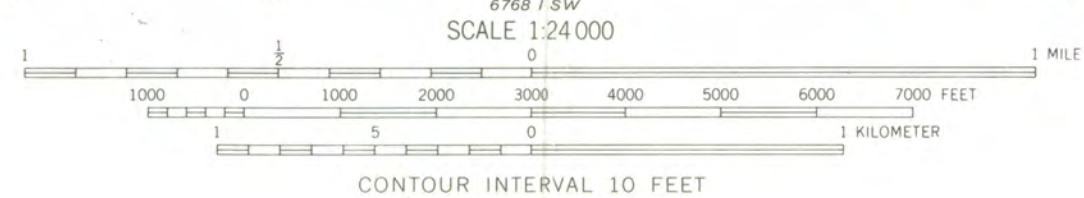
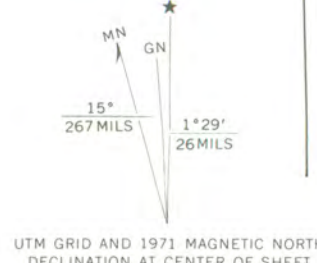


Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey
Control by USGS, USC&GS, and Massachusetts
Geodetic Survey

Planimetry by photogrammetric methods from aerial
photographs taken 1939. Topography by planetable surveys 1943
Revised from aerial photographs taken 1969. Field checked 1971

Polyconic projection. 1927 North American datum
10,000-foot grid based on Massachusetts coordinate system,
mainland zone
1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks,
zone 19, shown in blue

Red tint indicates areas in which only landmark
buildings are shown



THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS
FOR SALE BY U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, WASHINGTON, D. C. 20242
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

ROAD CLASSIFICATION
Primary highway, hard surface ————
Secondary highway, hard surface ————
Unimproved road ————
Interstate Route ————
U. S. Route ————
State Route ————

LEXINGTON, MASS.
N4222.5—W7107.5/7.5

1971

AMS 6768 1 NW—SERIES V814





The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Office of the Secretary

Massachusetts Historical Commission

Paul Guzzi

294 Washington Street

~~40 XX Beacon Street~~

Boston, Massachusetts 02108

727-8470

Secretary of the Commonwealth

November 25, 1975

Mr. Charles Herrington, Chief
Registration
National Register of Historic Places
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C. 20240



Dear Charles:

Enclosed please find two National Register nominations for the following properties:

1. Lexington, Follen Community Church
2. Lexington, The Stone Building

Originally submitted together as "buildings," the nomination for the Stone Building and the Follen Community Church was returned to us on June 26, 1975 with the suggestion that the two buildings be nominated separately. These properties were voted eligible for individual submission on July 8, 1975 by the Massachusetts Historical Commission (State Review Board) and have been signed by the State Historic Preservation Officer, Elizabeth Reed Amadon.

Sincerely yours,

Pat

Patricia L. Weslowski
Survey Director
Massachusetts Historical Commission

PLW/mw

Enclosures

HABS

ENTRIES IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

STATE MASSACHUSETTS

Date Entered APR 30 1976

<u>Name</u>	<u>Location</u>
The Stone Building	Lexington Middlesex County
Superior Courthouse and Bartlett Mall	Newburyport Essex County
The Follen Community Church	Lexington Middlesex County
Sands, Hiram, House	Cambridge Middlesex County
Lexington Green Historic District	Lexington Middlesex County
South Congregational Church	Springfield Hampden County
Paine, Timothy House	Worcester Worcester County
Bartlett-Russell-Hedge House	Plymouth Plymouth County

5/4/76

PR:M Mott:coc

Hon. Edward M. Kennedy
Hon. Edward W. Brooke
Hon. Paul Tsongas
Hon. Michael J. Harrington
Hon. Thomas P. O'Neill, Jr.
Hon. Edward P. Boland
Hon. Joseph D. Early
Hon. Gerry E. Studds

Also Notified

State Historic Preservation Officer
Mrs. Elizabeth R. Amadon
Executive Director
Massachusetts Historical Commission
294 Washington Street
Boston, Massachusetts 02108

Regional Director, North Atlantic Region

NATIONAL REGISTER DATA SHEET

1 NAME as it appears on federal register: Follen Community Church
2 OTHER NAMES:
3 date of entry: 4-30-76 **4 county code:** 017
5 LOCATION street & number: 755 Massachusetts Ave. **city / town:** Lexington **vicinity of:** MA **county:** Middlesex **6 NPS REGION:** North Atlantic
7 OWNER: ☒ PRIVATE ☐ STATE ☐ MUNICIPAL ☐ COUNTY ☐ MULTIPLE ☐ FEDERAL (agency name)
8 ADMINISTRATOR:
9 EXISTING SURVEYS: ☒ NAB ☐ NAC ☐ NAL ☐ NAL ☐ FUNDED? ☐ YES ☐ NO **10 CONGRESS, DISTRICT:** 5 **11 SOURCE of NOMINATION:** ☒ STATE ☐ FEDERAL
12 WITHIN NATIONAL REGISTER HISTORIC DISTRICT? ☐ YES, NAME **13 WITHIN NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK?** ☐ YES, NAME **14 ACBARE:** 347 **15 LOCAL:** ☐ LOCAL ☐ PRIVATE ORGANIZATION
16 CONDITION: ☐ deteriorated ☒ altered ☒ original site **17 features:** ☒ SUBSTANTIALLY INTACT-1 ☒ SUBSTANTIALLY INTACT-2 ☐ SUBSTANTIALLY INTACT-3
☒ excellent ☐ ruins ☐ unaltered ☐ moved ☐ NOT INTACT-0
☒ good ☐ unexposed ☐ reconstructed ☐ unknown ☐ UNKNOWN-4 ☐ UNKNOWN-5 ☒ UNKNOWN-6
☐ fair ☐ unexcavated ☐ excavated ☐ NOT APPLICABLE-7 ☐ NOT APPLICABLE-8 ☐ NOT APPLICABLE-9
18 ACCESS: ☒ YES-Restricted ☐ YES-Unrestricted ☐ No Access ☐ Unknown **19 ADAPTIVE USE:** ☒ YES ☐ NO **20 SAVED?** ☐ YES ☐ NO
21 AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE: ☐ ARCHEOLOGY-prehistoric-2 ☐ COMMERCE-6 ☐ ENTERTAINMENT-26 ☐ LAW-16 ☒ RELIGION-22 ☐ RECREATION-28
☐ ARCHEOLOGY-historic-1 ☐ COMMUNICATIONS-7 ☐ EXPLORATION-12 ☐ LITERATURE-17 ☒ SCIENCE-23 ☐ SETTLEMENT-29
☒ AGRICULTURE-3 ☐ CONSERVATION-8 ☐ HEALTH-27 ☐ MILITARY-18 ☒ SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN-24 ☐ URBAN PLANNING-31
☒ ARCHITECTURE-4 ☐ ECONOMICS-9 ☐ INDUSTRY-13 ☐ MUSIC-19 ☐ SOCIAL/CULTURAL-30 ☐ OTHER (SPECIFY)
☐ ART-5 ☐ EDUCATION-10 ☐ INVENTION-14 ☐ PHILOSOPHY-20 ☐ TRANSPORTATION-25
22 functions: WHEN HISTORICALLY SIGNIFICANT: CHURCH **23 dates of initial construction:** 1840-41 **24 major alterations:** 1857, 1955 **25 historic events:**
CURRENTLY: CHURCH **26 CLAIMS:** explain 'first' X permanent home of the Relig. Soc. of E. Lexington
'oldest' ☐ 'only' X octagonal structure in Lexington
27 architectural style(s): **28 architect:** designer 2 Rev. Charles Follen **29 master builder:** **30 engineer:** German
31 landscape architect / garden designer: **32 interior decorator:** **33 artist:** **34 artisan:** **35 builder/contractor:**
36 NAMES give role & date:
PERSONAL: Rev. Charles Theodore Christian Follen, Harvard professor of German whose radical abolitionist views cost him his professorship, early pastor of the Religious Society of East Lexington (formed 1833), architect of the original church building.
EVENTS: church building.
INSTITUTIONAL:

37 NATIONAL REGISTER WRITE-UP Frame, narrow clapboarding; 1 story, octagonal, hipped roof, front double-door entrance with fanlight in base of octagonal bell and clock tower with louvered belfry and spire, pointed-arched openings; rear ~~basement~~ story addition, 1955. Octagonal, Greek Revival elements.

First permanent home of the Religious Society of East Lexington, group avowing liberal social and religious views, formed in 1833; only octagonal structure in town ~~designed by Rev. Charles Follen, pastor of the Society.~~
~~and still used as the Follen Church Society~~
 gen jr 11/2/78 1.13.78
 IF ADDITIONAL SPACE NEEDED, NUMBER & PUT ON REVERSE