

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form



1381

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name BAKER CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

other names/site number BAKER MAVERICK CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH; GRACE CHURCH FEDERATED

2. Location

street & number 760 SARATOGA STREET not for
publication

city or town BOSTON (East Boston) vicinity

state MASSACHUSETTS code MA county SUFFOLK code 025 zip code 02128

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this ☒ nomination
☐ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of
Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property
☒ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant
☐ nationally ☐ statewide ☒ locally. (☐ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Judith B. McDonough

10/22/98
Date

Signature of certifying official/Title Judith B. McDonough, Executive Director
Massachusetts Historical Commission, State Historic Preservation Officer

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. (☐ See continuation sheet for additional Comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:

- ☒ entered in the National Register
 - ☐ See continuation sheet.
- ☐ determined eligible for the National Register
 - ☐ See continuation sheet.
- ☐ determined not eligible for the National Register
- ☐ removed from the National Register
- ☐ other (explain): _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

Edson H. Beall

11.19.98

BAKER CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

Name of Property

SUFFOLK, MA

County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply)

(Check only one box)

☒ private

☐ public-local

☐ public-State

☐ public-Federal

☒ building(s)

☐ district

☐ site

☐ structure

☐ object

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing

Noncontributing

1

buildings

sites

structures

objects

1

total

Name of related multiple property listing

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

RELIGION/religious facility

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

RELIGION/religious facility

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

Shingle Style

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation BRICK

walls WOOD: shingle

roof ASPHALT

other WOOD: shingle

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheet)

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Baker Congregational Church survives as an early twentieth-century landmark in the Orient Heights section of East Boston and continues as an active social center for its urban residential neighborhood. The church occupies a 9,748 square-foot lot at the corner of Saratoga and Byron Streets in East Boston. The property is relatively flat with a stone retaining wall holding back Byron Street along the east and north property lines. The raised one-story Shingle Style church is located on the eastern end of the odd-shaped lot and perpendicular to Saratoga Street, which is to the south. The modified rectangular plan has a brick foundation, wood shingle-covered walls, and a steep-sloped gable roof covered with asphalt shingles. The present asphalt shingle roof was installed in the mid 1980s. At this same time, the wood gutters along the east and west elevations were replaced with aluminum. The southern gable end projects out beyond the Saratoga Street facade, and an entrance vestibule/tower is asymmetrically placed along the southern end of the west elevation. Windows are typically double-hung sash with diamond-paned upper sash and two-pane lower sash. The glass was originally textured and colored; however, several panes have been broken by vandals and the glass replaced with a clear acrylic. Metal screens/grilles were installed on the south and east windows in 1974 to protect them from vandalism. The interior is unadorned and contains the sanctuary, a small pulpit area, and minister's room on the main level. The eighteen-foot-high ceiling of the sanctuary has sloped sides that are created by the roof coming down to meet the side walls. A narrow set of wood steps leads to the kitchen, bathroom, and function/Sunday school room in the basement.

The surrounding neighborhood is characterized by one-, two- and three-story frame houses spanning from the turn of the century to the present. A small neighborhood park, the site of a former fire station, is located directly across Saratoga Street from the church. A chain-link fence runs the perimeter of the church property, and access to property is provided by two gates along Saratoga Street. Several deciduous trees are scattered about the property, there are small plantings along the eastern property line, and there is a small grouping of shrubs along the west elevation of the church.

The main body of the church is rectangular in shape, approximately thirty-three feet, six inches wide by sixty-three feet, six inches deep. A ten-foot-square entrance vestibule/bell tower that rises approximately fifty feet above grade projects from the east elevation. Three sides of the tower have round-top louvered openings at the bell house. The roof of the tower is pyramidal and splays out at the eaves. The wood gutters at the eave of the tower were removed sometime after 1943. A separate gable roofed entrance to the basement projects from the center of the east elevation. A thirteen-foot-wide by seven foot, six inch deep apse with clipped corners projects from the center of the north elevation, and a sixteen foot wide by twelve foot deep minister's room is attached to the northwest corner of the building. This appendage is covered with a low-sloped hip roof.

The brick foundation rises approximately six feet above grade and has large fixed pane windows that align with the windows above and emit light into the basement. The foundation is capped with a water table that catches the splayed wood shingle walls above. The south facade has a large round top window centered on it. The

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gable end projects out beyond the facade and mimics the top of the window creating a hood. The west elevation has four rows of equally spaced windows and an extra wide door at the northern end that provides access to the sanctuary. The east elevation has four rows of equally spaced windows and the double entrance doors at the southern end. The doors have a half round transom above and they are centered in the tower. The top half of the doors are divided into multiple diamond-shaped panes. A steeply sloped gable roof supported by four brackets projects approximately two feet from the tower and provides shelter at the doors. The single door entrance to the basement is also capped with a steeply sloped gable roof that projects out from the wall and is supported by two simple pilasters, one on each side of the door.

The main entrance doors to the building enter into a small vestibule that provides access to the sanctuary by nine steps. The doors to the sanctuary enter at the back and to the side. The interior is unadorned with painted plaster walls and wood floor. There is a center aisle with stained wood pews to each side. The pulpit is located at the northern end of the space on a raised platform. A door on the west side of the apse leads to a small minister's room. A small set of stairs in the southwest corner of the sanctuary and another set located through a door in the northwest corner of the sanctuary provide access to the basement.

The function/Sunday school room in the basement has a wood beaded board wainscoting that was originally stained wood and has since been painted over. A small stage runs the width of the room at the southern end. The kitchen and restroom are located in the northwest corner of the basement. There are indications that the current concrete floor in the basement is not original and the floor may have been wood. No documentation has been found to confirm this.

(end)

Baker Congregational Church

Name of Property

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- ☒ **A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- ☐ **B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- ☒ **C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- ☐ **D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- ☒ **A** owned by religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- ☐ **B** removed from its original location.
- ☐ **C** a birthplace or grave.
- ☐ **D** a cemetery.
- ☐ **E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- ☐ **F** a commemorative property.
- ☐ **G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

Suffolk, MA

County and State

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE

SOCIAL HISTORY

Period of Significance

1903-1948

Significant Dates

1903

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Builder: John Nelson Thisland

9. Major Bibliographical References

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- ☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- ☐ previously listed in the National Register
- ☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register
- ☐ designated a National Historic Landmark
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- ☒ State Historic Preservation Office
- ☐ Other State agency
- ☐ Federal agency
- ☐ Local government
- ☐ University
- ☐ Other

Name of repository: _____

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STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Baker Congregational Church, Boston, is eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places, meeting criteria A and C at the local level. A religious property, it meets criteria consideration A for its architecture. The present church is made up of four separate congregations, two Congregational and two Episcopal, who joined together as their individual congregations decreased in numbers and they could not afford to maintain their own church. Maverick Congregational, which united with Baker Congregational in 1932, is the oldest congregation in East Boston.

Historically, the site falls under the category of social history because it was used by many of the residents moving into the Orient Heights section of East Boston as a social gathering spot. As the community has grown and more Catholics have moved into East Boston, Baker Congregational has been one of the few Protestant churches to survive, and the church continues to serve as an important neighborhood social center.

Architecturally, the church is an excellent local example of Shingle Style ecclesiastic architecture. It is relatively unaltered from its original construction and retains its integrity of location, setting, materials, and workmanship.

SOCIAL HISTORY

Baker Congregational Church is one of the few surviving Protestant churches in East Boston and remains as an early neighborhood landmark for the Orient Heights community. It represents both the early development of the area and the history of the changing population in East Boston for the past 100 years.

East Boston is made up of five islands, Noddle, Hog, Governor, Bird and Apple, that were eventually connected together by fill. The first settler was Samuel Maverick, an Episcopalian, who farmed on Noddle Island in 1633. Maverick was considered a nonconformist because he belonged to the church that most people in the Colonies were fleeing from. As more people settled on Noddle Island, a Baptist Church was organized and existed from 1665-1679. The members were fleeing from the bigotry and persecution of Congregationalists on the main land. The Baptists met in a member's house and called themselves the Church of Jesus Christ Worshipping at Noddle's Island in New England.¹ For the next 150 years no organized churches existed in East Boston.

By the beginning of the nineteenth century, Boston's population was growing quickly and a housing shortage was created because building lots had begun to fill up. This caused people to move further away from the city

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¹ Joyce Haddock, "Many Religions Contribute to Local Church History," *East Boston Community News*, 23 September 1975,

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core, so in the early 1830s East Boston was surveyed and divided up into building lots. East Boston was located across the harbor from Boston and access was provided by ferry. The first permanent residence was constructed in 1833 for Guy C. Haynes.² As people moved into East Boston businesses developed, and in 1834 the East Boston Wharf Company, the East Boston Timber Company, a sugar refinery and shipyard were established. By 1835 two ferries, the Maverick and the East Boston, were transporting passengers and freight from Boston to East Boston. Inhabitants of the community were ships' officers and owners and Boston businessmen.

On July 23, 1835, a group of Orthodox Congregationalists began to hold evening religious meetings in a small schoolhouse on Paris Street. The population was continuing to grow rapidly and people were starting to show interest in forming a church. On May 5, 1836, a meeting was held at the home of Aaron Ordway, located on Sumner Street between London and Liverpool streets, to discuss forming a new church. On May 31 the Ecclesiastical Council³ approved the formation of the First Congregational Church in East Boston. There were ten original members, four men and six women. One of the members donated land, and a small chapel was constructed for meeting. The congregation began to grow rapidly and by December it was decided to build a new church. From April 13, 1837, to July 19, 1837, a wood-framed Greek Revival style church was constructed at the corner of Maverick and Havre Streets at a cost of \$7000. The Reverend W.W. Newell of Brighton was invited to be the new minister and he was paid \$1000 a year with \$100 incremental increases per year for the next five years.⁴ On July 7, 1837, the congregation voted to change the name of the church to Maverick Congregational Church. Baker Congregational Church would eventually grow out of this church.

During the 1830s and 1840s East Boston grew rapidly with many Irish immigrants settling in the area. They worked as mechanics, tradesman and laborers at the wharves that were developing along the harbor. This Irish immigration caused a need for Catholic churches. The Congregationalists were growing in numbers also, and in 1844, Maverick Congregational Church was sold to the Catholics for \$5000. A new church was constructed at the corner of Sumner Street and Maverick Square for a cost of \$30,000, and it was dedicated on February 13, 1945.⁵ In 1874, the last Maverick Congregational Church was constructed at Central Square. This was a brick Gothic Revival-style structure that still stands today and serves as the Central Square Social Center.

East Boston was continuing to grow throughout the nineteenth century and the development was moving to the northeast away from the harbor and into what is now known as the Orient Heights section of East Boston. Maverick Congregational Church had grown quite large and in 1884 several members started having their own

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² William A. Sumner, *A History of East Boston*, (Boston: J.E. Tillon & Company, 1858), 460, facsimile reprint, photocopied.

³ The Ecclesiastical Council consisted of members and Pastors of the Second Church in Dorchester, Phillips Church in South Boston, and Bowdoin, Salem, Union, and Franklin street Churches in Boston. *Condensed History and Manual of Maverick Congregational Church* (East Boston: Maverick Congregational Church, 1894), 7.

⁴ "Volume I, Maverick Church Minutes" (East Boston, 1836) n.p.

⁵ Sumner, 645.

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meetings in a carpenter's shop on Chelsea Street. In 1887 the meetings moved to Union Chapel, which was owned by the City Missionary Society⁶, at 433 Bennington Street. The City Missionary Society had constructed the chapel in 1852 and deeded the structure along with the attached Sunday School to nine trustees from the Orthodox Congregational, Baptist and Methodist Episcopal churches. On December 1, 1897, fifteen members, two men and thirteen women, officially formed Baker Congregational Church. The growing congregation felt the need to build their own house of worship and in 1901 a request was made by George Taylor, M.J. Humes, Mr. Goodwin, Mr. Marshall and Mr. Arthur Page to buy land at the corner of Saratoga and Byron streets in the Orient Heights section of East Boston.⁷ These gentlemen were representative of the people moving into East Boston. Mr. Taylor was a bookkeeper who worked on Atlantic Avenue in Boston and lived at 563 Bennington Street in East Boston, Mr. Goodwin was a gateman who lived at 331 Bennington Street and Mr. Marshall was most likely a printer who lived at 77 Byron Street or a harnessmaker that lived at 304 Saratoga Street.⁸

After the land was purchased, funds were not available to build a church immediately. The Church treasurer's report for the year ending 1901 lists a balance of \$65.89 and for the year ending 1902 a balance of \$20.72. By 1903 membership at Baker Congregational Church had grown to 83 and the membership was expected to increase. The City of Boston was in the process of building a new schoolhouse just a couple of blocks away from the land at Saratoga and Byron streets and this would be bringing more families to the area. On August 31, 1903, ground was broken for the new church. The cost of construction was \$9000. The congregation raised \$1000 themselves and the rest came through loans, a \$1000 grant from the Congregational Church Building Society and a \$2000 gift from the Congregational Church Union.⁹ A stipulation of the gift from the Congregational Church Union was that the Church was to become a member of the Union and transfer its property and building to the Union.

The cornerstone for the new church was laid November 2, 1903, and the church was completed and held its first service on May 1, 1904. Baker Congregational was the only Protestant church in Section Four of Ward One.¹⁰ The day the church opened, 236 attended the morning service, 171 attended Sunday School, and 400 attended

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⁶ The City Missionary Society was supported by the Orthodox Congregational Church, now the United Congregational Church (U.C.C.)

⁷ *The Pilgrim Church Register and Record* (Baker Congregational Church, 1897-1906), 9 February 1901, Grace Church Federated Archives.

⁸ *Boston City Directories 1901-1903* (Boston: Sampson, Murdock & Company). There is no listing for M.J. Humes, there are seven Mr. Marshall's listed as living in East Boston and no Mr. Page living in East Boston. An assumption was made that the Mr. Marshall mentioned in the church records would have lived near the church on either Byron or Saratoga streets. The other Mr. Marshall's listed include Frank E., a clerk boarding at 4 Short Street; Frank E. living at 461 Summer Street; James W., a boilermaker living at 4 Short Street; John C., a laborer boarding at 54 Brooks Street; and John I., a painter living at 366 Summer Street.

⁹ *The Pilgrim Church Register and Record*, 6 March 1903, 27 November 1903 and 8 February 1904; and "The Baker Congregational Church of East Boston" photocopy, United Congregational Church Archives, Boston.

¹⁰ "The Baker Congregational Church of East Boston"

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evening service. Except for a fire station located directly across Saratoga Street, the surrounding neighborhood of the church was completely residential consisting primarily of wood-framed 1-, 2-, and 3 family houses.

The congregation was not large or wealthy, but was active and quickly became a social center for the surrounding neighborhood. Church records for the end of 1907 indicate a membership of eighty-eight and \$5.18 cash on hand. In January 1908, twenty to thirty men attended a social meeting at the church in which the Reverend Mr. Brant, Secretary of the Anti-Saloon League, "gave a very interesting account of the work of his society."¹¹ Ten years later on April 2, 1918, "the church bell was rung for ten minutes for the victory in Senate for the Prohibition Amendment."¹² Other activities mentioned in 1908 that were listed as well attended by community members included the Annual Church Fair, the Ladies Guild Public Supper and the "Old Folks Concert." In April 1908, the City of Chelsea was partially destroyed by fire and the fire spread into East Boston destroying several buildings around Baker Congregational Church. A special service was held the following Sunday for the Central Congregational Church of Chelsea, and \$15 was added to the relief fund from this service to assist the Chelsea Church.

By 1910 membership in Baker Congregational Church had only grown to ninety. Ninety people attended Easter morning services that year and 350 people attended a concert at the church that same evening, given by "The Primary Department." Reverend Peebles, the church's minister at the time, resigned in May 1910 leaving the church without a minister. Maverick Congregational Church still had a large membership and two ministers. It was decided that the two Congregational Churches would share the two ministers. In August one of the ministers at Maverick resigned due to poor health, so the Massachusetts Congregational Home Missionary Society¹³ recommended Reverend Burke Leavitt as the permanent minister at Baker Church.

By the end of the nineteenth century most of the leading citizens in East Boston were of Irish decent and Roman Catholic. Italians began moving into East Boston from the overcrowded North End of Boston during the first part of the twentieth century. As more and more Catholics moved into the area, the Protestant churches in the southwest section of East Boston began to see a decline in membership, and the Protestant Churches in the northwest section, or Orient Heights, never achieved an optimum size. Between 1890 and 1910 Maverick Congregational Church lost 310 members.¹⁴

Because Baker's membership was not growing as expected and Maverick's membership was declining, in 1913 the Home Missionary Society questioned whether or not Baker should continue as an independent church or if

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¹¹ *The Pilgrim Church Register and Record* (Baker Congregational Church, 1907-1913), 23 January 1908, Grace Church Federated Archives.

¹² *Baker Congregational Church, Church Records of Church Committee Book No. 1* (Baker Congregational Church), 117, Grace Church Federated Archives.

¹³ The Massachusetts Congregational Home Missionary Society was part of the United Congregational Church (U.C.C.)

¹⁴ William J. Villaume, "Protestantism in East Boston 1920-1946," 1947 TMs, 8, Baker Congregational Church Archives.

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it should close and join forces with Maverick. The congregation at Baker felt strongly that they should remain independent. Baker continued to be a social center for the surrounding neighborhood with large numbers of people attending the numerous concerts, lectures, suppers and fairs held each year. In 1917 money was collected for four months and donated to the children of Belgium who were starving due to the war. The membership of the church had reached 144 by then.

East Boston's population peaked at approximately 64,000 in 1925. The area began to decline as a center of industry and commerce and the crowded residential conditions, particularly the southwest section, made East Boston not as desirable a place to live. People started to move away, particularly the businessmen and old New England families. Finally in 1931 the Home Missionary Society suggested again that Baker and Maverick Churches unite. That union occurred on November 1, 1931. In 1932 the name of the church was changed to Baker-Maverick Congregational Church. Maverick Congregational Church in Central Square was sold to the Central Square Social Center. The two congregations became one and continued to serve the surrounding neighborhood. "Cheer Baskets" were sent to the elderly and shut-ins in the neighborhood, and cards and care packages were sent to soldiers during WWII. The annual fair continued to be held along with several concerts and suppers throughout the year that were well attended by community members.

Throughout the 1930s and 1940s the general population of East Boston continued to decline and many of the Protestants were moving to the outer suburbs. In 1946 it was decided that a study of East Boston and its churches be undertaken by the Department of Research and Planning of the Massachusetts Council of Churches. The result of that study was the suggestion that some of the Protestant churches join together to create larger congregations. This union could be done in one of two ways, as a merger where the congregations come together as one, or as a federation where the two congregations come together as one functional organization but keep their separate denominations.

Baker-Maverick Congregational Church, still small in membership but active and important to the surrounding neighborhood, listened to this suggestion and decided to federate with St. Andrews Episcopal Church in 1949. The name of the church was changed to Grace Church Federated that same year. The two religions have worshipped together at the same service with the one minister ever since and continue to serve the surrounding community. In 1979 St. John's Episcopal Church closed its doors and joined Grace Church Federated.

Today the church has an active membership of approximately forty people, thirty Congregational and ten Episcopal. The church's function room in the basement serves as an emergency food pantry for the Greater Boston Food Bank and provides food to between five and ten families each Saturday. The Girl Scouts, Alcoholics Anonymous, and a local women's group all meet at the church once a week. Regular church service is held each Sunday morning, there is an active youth group and women's organization (NOBA Guild - meaning

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Not One But All), community suppers are held four to five times a year, flea markets twice a year, and the annual fair is still held. An increase in East Boston's Hispanic population has created a need for a place to worship. On weekend evenings the Visions of God, a Spanish Pentecostal Church, uses the church.

ARCHITECTURE

The present Baker Congregational Church is locally significant as an example of Shingle Style ecclesiastical architecture. The Shingle Style developed as a result of the renewed study of colonial buildings in the late 1870s and early 1880s. While the style is most commonly associated with residential architecture in New England coastal towns, it was also used in the design of several small churches throughout New England. Many Boston architects are considered leaders in the development of the style. Among these are H.H. Richardson, William Ralph Emerson, and John Calvin Stevens.¹⁵

Baker Congregational Church is the only example of Shingle Style architecture in its urban residential neighborhood. No records listing an architect have been found for the building, but the builder was John Nelson Thisland. A program from the ceremony held during the laying of the cornerstone lists Thisland, with F.W. Woolcott as the contracting mason. There is no mention of an architect which would suggest that Thisland designed the building himself or copied it from a plan in a plan book. No other work by Thisland has been identified. The *Boston City Directory* for 1903 lists Thisland as living at 91 Homer Street in East Boston and the Church records occasionally mention his name when discussing a contractor providing a quote for repairs at the church. This would suggest that Thisland did other work in East Boston. There is no listing anywhere in Boston for F.W. Woolcott in the 1903 directory.

The simple rectangular plan with an asymmetrically placed entrance vestibule and tower are typical of floor plans shown for small churches at the time. An article in *Building* magazine around 1890 showed plans and elevations for a competition for a country church. Many of the churches had features similar to Baker Congregational including a masonry base (Baker's is brick; however, many were stone), wood shingle siding, one or more round top windows, a corner tower, and a projecting gable end. Elements of the Shingle Style that are attributed to H.H. Richardson and his Richardsonian Romanesque include the wood shingles splaying out at a water table that sits on a masonry base and the round top windows. Other features of Baker Church that are typical of the Shingle Style include the steep sloped roof and double-hung windows with multi-pane upper sash and two-pane lower sash. The windows are slightly different from traditional Shingle Style windows because the multi-pane upper sash is diamond panes and traditionally the lower sash was one pane instead of two. This

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¹⁵ Stevens is actually known for his work in Maine, but he started out in Boston running the office of Francis Fassett, one of Maine's premier architects in the latter half of the nineteenth century. Shingle Style churches in Massachusetts that were designed by William Ralph Emerson include Saint Margaret's Catholic Church (1887) in Beverly, the Unitarian Universalist Church (1891) in Middleborough and the Church of the Good Shepherd (1901) in Lee.

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difference could be due to the ecclesiastic nature of the building. Similar examples of Shingle Style churches in Boston from the same period as Baker Congregational include Emmanuel Baptist Church (1897) on Adams Street in Dorchester and Oak Square Methodist Church (1911) on Washington Street in Brighton.

The simple design of the Shingle Style appears to be practical for this urban neighborhood even though the style never was really adapted to mass vernacular design and was primarily a high-fashion style used by architects. An article on church planning in *Architectural Record* from September 1916, states that Sunday Schools were put in the basement of small churches out of economy and lack of land in large cities. Putting the Sunday School in the basement caused the church to be raised up to allow large enough windows to let light into the basement. Baker Congregational is raised up on a brick foundation that creates a base for the church above and allows large windows to emit light into the basement which is where the Sunday School meets. The simple design is also typical of the design of Protestant churches.

On the interior the church is a simple center aisle church with raised pulpit and small platform area for the choir. The main level consists of the sanctuary, a small apse at the north end and a ministers room to the west of the apse. The lower level contains a kitchen, a bathroom and a large meeting room with a raised stage. The meeting room has doors that can be closed to divide the room into two separate spaces.

The church retains its architectural integrity and remains relatively unaltered from the time of construction.

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"The Baker Congregational Church of East Boston," photocopy, Boston: United Congregational Church Archives.

The Pilgrim Church Register and Record, Grace Church Federated Archives.

Villaume, William J., "Protestantism in East Boston 1920-1946," TMs, Grace Church Federated Archives.

"Volume I, Maverick Church Minutes." East Boston, 1836.

Wright, Frank Ayes., *Architectural Studies Volume II*. New York: William T. Comstock, 1890.

(end)

Baker Congregational Church

Name of Property

Suffolk, MA

County, State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property less than one

UTM References See continuation sheet.

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

1. 19 333900 4694160
Zone Easting Northing

2. Zone Easting Northing

3. Zone Easting Northing

4. Zone Easting Northing

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Tobin Tracey, Preservation Consultant, with Betsy Friedberg, NR Director, MHC

organization Massachusetts Historical Commission date September 1998

street & number 220 Morrissey Boulevard telephone 617-727-8470

city or town Boston state Massachusetts zip code 02125-3314

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name Congregational Church Union

street & number 760 Saratoga Street telephone 617-569-5358

city or town East Boston state MA zip code 02127

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

**Baker Congregational Church
Boston (East Boston) (Suffolk Co.)
Massachusetts**

Section number 10 Page 1

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The nominated property occupies lot number 680 on the City of Boston Assessors Plan for Ward 1, Section 4, Block 24.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The boundaries encompass all land historically known as the Baker Congregational Church. The property includes the church and grounds.

(end)

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

**Baker Congregational Church
Boston (East Boston) (Suffolk Co.)
Massachusetts**

Section number photos Page

PHOTOGRAPHS

Photographer: Tobin Tracey

Date of photographs: April 24, 1998

Negatives in the possession of the photographer

1. South and east elevations, looking NW
2. South elevation, looking N
3. South and west elevations, looking NE
4. North elevation, looking S
5. East elevation, looking W
6. Interior of sanctuary, looking S
7. Sanctuary, pulpit area, looking N

(end)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY NAME: Baker Congregational Church

MULTIPLE
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: MASSACHUSETTS, Suffolk

DATE RECEIVED: 10/21/98 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 11/03/98
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 11/19/98 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 12/05/98
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 98001381

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 11.19.98 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

Entered in the
National Register

National Register

RECOM./CRITERIA _____

REVIEWER _____ DISCIPLINE _____

TELEPHONE _____ DATE _____

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



1. BAKER CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
2. SUFFOLK COUNTY, MA.
3. TOBIN TRACEY, PHOTOGRAPHER
4. APRIL 24, 1998
5. TOBIN TRACEY, NEGATIVES
6. SOUTH AND EAST ELEVATIONS, LOOKING NORTHWEST

PHOTO 1



1. BAKER CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
2. SUFFOLK COUNTY, MA.
3. TOBIN TRACEY, PHOTOGRAPHER
4. APRIL 24, 1998
5. TOBIN TRACEY, NEGATIVES
6. SOUTH ELEVATION, LOOKING NORTH

PHOTO 2



1. BAKER CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

2. SUFFOLK COUNTY, MA.

3. TOBIN TRACEY, PHOTOGRAPHER

4. APRIL 24, 1998

5. TOBIN TRACEY, NEGATIVES

b. SOUTH AND WEST ELEVATIONS, LOOKING NORTHEAST

Lo...
C...
W...
K...
T...
N...

PHOTO 3



1. BAKER CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
2. SUFFOLK COUNTY, MA
3. TOBIN TRACEY, PHOTOGRAPHER
4. APRIL 24, 1998
5. TOBIN TRACEY, NEGATIVES
6. NORTH ELEVATION, LOOKING SOUTH

PHOTO 34



1. BAKER CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
2. SUFFOLK COUNTY, MA
3. TOBIN TRACEY, PHOTOGRAPHER
4. APRIL 29, 1998
5. TOBIN TRACEY, NEGATIVES
6. EAST ELEVATION, LOOKING WEST

PHOTO 25



1. BAKER CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
2. SUFFOLK COUNTY, MA
3. TOBIN TRALEY, PHOTOGRAPHER
4. APRIL 24, 1998
5. TOBIN TRACEY, NEGATIVES
6. SANCTUARY, LOOKING SOUTH

PHOTO 6



1. BAKER CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
2. SUFFOLK COUNTY, MA
3. TOBIN TRACEY, PHOTOGRAPHER
4. APRIL 24, 1998
5. TOBIN TRACEY, NEGATIVES
6. SANCTUARY, PULPIT AREA, LOOKING NORTH

PHOTO 7

**Produced by the United States Geological Survey
in cooperation with Massachusetts Department
of Public Works**

**Control by USGS, NOS-NOAA, and Commonwealth of
Massachusetts agencies**

**Compiled by photogrammetric methods from aerial photographs
taken 1978. Field checked 1979. Map edited 1985.**

**Supersedes Boston North and Lexington 1:250,000-scale
maps dated 1971**

Selected hydrographic data compiled from Nautical Chart 1327Z (1982)

This map is not intended for navigational purposes

**Projection and 1000-meter grid: Universal
Transverse Mercator, zone 19**

All 100,000-foot grid ticks are labeled for navigational purposes

**Projection and 1000-meter grid: Universal
Transverse Mercator, zone 19**

**The projection lines are based on Massachusetts coordinate
system, mainland zone, 1927 North American Datum**

**To place on the predicted North American Datum 1983
move the projection lines 6 meters eastward**

**A distance scale bar shows distances up to
41 meters west as shown by dashed corner ticks**

**There may be private inclusions within the boundaries of
State reserves or State reservations shown on this map**

CONTOUR INTERVAL 3 METERS
NATIONAL GEODETIC VERTICAL DATUM OF 1929
CONTROL ELEVATIONS SHOWN TO THE NEAREST 0.1 METER
OTHER ELEVATIONS SHOWN TO THE NEAREST 0.5 METER
DEPTH CURVES AND SOUNDINGS IN METERS
DATUM IS MEAN LOW WATER
THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE TWO DATUMS IS VARIABLE
THE BOLD LINE SHOWN REPRESENTS THE APPROXIMATE LINE
OF MEAN HIGH WATER
THE MEAN RANGE OF TIDE IS APPROXIMATELY 2.9 METERS

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS

CONVERSION TABLE

Meters	Feet
1	3.2808
2	6.5617
3	9.8425
4	13.1234
5	16.4042
6	19.6850
7	22.9659
8	26.2467
9	29.5276
10	32.8084

To convert meters to feet multiply by 3.2808

To convert feet to meters multiply by 0.3048

DECLINATION DIAGRAM

184° 179°

264 MILS 25 MILS

ITM grid convergence (IGN and 1985 magnetic declination) (Mils) at center of map
Diagram is approximate

ADJOINING MAPS

	1	2	3
1	Billerica	2 Reading	3 Salem
4	5 Lynn	6 Framingham	7 Boston South
8	9 Hull		

ISBN 0-607-23443-1



9 780607 234435

Topographic Map Symbols

Primary highway, hard surface
Secondary highway, hard surface
Light-duty road, hard or improved surface
Unimproved road, trail
Route marker: Interstate; U.S.; State
Railroad: standard gauge; narrow gauge
Bridge; drawbridge
Footbridge; overpass; underpass
Built-up area: only selected landmark buildings shown
Waves; barn; church; school; large structure
Boundary
National, with monument
State
County, parish
Civil township, precinct, district
Incorporated city, village, town
Nonincorporated city, village, town
National or State reservation; small park
Land grant with monument; found section corner
U.S. public lands survey: range, township; section
Range, township; section line; location approximate
Fence or field line
Power transmission line, located tower
Dam; dam with lock
Cemetery; grave
Cemetary; picnic area; U.S. location monument
Windmill; water wheel; spring
Mine shaft; prospect; odd or irregular
Control point; contour; vertical station; spot elevation
Contours: index; intermediate; supplementary; depression
Bathymetric surface: strip mine; lake; sand
Differential surface: index, intermediate
Perennial lake; dry stream; intermittent lake and stream
Rapids, large and small; falls, large and small
Submerged marsh; marsh, swamp
Land subject to controlled inundation: woodland
Sandy, marginal
Orchard, vineyard

A pamphlet describing topographic maps is available on request

CITY OF BOSTON
TOPOGRAPHIC AND PLANIMETRIC SURVEY



Prepared under the direction of the Boston Redevelopment Authority
Control by U. S. C. & G. S. and the Mass. Geodetic Survey
Mapped by Fairchild Aerial Surveys
Photography by Fairchild Aerial Surveys, April 1961
North American Datum 1927
Control and Property Lines by
New England Survey Service Inc.

Warning:
This map does not meet national map accuracy
standards and can not be used for engineering
purposes.

SCALE 1:1 200
0 100 200 300 400 500 FT.

500 FOOT GRID BASED
ON MASSACHUSETTS COORDINATE SYSTEM, MAINLAND ZONE
THE LAST THREE DIGITS OF THE GRID NUMBERS ARE OMITTED

RECEIVED

OCT 15 1966
MASS. HIST. COMM

BOSTON
MASSACHUSETTS

1962
I.O. (DUP.)

SHEET NO. 30N-16E

5 I.O.
(DUP.)

BAKER CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
BOSTON (SUFFOLK), MA
[EAST BOSTON]



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

William Francis Galvin, Secretary of the Commonwealth
Massachusetts Historical Commission

October 22, 1998

Ms. Carol Shull
National Register of Historic Places
Department of the Interior
National Park Service
Mail Stop 2280, Suite 400
1849 C Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Ms. Shull:

Enclosed please find the following nomination for:

Baker Congregational Church, 760 Saratoga Street, Boston (East Boston) (Suffolk Co.),
Massachusetts

The nomination has been voted eligible by the State Review Board and has been signed by the State Historic Preservation Officer. The owners of property in the Certified Local Government community of Boston were notified of pending State Review Board consideration 60-120 days before the meeting.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Betsy Friedberg".

Betsy Friedberg, National Register Director
Massachusetts Historical Commission

cc: Matthew Kiefer, Acting Chair, Boston Landmarks Commission
Tobin Tracy, Preservation Consultant
Hon. Thomas M. Menino, Mayor, City of Boston
Maura Fitzpatrick Sklarz, Boston Landmarks Commission
Dennis Boseman, Grace Federated Church