

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only

received AUG - 1 1983
date enteredSee instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic ~~All Souls Unitarian Church~~
and/or common ✓ Charles Street African Methodist Episcopal Church (preferred)

2. Location

street & number 551 Warren Street N/A not for publication

city, town Boston (Roxbury) N/A vicinity of

state Massachusetts code 025 county Suffolk code 025

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
☐ district	☐ public	☒ occupied	☐ agriculture	☐ museum
☒ building(s)	☒ private	☐ unoccupied	☐ commercial	☐ park
☐ structure	☐ both	☐ work in progress	☐ educational	☐ private residence
☐ site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	☐ entertainment	☒ religious
☐ object	☐ in process	☒ yes: restricted	☐ government	☐ scientific
	☐ being considered	☐ yes: unrestricted	☐ industrial	☐ transportation
		☐ no	☐ military	☐ other:

4. Owner of Property

name Charles Street African Methodist Episcopal Church

street & number 551 Warren Street

city, town Roxbury N/A vicinity of state MA

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Suffolk County Courthouse

street & number Pemberton Square

city, town Boston state MA

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Comprehensive Boston Preservation Study
date Fall, 1981
has this property been determined eligible? ☐ yes ☒ no
☐ federal ☐ state ☐ county ☒ local

depository for survey records Boston Landmarks Commission, Room 805, City Hall

city, town Boston state MA

7. Description All Souls Unitarian Church, 551 Warren St., Boston

Condition		Check one	Check one
☐ excellent	☐ deteriorated	☒ unaltered	☒ original site
☐ good	☐ ruins	☐ altered	☐ moved
☒ fair	☐ unexposed		date <u>N/A</u>

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

All Souls Unitarian Church in the Roxbury section of Boston is located at 551 Warren Street, in the acute angle formed by the intersection of Warren Street and Elm Hill Avenue. It is a short distance north of Franklin Park. The surrounding neighborhood largely retains the character of a late 19th century suburb with blocks of Mansard, Queen Anne and later Victorian single and double houses set back on small city lots.

Architect J. Williams Beal designed All Souls in the Tudor style and carpenter Melzar W. Allen and mason Alfred Blight collaborated with him to create unusual architectural and decorative features. All Souls consists of the church proper and a Parish House by its side. The material is Roxbury Puddingstone, trimmed with Quincy granite. The interior is finished in cypress.

The building is L-shaped in plan, with the exterior sides of the L facing Warren Street and Elm Hill Avenue, the long arm running along the latter. For purposes of explanation, the narthex is on the N end of the church, the apse on the S. The crenellated square tower with high, hipped roof and gargoyles is located on the NW corner, flanked by the gables of the W transept and the N front of the parish house, the latter appended to the short end of the L. The parish house also has a gable facing E, displaying considerable overhang; through it rises a large, tapering chimney, to emerge again from the roof. Between the parish house and the tower are situated the main entrance and narthex. On the W side of the narthex rises a small polygonal, peaked-roofed structure serving as the stair tower to the contiguous main tower.

The sanctuary, constituting the long arm of the L, consists of the nave, a spacious transept with shallow arms and a pentagonal apse attached to the S end and entered through a round-headed arch. Subsidiary rooms are located off the NW (in the tower), SW and SE corners of the sanctuary. The latter, a broad, low space exhibiting the intimate proportions of the church as a whole, is defined by varnished wainscoting and roof timbers, the ceiling being supported and articulated by a complicated system of rafters, purlins and collar beams. The ceiling rises in two slanting planes to a flat central plane. The ribs rising at the junctions of nave and transept arms continue into four horizontal, diagonally-placed rafters which form a box-shaped inclosure over the crossing. Hammer beams mark the points where these rafters intersect and emphasize other critical points in the structure. Screens with lobe-cutouts fill spaces between collar ties and the ceiling. The sanctuary is further decorated by the paneled screen surmounted by a delicate balustrade in the apse, and an impressive series of stained glass windows.

Although a number of these windows were removed and replaced by plain leaded cathedral glass when the church was sold in 1939, several of the original windows remain. These include the two small chancel windows without figures (by LaFarge); the three windows representing St. Cecilia, St. Elizabeth of Hungary and Mary in the east transept (also by LaFarge) with dedicatory windows below, except for the central one which was destroyed in a burglary; and the window in the Elm Hill side of the church

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National Park Service**

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date entered

Continuation sheet All Souls Unitarian Church Item number 7

Page 1

which represents St. Cecilia, typical of faith. In the western transept a large Tiffany window was once located. In three parts, the window represented the Angel of the Lilies.

John LaFarge was the outstanding American stained glass maker of the nineteenth century; his work played a prominent part in the interior decoration of Trinity Church in Boston. McDonald, too, was a well-known stained glass maker of the time.

Other furnishings which should be mentioned include the E. Howard tower clock with two dials, the bell cast by Henry McShane and Company of Baltimore, Maryland, the Hook and Hastings organ (now disassembled, it was probably brought from Mt. Pleasant Congregational Church; the Unitarian Universalist Association files contain a bill from Hook and Hastings for \$1096.05 for "organ alterations and setting") and the "eagle lectern, carved by Kirchmeyer from cypress wood... placed in the chancel" also described in the abovementioned deed. The lectern is no longer in the church.

The exterior appearance of the church has changed little except for the replacement of the red and blue slate roof with rolled asphalt roofing and the addition of an unobtrusive glass entry to the narthex. Exterior elevations show careful attention to detail; for example, the Quincy granite trim surrounds window openings and accents exterior corners and buttresses. The narthex and other subsidiary rooms of the interior have been largely covered with drywall and modern panelling; however, the sanctuary remains little-changed from its original appearance except for the replacement of some windows as noted above. New rooms are in process or planned in unused spaces below the sanctuary and above the narthex.

8. Significance All Souls Unitarian Church, 551 Warren St., Boston

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/
☐ 1700–1799	☒ art	☐ engineering	☐ music	humanitarian
☒ 1800–1899	☐ commerce	☐ exploration/settlement	☐ philosophy	☐ theater
☐ 1900–	☐ communications	☐ industry	☐ politics/government	☐ transportation
		☐ invention		☐ other (specify)

Specific dates 1888 **Builder/Architect** J. Williams Beal, architect

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Alfred Blight, mason
Melzar W. Allen, carpenter

The All Souls Unitarian Church retains its integrity of location, design, setting, materials and workmanship. The church, designed by Boston architect J. Williams Beal, was erected in 1888–9 by the Mount Pleasant Congregational Church, which took the name of All Souls upon the completion of the building. Parishioners, such as fire engine manufacturer William Cooper Hunneman, were members of Roxbury's nineteenth century merchant class. From 1929–1933 the church was owned by the Episcopal City Mission and occupied by St. Ansgarius Swedish Church (originally an East Boston congregation). In 1939 the church was acquired by its present owner, the Charles Street African Methodist Episcopal Church. This congregation had owned the Charles Street Meeting House since 1876. During pre-Civil War days, at a location on Anderson Street, the congregation's services had been the scene of many stirring abolitionist meetings where William Lloyd Garrison, Wendell Phillips, Frederick Douglass and others led the fight against slavery. As the last black congregation on Beacon Hill, the move of the Charles Street African Methodist Episcopal Church to Roxbury reflected the decades long movement of Boston's black population from Beacon Hill to Roxbury and the changing population patterns in twentieth century Boston. The first settlers in Roxbury had been English. The neighborhood's multi-ethnic character began in the 19th century with the immigration of Irish and German workers before the Civil War, followed by Eastern European Jews and small groups of Scandinavians, Lithuanians and French Canadians. Afro-Americans began settling in Lower Roxbury in the early 20th century. As a building significant for its architectural excellence, its tradition and its history, All Souls Unitarian Church meets criteria A and C of the National Register of Historic Places.

Architecturally, the church is significant as a major work of J. Williams Beal, a member of Massachusetts Institute of Technology's first graduating class in architecture (1877). He also designed the nearby Harris Wood Crescent, a block of Tudor rowhouses which stands on Horatio Harris Park in Roxbury, the Walnut Avenue Congregational Church and Eliot Church (1887–9). As a young architect, Beal was employed by some of the leading architects in America -- Richard Morris Hunt and the firm of McKim, Mead and White. He became a pioneer in the structural use of concrete and designed numerous public buildings in Boston's South Shore area as well as private residences throughout New England. His domestic and ecclesiastical designs, and his imaginative display of plans and elevations, reflect his early training under the then Shingle Style architects. In a personal communication, his successor, Edward Poskus of J. Williams Beal Sons and Poskus, cites All Souls Church as a fine example of Beal's style.

The church windows illustrate the work of McDonald of Boston, a noted local stained glass maker, and of John LaFarge, the outstanding American stained

9. Major Bibliographical References

Suffolk County Courthouse; Boston, Mass.: Deeds relating to Mt. Pleasant Congregational Church, All Souls Unitarian Church, Charles St. Meeting House. Tucci, Douglass Shand. Built in Boston, Boston: New York Graphic Society, 1978. Figure 94: Harris Wood Crescent.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property 11,824 square feet

Quadrangle name Boston South

Quadrangle scale 1" = 25,000'

UTM References

A

1	9
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3	2	8	2	3	0
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4	6	8	6	3	7	0
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Zone Easting Northing

B

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Zone Easting Northing

C

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H

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Verbal boundary description and justification

see attached deed description and assessor's map.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries N/A

state N/A code county code

state code county code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Candace Jenkins, Preservation Planning Director Woodard Openo, Museum of Afro-American History and the Boston Landmarks Commission.
organization Massachusetts Historical Commission date 5/83

street & number 294 Washington Street telephone (617) 727-8470

city or town Boston state Massachusetts

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

☐ national ☐ state ☒ local

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 Patricia H. Weslowski

title State Historic Preservation Officer, MHC

date 7/20/83

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

Entered in the
National Register

date 9/1/83

f. Melrose Byers
Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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

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date entered

Continuation sheet All Souls Unitarian Church Item number 8

Page 1

glass maker of the nineteenth century, responsible for much of the interior decoration of Trinity Church in Boston.

The architecture and furnishings of the church are significant not only for their high quality, but also because of the use of Roxbury products: the E. Howard tower clock, the Hook and Hastings organ and Roxbury puddingstone. Parenthetically, the completeness of the building documentation (as found in the files of the Unitarian Universalist Association in Boston) makes the church an extraordinarily historical resource regardless of the importance of Beal, LaFarge and others connected with its construction and furnishing.

The All Souls Church is among a number of architecturally distinguished later 19th century churches in Boston and the Roxbury neighborhood. It is unusual in Boston ecclesiastical architecture in that it combines Gothic Revival and Tudor Revival stylistic elements in rather picturesque massing.

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date entered

Continuation sheet All Souls Unitarian Church item number 9

Page 1

Unitarian Universalist Association, Boston. MA.

Damrell, Charles. A Half Century of Boston's Buildings, Boston:
Louis P. Hager, 1895, p.63: Warren Avenue Congregational Church.

Episcopal Diocese of Massachusetts; 1 Joy Street, Boston, Library:
St. Ansgarius Swedish Church.

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date entered

Continuation sheet All Souls Unitarian Church Item number 10

Page 1

The nominated property includes only the lot on which the building stands; it is described in Boston Assessor's Records as parcel # 2608 of Ward 12. Its boundary is as follows:

Beginning at the southeasterly corner of the premises, assessor's parcel #2608, on Warren Street, thence running northwesterly on said street, eighty-two and seventy hundredths (82.70) feet;

thence running on a curve with a radius of twenty-two and twenty hundredths (22.20) feet, forty-two and fifteen hundredths (42.15) feet;

thence running southwesterly on Elm Hill Avenue, one hundred and thirteen and eighty-four hundredths (113.84) feet;

thence turning and running southeasterly along parcel # 2608, thirty -two and eight hundredths (32.08) feet;

thence running still southeasterly a little more southerly by some forty-two feet ;

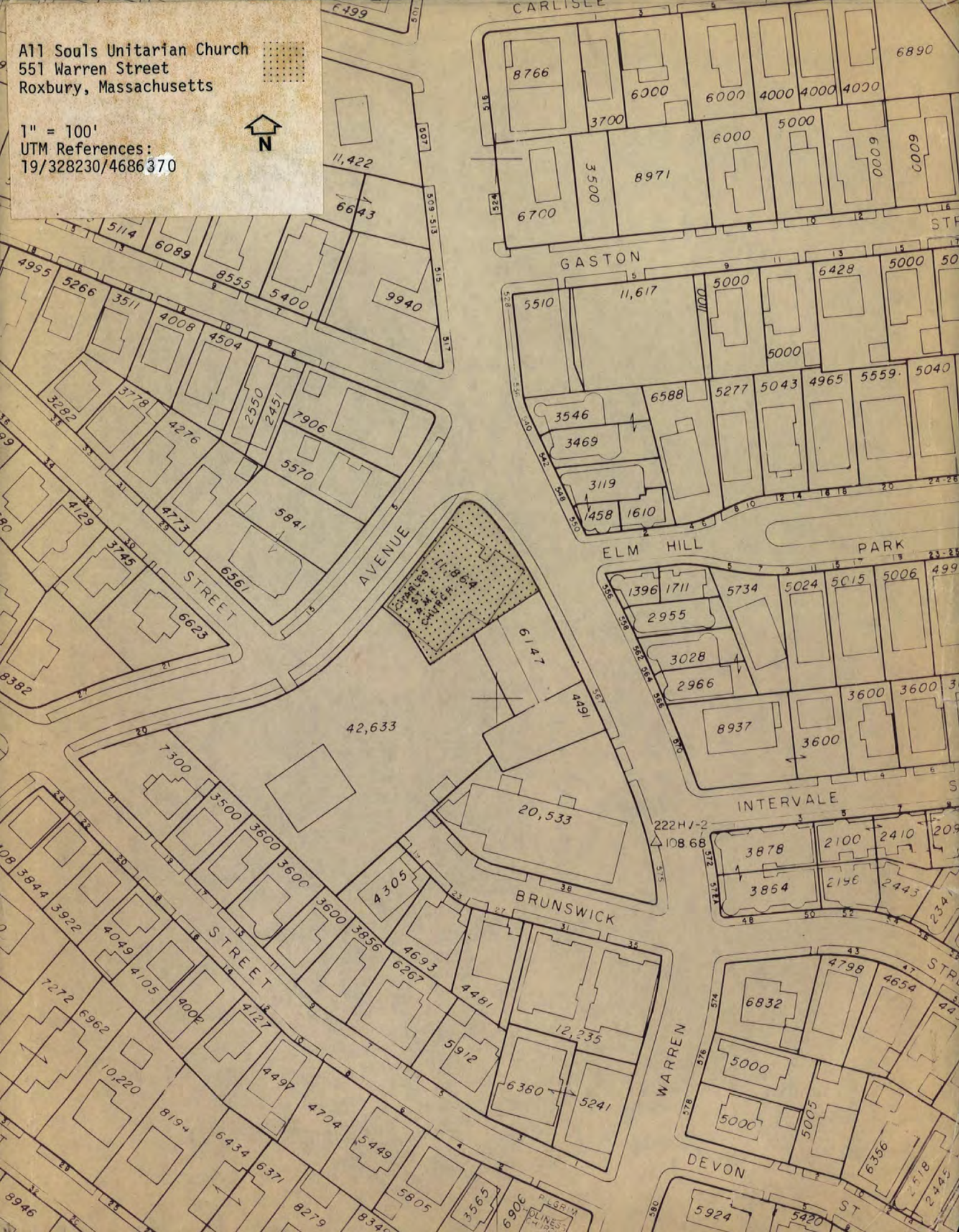
thence turning and running northeasterly, along parcel # 2608, one hundred and twenty and sixty-seven hundredths (120.67) feet to the point of beginning on Warren Street.

Containing eleven thousand and eight hundred and twenty-four square feet.
(Suffolk Deed L1832 f526, 1887)

All Souls Unitarian Church
551 Warren Street
Roxbury, Massachusetts

1" = 100'

UTM References:
19/328230/4686370



NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Charles Street African Methodist Episcopal
Church
Suffolk County
MASSACHUSETTS

Working No. AUG 1 1983

Fed. Reg. Date: 2-7-84

Date Due: 9/1/83 - 9/15/83

Action: ☒ ACCEPT 9/1/83

Entered in the National Register ☐ RETURN

☐ REJECT

Federal Agency: _____

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

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

- ☐ 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

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

8. 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

9. Major Bibliographical References

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property _____

Quadrangle name _____

UTM References _____

Verbal boundary description and justification _____

11. Form Prepared By

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

_____ national _____ state _____ local

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

title _____

date _____

13. Other

- ☐ Maps
- ☐ Photographs
- ☐ Other

Questions concerning this nomination may be directed to _____

Signed _____ Date _____ Phone: _____

Comments for any item may be continued on an attached sheet



Photo #1 of 2

All Souls Unitarian Church

551 Warren Street

Roxbury, Massachusetts

view from northwest corner: tower flanked by
north front of parish house and west transept.

Woodard Openo, Afro-American Museum, 1980.



Photo #2 of 2

All Souls Unitarian Church

551 Warren Street

Roxbury, Massachusetts

Charles St. African Church
view from southeast *Suffolk MA*

Woodard Openo, Afro-American Museum, 1980.

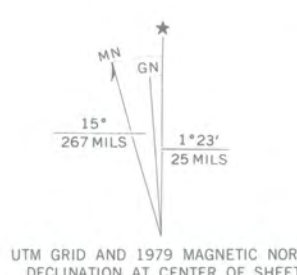


CONVERSION SCALES	
Feet	Meters
15000	4500
14000	4000
13000	3500
12000	3000
11000	2500
10000	2000
9000	1500
8000	1000
7000	700
6000	500
5000	300
4000	200
3000	100
2000	50
1000	25
500	12.5
250	6.25
100	2.5
50	1.25
25	0.625
10	0.25

To convert feet to meters
multiply by 3.048

To convert meters to feet
multiply by 3.2808

Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey
Control by USGS, USCGS, and Massachusetts Geodetic Survey
Topography by planetable surveys 1943. Revised from
aerial photographs taken 1969. Field checked 1970
Selected hydrographic data compiled from USCGS Charts 246
and 248 (1971). This information is not intended for navigational
purposes
Polyconic projection. 1927 North American datum
10,000-foot grid based on Massachusetts coordinate system,
mainland zone
1,000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid,
zone 19
Boundaries in tidewater areas from information supplied
by Massachusetts Department of Public Works
Red tint indicates areas in which only landmark buildings are shown



SCALE 1:25 000

1 1000 0 1000 2000 3000 4000 5000 6000 7000 FEET

1 1000 0 1000 2000 3000 4000 5000 6000 7000 METERS

CONTOUR INTERVAL 10 FEET
NATIONAL GEODETIC VERTICAL DATUM OF 1929
DEPTH CURVES AND SOUNDINGS IN FEET—DATUM IS MEAN LOW WATER
THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE TWO DATUMS IS VARIABLE
SHORELINE SHOWN REPRESENTS THE APPROXIMATE LINE ON MEAN HIGH WATER
THE MEAN RANGE OF TIDE IS APPROXIMATELY 9.5 FEET

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS
FOR SALE BY U. S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, RESTON, VIRGINIA 22092
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

ROAD CLASSIFICATION

Primary highway, hard surface
Secondary highway, hard surface
Light-duty road, hard or improved surface
Unimproved road

Interstate Route
U. S. Route
State Route



BOSTON SOUTH, MASS.
N4215-W7100/7.5
1970
PHOTOREVISED 1979
AMS 6768 I SE—SERIES V814

There may be private inholdings within the boundaries of
the National or State reservations shown on this map
Revisions shown in purple compiled in cooperation with the State of
Massachusetts agencies from aerial photographs taken 1975 and other
source data. This information not field checked. Map edited 1979



**MASSACHUSETTS
HISTORICAL
COMMISSION**

**COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
Office of the Secretary of State**

294 Washington Street
Boston, Massachusetts
02108
617-727-8470

MICHAEL JOSEPH CONNOLLY
Secretary of State

July 20, 1983

Ms. Carol Shull, Chief
National Register of Historic Places
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
18th and C Streets, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20240

Dear Ms. Shull:

Enclosed you will find the following nomination forms:

Boston - Charles Street African Methodist Episcopal Church (local)

Boston - Harrison Loring House (local)

Chicopee - Valentine School (local)

Gardner - Heywood-Wakefield Complex (local)

Greenfield - Garden Theater Block (local)

Monterey - Rock Ridge (local)

Pittsfield - Allen Hotel (local)

Williamstown - Col. Benjamin Simond House (local)

All have been voted eligible by the State Review Board and have been signed by the State Historic Preservation Officer. Owners were notified of pending State Review Board consideration 30-75 days before the meeting and were afforded the opportunity to comment. Comments received to date are attached to the nomination forms.

Sincerely,

Candace Jenkins

Candace Jenkins
Registration Director
Massachusetts Historical Commission

rec'd
AUG - 1 1983

CJ/hi
Enclosure