

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE:

Massachusetts

COUNTY:

Middlesex

FOR NPS USE ONLY

ENTRY DATE

JUL 18 1974

1. NAME

COMMON:

Arlington Town Center District

AND/OR HISTORIC:

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:

Area bounded by Massachusetts Ave. on the north, Academy St. on the east, (cont.)

CITY OR TOWN:

Arlington

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT:

Eighth

STATE

CODE

COUNTY:

CODE

Massachusetts

025

Middlesex

017

3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY
(Check One)

OWNERSHIP

STATUS

ACCESSIBLE
TO THE PUBLIC

- ☒ District ☐ Building
☐ Site ☐ Structure
☐ Object

- ☐ Public
☐ Private
☒ Both

- Public Acquisition:
☐ In Process
☐ Being Considered

- ☒ Occupied
☐ Unoccupied
☐ Preservation work
in progress

- Yes:
☒ Restricted
☐ Unrestricted
☐ No

PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- ☐ Agricultural ☒ Government ☒ Park
☐ Commercial ☐ Industrial ☒ Private Residence
☒ Educational ☐ Military ☒ Religious
☐ Entertainment ☐ Museum ☐ Scientific

- ☐ Transportation ☐ Comments
☐ Other (Specify)

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:

multiple owners -- public and private

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN:

Arlington

STATE:

Massachusetts

CODE

02174

025

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC:

Middlesex County Registry of Deeds

STREET AND NUMBER:

208 Cambridge Street

CITY OR TOWN:

Cambridge

STATE:

Massachusetts

CODE

025

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:

Inventory of Historic Assets of the Commonwealth

DATE OF SURVEY: 1973 ☐ Federal ☒ State ☐ County ☐ Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:

Massachusetts Historical Commission

STREET AND NUMBER:

40 Beacon Street

CITY OR TOWN:

Boston

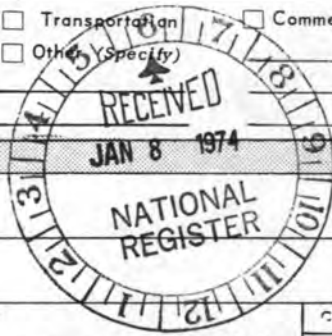
STATE:

Massachusetts 02108

CODE

025

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

STATE: Massachusetts
COUNTY: Middlesex
ENTRY NUMBER: JUL 18 1974
FOR NPS USE ONLY
DATE:

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	☐ Excellent	☒ Good	☐ Fair	☐ Deteriorated	☐ Ruins	☐ Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	☒ Altered	☒ Unaltered	☒ Moved	☒ Original Site		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Arlington Town Center district is comprised of a single city block, bounded on the north by Massachusetts Avenue, on the east by Pleasant Street, on the south by Maple Street, and on the west by Academy Street. The New England Telephone Company property on the corner of Pleasant and Maple Streets is excluded from this district. The area contains eight structures with their respective additions and dependencies, a well-landscaped public garden, a burial ground, and various pieces of street furniture such as markers, walls, and statuary. Although their functions and architectural styles vary, the buildings of this district complement each other in terms of scale, landscaping, and use of building material.

The First Parish Unitarian Church (1857) is situated at the northeast corner of the district on Massachusetts Avenue at Pleasant Street. Designed by Richard Bond, a Boston architect, it is the only ecclesiastical building within the district. Stylistically, the white frame structure is an example of first phase Romanesque Revival, typically displaying Gothic Revival and Italianate motifs as well. It is thought that this church was Bond's only exercise in the style. A small addition and connecting ell, sympathetic in roofline, scale, and wall fabric, were finished in 1958. Behind the church is the Old Burying Ground, associated with the congregation of the First Parish Church since at least 1736 (the date of the oldest headstone).

Immediately to the west of the church is an access lane to the Whittemore-Robbins House (c. 1800) and its two dependencies, a carriage shed and a cottage. Originally located on Massachusetts Avenue, the house was moved to its present location when preparations for the construction of the Robbins Library began (c. 1890). The building is a handsome federal structure, almost square in plan, with mid- and late nineteenth century additions and alterations. The exterior of the building has been changed only slightly; it still retains the hip roof, brick end walls, four end chimneys, and side-lighted doorway with elliptical fanlight that characterize substantial domestic architecture of this period. With the exception of an Italianate front porch, most of the exterior alterations or additions have occurred above the cornice. Circa 1870 the original balustrade was removed from the eave line, a dormer with Italianate detail was added to each plane of the roof, and the balustrade was recreated behind the dormers. At the same time, the original cupola was probably enlarged and certainly modified with the addition of bracketed detail reflecting that of the porch.

To the west of the Whittemore-Robbins House on Massachusetts Avenue is the Robbins Library (1892). Designed by the firm of Cabot, Everett, and Mead, it is the earliest extant example of the second Renaissance Revival in Arlington. A later addition (1930) in the same style houses the children's collection. The wall fabric of the main library is sandstone ashlar with limestone and marble ornament used in the entrance frame. There are two significant elements in the design of the library. The first is the abundance of well-executed ornamental detail, evident in the cornice and portal. The second noteworthy detail is the monumental scale, expressed in the use of arched windows which incorporate three stories and the tremendous portal. This scale was characteristic of the second Renaissance Revival, especially in civic buildings and was suitable to the iconography of a building which was designed to function both as a monument to a founding family and as a civic landmark.

Between the Robbins Library and the Robbins Memorial Town Hall to the west
(cont.)

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Continuation Sheet)

STATE	
Massachusetts	
COUNTY	
Middlesex	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
JUL 18 1974	

(Number all entries)

Arlington Town Center District

2. LOCATION (street and number cont.)

Maple St. on the south, and Pleasant St. on the west.

7. DESCRIPTION (cont.)

is the Memorial Garden, designed by R. Clipston Sturgis. According to the Arlington Historical Commission, the development of the landscape from an informal almost wild periphery to a stylized and controlled center is symbolic of the growth and development of Arlington.

The Robbins Memorial Town Hall (1913), located at the northwest corner of the district, was the work of R. Clipston Sturgis who was probably influenced by Mangin and McComb's New York City Hall (c. 1802). His interpretation of classical Revival forms with French and Italian motifs is more restrained in the use of architectural ornament than the library, but is more sophisticated in its modulation of wall planes and textures. Alternating surfaces of rusticated limestone and ashlar panels accentuate the three bay facade, which consists of a central pavilion with projecting entrance porch and two end projecting pavilions.

Behind the Robbins Memorial Town Hall and at the southwest corner of the district, is the Central Junior High School (1894). This two story brick and terra cotta structure combines the influences of a number of styles in its steeply-pitched slate roof and dormers, decorative terra cotta panels, brick bond patterns, and symmetry. The building is attributed to the Boston firm of Hartwell and Richardson.

The remainder of the southern boundary of the district is defined by two mansard cottages, one of which has been 'modernized', and is contiguous to the New England Telephone Company's property.



8. SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- ☐ Pre-Columbian ☐ 16th Century ☒ 18th Century ☒ 20th Century
☐ 15th Century ☐ 17th Century ☒ 19th Century

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known)

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|--|---|---|--|
| ☐ Aboriginal | ☐ Education | ☒ Political | ☐ Urban Planning |
| ☐ Prehistoric | ☐ Engineering | ☒ Religion/Philosophy | ☐ Other (Specify) _____ |
| ☐ Historic | ☐ Industry | ☐ Science | _____ |
| ☐ Agriculture | ☐ Invention | ☐ Sculpture | _____ |
| ☒ Architecture | ☒ Landscape | ☐ Social/Humanitarian | _____ |
| ☒ Art | ☐ Architecture | ☐ Theater | _____ |
| ☐ Commerce | ☐ Literature | ☐ Transportation | _____ |
| ☐ Communications | ☐ Military | | |
| ☐ Conservation | ☐ Music | | |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Arlington Town Center District represents many aspects of the growth and development of the town. The area contains several architecturally distinguished structures, perhaps the most noteworthy of which are the Robbins Library and the Whittemore-Robbins House. William Whittemore's choice of site was entirely suitable for the house of a substantial industrialist because of its location at the intersection of the Concord Road which led to Cambridge and Lexington (Massachusetts Avenue), the Old Watertown Road (Pleasant Street), Medford Street (Mystic Street), and Charlestown Street (Broadway).

This site, because of its proximity to the intersection, has traditionally been the center of religious and civic activity -- first as a part of the precinct of Cambridge, then as the town of Menotomy, and now as Arlington. The present First Parish Church stands on the site of three successive earlier meetinghouses, the first of which was erected in 1732. The Old Burying Ground adjacent to it has been used since the founding of the church and contains markers inscribed with the names associated with the founding fathers of Arlington. Robbins Memorial Town Hall was constructed on the site of an earlier meeting place which apparently functioned as Faneuil Hall does -- that is with commercial space on the ground floor and a large meeting room on the second floor.

Perhaps the most significant element of the district can be understood in terms of urban design. It is a good example of a heterogeneous urban fabric, where ownership and function are mixed but where the structures themselves are complementary in terms of scale and proportion. The area functions as a buffer zone with a smooth transition between commercial structures on the north side of Massachusetts Avenue and the domestic structures on the south side of Maple Street, only one block removed. Ample open space is provided in the form of the Memorial Garden, in which can be found several sculptures by the famous New England sculptor Cyrus Dallin.



9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Cutter, Benjamin and William. History of Town of Arlington 1635-1879. (Boston, 1880).
Parker, Charles S. Town of Arlington Past and Present . (Arlington, 1907), p. 170-173.
Parmenter, J. P. "History of Arlington and Biographical Sketches" from History of Middlesex County ed. D. H. Hurst. (C Lewis Co., 1890), vol. 3, p. 173-205.
Whiffen, Marcus. American Architecture Since 1780 A Guide to the Styles. (Cambridge, 1969).

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	
NW	42 ° 24 ' 58 "	71 ° 09 ' 26 "				
NE	42 ° 24 ' 55 "	71 ° 09 ' 13 "				
SE	42 ° 24 ' 49 "	71 ° 09 ' 16 "				
SW	42 ° 24 ' 52 "	71 ° 09 ' 29 "				

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: Approx 13 Acres

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE: Laurie Hammel for Elizabeth R. Amadon, State Survey Director

ORGANIZATION: Massachusetts Historical Commission DATE: 2/20/73

STREET AND NUMBER: 40 Beacon Street (617) 727-8470

CITY OR TOWN: Boston STATE: Massachusetts CODE: 02108 25

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison 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. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National ☐ State ☒ Local ☐

Name John F.X. Davenport
JOHN F.X. DAVOREN, Secretary
of the Commonwealth and Chairman
of the Massachusetts Historical
Commission

Date 12-27-73

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

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

AB Quatman
Director, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date 7/18/74

ATTEST: Wm J. Mumford
Keeper of The National Register

Date 7.17.74

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

PROPERTY Arlington Town Center District STATE Mass.

WORKING NUMBER 1. 8. 74. 41

TECH REVIEW

PHOTOS 5

MAPS 1

Middlesex

CONTROL REVIEW

#10 increase is missing.

cm

1. 11.

74

OK

HISTORIAN

Cyrus Dellin is a Utah sculptor!

Accept
W.R. Luce
5/8/74

ARCHITECTURAL HISTORIAN

Should we ask the person who prepared this for a sketchmap?

Accept
J.T.
4-10-74

ARCHEOLOGIST

REVIEW UNIT CHIEF

Accept
Cole
7/17/74

BRANCH CHIEF

KEEPER

cm
7/17

National Register Write-up Sept 5, 1974

Send-back _____

Federal Register entry Sept. 3, 1974

Re-submit _____

Entered _____

JUL 18 1974



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
PROPERTY PHOTOGRAPH FORM

(Type all entries - attach to or enclose with photograph)

1. NAME		
COMMON	AND/OR HISTORIC	NUMERIC CODE (Assigned by NPS)
Arlington Town Center District		JUL 18 1974
2. LOCATION		
STATE	COUNTY	TOWN
Massachusetts	Middlesex	Arlington
STREET AND NUMBER		
Area bounded by Massachusetts Ave. (north), Pleasant St. (east), Maple St. (south) and Academy St. (west)		
3. PHOTO REFERENCE		
PHOTO CREDIT	DATE	NEGATIVE FILED AT
Edward Jacoby Architectural Photography Group	1972	108 Mt. Vernon St. Boston, MA 02108
4. IDENTIFICATION		
DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC.		

View of Robbins Library from the south east.



GPO 932-009

BOSTON MASS 02108

PROPERTY OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
PROPERTY PHOTOGRAPH FORM

(Type all entries - attach to or enclose with photograph)

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COMMON	AND/OR HISTORIC	NUMERIC CODE (Assigned by NPS) 8 1974 JUL 5 1974
Arlington Town Center District		
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STATE	COUNTY	TOWN
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4. IDENTIFICATION		
DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC.		

View of Robbins Memorial Town Hall from the north (across Massachusetts Ave.)

Photograph must be dated
To © EDWARD JACOBY

108 Mt. Vernon St 2 of 5

PROPERTY OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

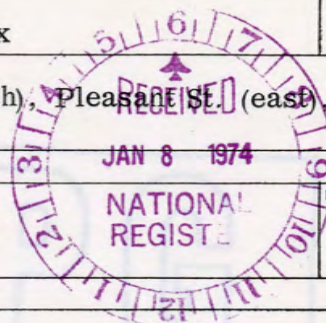


UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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PHOTO CREDIT	DATE	NEGATIVE FILED AT
Edward Jacoby Architectural Photography Group	1972	108 Mt. Vernon St. Boston, MA 02108
4. IDENTIFICATION		
DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC.		
View from the east of the Memorial Gardens which are located between the Robbins Library and the Robbins Memorial Town Hall		



JUL 18 1974

All reproductions of this
Photograph must be credited
To: © EDWARD JACOBY

30f5

GPO 932-009

108 MT VERNON ST
BOSTON MASS 02108

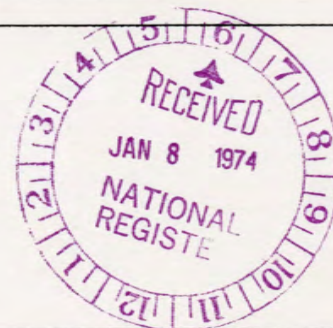
PROPERTY OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
PROPERTY PHOTOGRAPH FORM

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PHOTO CREDIT	DATE	NEGATIVE FILED AT
Edward Jacoby Architectural Photography Group	1972	108 Mt. Vernon St. Boston, MA 02108
4. IDENTIFICATION		
DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC.		
View of the Whittemore-Robbins House from the northeast		



4 of 5

GPO 932-009

108 MT VERNON
BOSTON MASS 02108

PROPERTY OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
PROPERTY PHOTOGRAPH FORM

(Type all entries - attach to or enclose with photograph)

1. NAME

COMMON

AND/OR HISTORIC

NUMERIC CODE (Assigned by NPS)

Arlington Town Center District

2. LOCATION

STATE

COUNTY

TOWN

Massachusetts

Middlesex

Arlington

STREET AND NUMBER

Area bounded by Massachusetts Ave. (north), Pleasant St. (east), Maple St. (south) and Academy St. (west).

3. PHOTO REFERENCE

PHOTO CREDIT

DATE

NEGATIVE FILED AT

Arlington Historical Commission Winter 1972

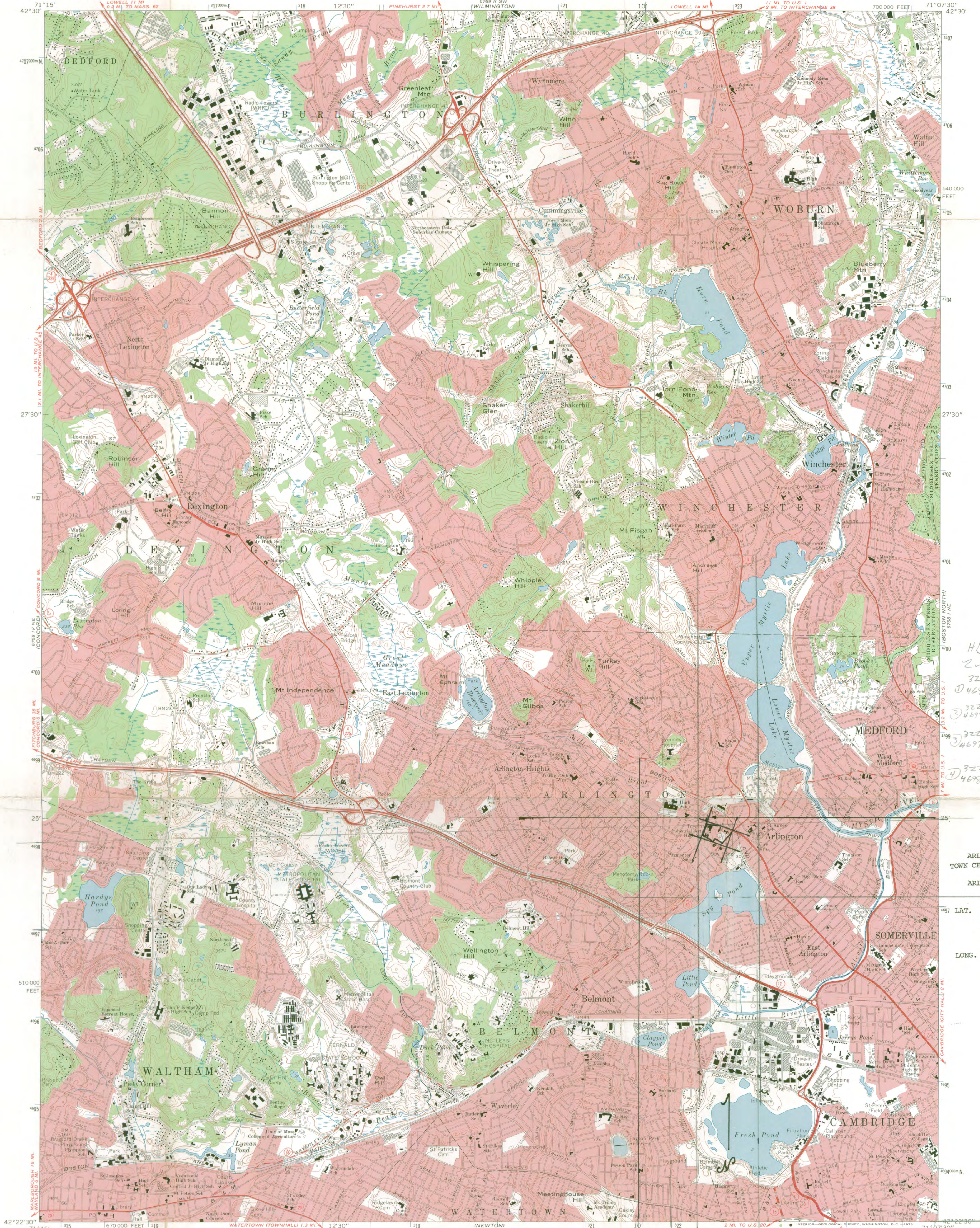
Arlington Historical Commission

4. IDENTIFICATION

DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC.

View of the First Parish Unitarian Universalist Church and Robbins Library from the northeast corner of the district.

PROPERTY OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER



H3
2419
322290
D4697930
322220
D4697740
322720
D4697870
322500
D4698040

ARLINGTON
TOWN CENTER DISTRICT
ARLINGTON

LAT.	NW	42	24'	58"
	NE	42	24'	55"
	SE	42	24'	49"
	SW	42	24'	52"
LONG.	NW	71	09'	26"
	NE	71	09'	13"
	SE	71	09'	16"
	SW	71	09'	29"

Maped, 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 planimetric 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



SCALE 1:24,000
CONTOUR INTERVAL 10 FEET
DATUM IS MEAN SEA LEVEL
THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS
FOR SALE BY U. S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, WASHINGTON, D. C. 20542
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

ROAD CLASSIFICATION
Primary highway, hard surface
Secondary highway, hard surface
Unimproved road
Light-duty road, hard or improved surface
U. S. Route
State Route

LEXINGTON, MASS.
N4222.5—W7107.5/7.5
1971
AMS 6768 I NW—SERIES V814



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Office of the Secretary

Massachusetts Historical Commission

John F. X. Davoren

3 Joy Street

Boston, Mass. 02108

Secretary of the Commonwealth

January 2, 1974



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

Attention Charles Herrington

CERTIFIED MAIL

Dear Charles:

Enclosed is the National Register nomination for:
Middlesex County, Arlington, Arlington Town Center District

It has been declared eligible for submission by the Massachusetts Historical Commission, the State Review Board, and has been signed by the Secretary of the Commonwealth, John F. X. Davoren, Chairman of the Massachusetts Historical Commission and designated State Historic Preservation Officer.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth R. Amadon

Elizabeth R. Amadon
State Survey Director
Massachusetts Historical Commission

ERA:ks
encl:

ENTRIES IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

STATE **MASSACHUSETTS**

Date Entered **JUL 18 1974**

Name

Location

Arlington Town Center District

**Arlington
Middlesex County**

Also Notified

Hon. Edward M. Kennedy
Hon. Edward W. Brooke
Hon. Thomas P. O'Neill, Jr.
Regional Director, North
Atlantic Region

State Historic Preservation Officer
Hon. John F.X. Davoren
Secretary of the Commonwealth
Chairman, Massachusetts Historical
Commission
40 Beacon St.
Boston, Massachusetts 02108

PR

MMott/row

7/19/74



meddised W. Mass *Mott*
The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Office of the Secretary
Massachusetts Historical Commission

Paul Guzzi

40 Beacon Street

Boston, Massachusetts 02108

Secretary of the Commonwealth

727-8470

2 April 1975

Mr. Charles Herrington, Chief
Registration
National Register of Historic Places
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
18th and C Streets, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20240

Dear Charles:

This letter is to notify you that the First Unitarian Universalist Church of Arlington was destroyed by fire on the morning of March 7, 1975. The church was situated at the northeast corner of the Arlington Town Center Historic District on Massachusetts Avenue at Pleasant Street. The appropriate notation should be made on the Arlington Town Center Historic District nomination form (accepted for listing on 7/18/74).

I have enclosed a newspaper clipping which relates the events of that morning. The congregation has several plans under consideration to replace the building. Please let me know if you wish further information on this matter.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Betty".

Elizabeth R. Amadon
Executive Director
Massachusetts Historical Commission

ERA:pjj

Remain good
PLOYER BOND
35% COTTON FIBER

Burned Arlington church will be rebuilt, pastor says

By Frank Mahoney
Globe Staff

The First Unitarian Universalist Church of Arlington was destroyed yesterday by a fire which started at the base of its 181-foot wooden steeple and quickly spread throughout the building.

The historic church was the fourth to be built on the site in Arlington Center since 1734. Dr. Charles Grady, the rector, said last night that rebuilding at or near the same site, the corner of Massachusetts avenue and Pleasant street, will probably begin within weeks.

"I don't think anyone in town would want anything other than a church on this ground," he said. The blaze started about 9:45 a.m. Workmen had been renovating the steeple for Bicentennial services next month.

Cause of the fire is under investigation by the state fire marshal's office. Workmen told Dr. Grady an electrical tool used for stripping paint may have started the fire.

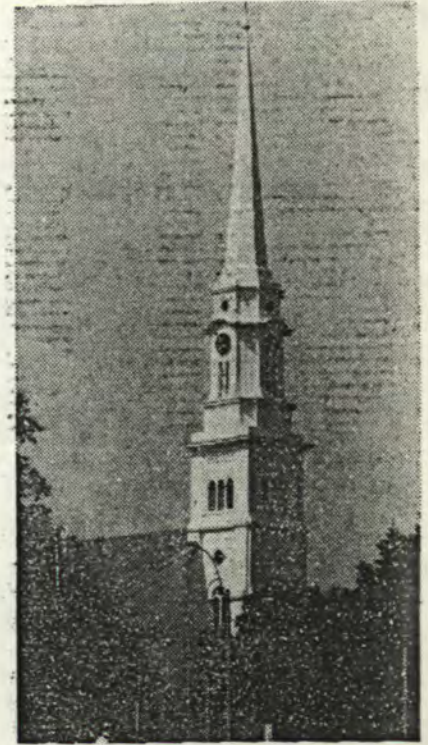
The flames quickly spread up the inner walls of the steeple, one of the tallest in New England. By the time firefighters arrived, Deputy Chief Robert Kelly said, "it was a mass of flames."

For several hours it appeared the spire was going to topple, but an iron scaffolding surrounding it held it upright. Last night workmen with a giant crane began razing the steeple, after town building commissioner William Libby said "a slight wind would topple it."

Volunteer church school teacher Carla Petrowicz led 40 children from the church basement when she smelled smoke and heard a fire alarm in the church. An adjoining church school, parsonage and burial ground were undamaged.

Firefighters from a dozen communities assisted at the fire.

The fire attracted hundreds of spectators. The steeple was considered one of the finest examples of



Arlington's historic First Parish Church in 1972 Globe photo.

colonial revival architecture in New England. It was built in 1871 after a torando toppled another steeple. Its four-faced clock served as a time-piece for townspeople for decades.

The first church was built on the site in 1734. In 1775, as British troops marched to Lexington for a clash with colonists, parishioners carried the silver communion service from the church and kept it in a woods for safekeeping. The same service was in use this year, and was unharmed in yesterday's fire.

The white church was used as meeting place for many town organizations, including the historical society, Girl Scouts, and the Heights-men Drum and Bugle Corps.

Another fire destroyed a church on the site on New Year's Day, 1856. The church was rebuilt within a year.

Dr. Grady said the congregation will meet this weekend to determine how the church can be rebuilt.

ouds First Parish Church steeple at height of fire which
ington landmark yesterday. (Globe photo by Jack