

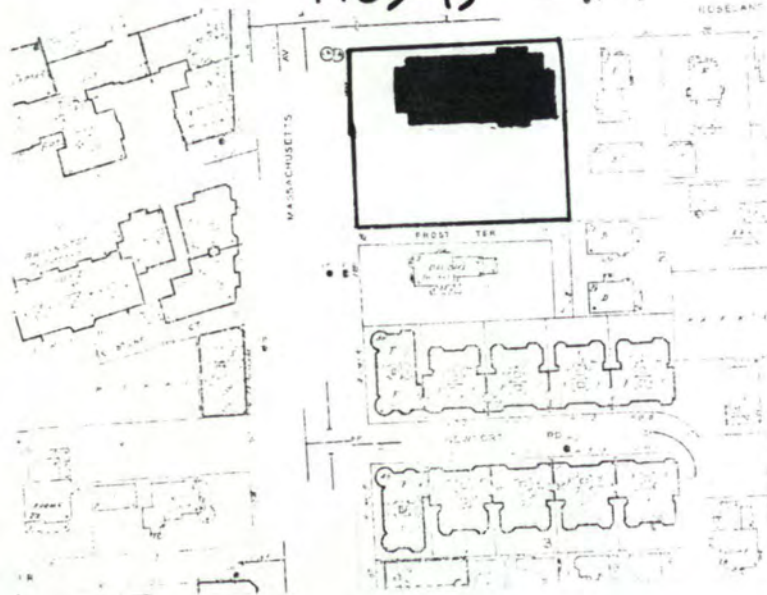
FORM B - BUILDING

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

In Area no. MID CAMB.	Form no. <u>MC</u> II C 3
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1105-15



1. Town Cambridge  
 Address 1803 Massachusetts Ave.  
 Name North Avenue Congregational Church  
 Present use church

Present owner North Avenue Congregational Society

3. Description:  
 Date 1845  
 Source deed records  
 Style Greek Revival  
 Architect Issac Melvin  
 Exterior wall fabric wood  
 Outbuildings (describe) none  
 Other features vestibule treated as a temple front with Egyptian capitals.

Altered Yes - steeple replaced Date several times  
 Moved Yes Date 1867

5. Lot size:  
 One acre or less XX Over one acre \_\_\_\_\_  
 Approximate frontage 75'  
 Approximate distance of building from street 40'

6. Recorded by Robert Rettig  
 Organization Cambridge Historical Comm.  
 Date 1968

ASSESSOR #153-1

(over)

UTM-BOSTON NORTH  
 19/325540/4694640

7. Original owner (if known) Old Cambridge Baptists

Original use church

Subsequent uses (if any) and dates same

8. Themes (check as many as applicable)

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

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

The North Avenue Congregational Church was designed for the Old Cambridge Baptists by Isaac Melvin in 1845. It originally stood on the corner of Holmes Place and Kirkland Street, and was moved to its present site in 1867. The Baptists outgrew the building and sold it to the Holmes Society in 1866. The Holmes Society then became the North Avenue Congregational Society, the same congregation which owns the church today. They moved the building in 1867, a year after assuming ownership.

Although the present steeple is an inappropriate replacement, the rest of Melvin's forthright Greek Revival design survives intact. The original building was Late Georgian in form: a rectangular plan, four bays long with a projecting entrance vestibule. The vestibule is treated as a temple front with Egyptian capitals and a pediment topped by an acroterion. Three identical doors stand beneath panels of carved ornament probably derived from designs of Asher Benjamin.

10. Bibliography and/or references (such as local histories, deeds, assessor's records, early maps, etc.)

NOV 14 1980

EVALUATION / RETURN SHEET

North Avenue Congregational Church

Property: Cambridge Multiple Resource Area

State, County: MA - Middlesex

Federal Agency: \_\_\_\_\_

Working No. 11-14-80-2862

Fed. Reg. Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Date Due: 4/17/82

Action:  ACCEPT

RETURN 4/13/82

REJECT

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

photos 1

maps \_\_\_\_\_

Substantive Review:  sample  request  appeal  NR decision

Reviewer's comments:

*No justification for this as an exception to the criteria - - architectural significance is not provided - what is context?*

Recom./Criteria Return

Reviewer Brarham

Discipline arch. His

Date 4.2.82

see continuation sheet

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

1. Name

2. Location

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
	Public Acquisition	Accessible	

4. Owner of Property

5. Location of Legal Description

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> original site
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

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

for NPS use only

## 8. Significance

Period \_\_\_\_\_ Area 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 \_\_\_\_\_

USIT 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 Patrick Andrus

Signed Bravham Date 4.12.82 Phone: 202 272-3504

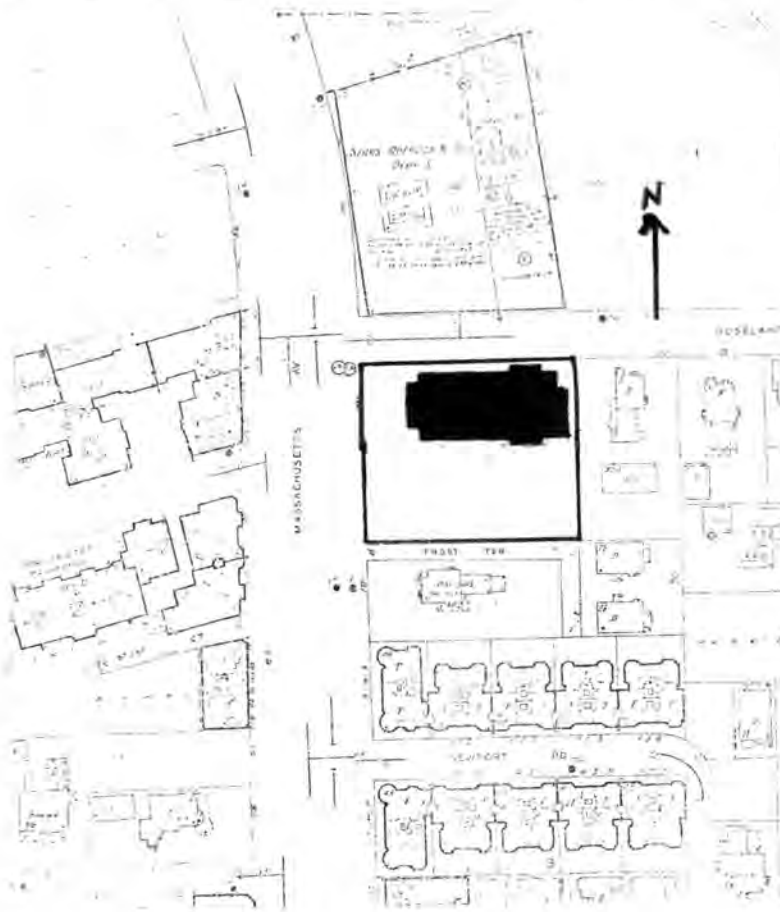
Comments for any item may be continued on an attached sheet

FORM B - BUILDING

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

In Area no. MID CAMB.	Form no. <u>MC</u> II C 3
--------------------------	---------------------------------

2. Photo (3x3" or 3x5")  
Staple to left side of form  
Photo number 1105-15



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Name North Avenue Congregational Church  
Present use church  
  
Present owner North Avenue Congregational Society

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6. Recorded by Robert Rettig  
Organization Cambridge Historical Comm  
Date 1968

ASSESSOR #153-1

(over)

UTM-BOSTON NORTH  
19/325540/4694640

7. Original owner (if known) Old Cambridge Baptists

Original use church

Subsequent uses (if any) and dates same

8. Themes (check as many as applicable)

Aboriginal	<input type="checkbox"/>	Conservation	<input type="checkbox"/>	Recreation	<input type="checkbox"/>
Agricultural	<input type="checkbox"/>	Education	<input type="checkbox"/>	Religion	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Architectural	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Exploration/ settlement	<input type="checkbox"/>	Science/ invention	<input type="checkbox"/>
The Arts	<input type="checkbox"/>	Industry	<input type="checkbox"/>	Social/ humanitarian	<input type="checkbox"/>
Commerce	<input type="checkbox"/>	Military	<input type="checkbox"/>	Transportation	<input type="checkbox"/>
Communication	<input type="checkbox"/>	Political	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Community development	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				

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

The North Avenue Congregational Church was designed for the Old Cambridge Baptists by Isaac Melvin in 1845. It originally stood on the corner of Holmes Place and Kirkland Street, and was moved to its present site in 1867. The Baptists outgrew the building and sold it to the Holmes Society in 1866. The Holmes Society then became the North Avenue Congregational Society, the same congregation which owns the church today. They moved the building in 1867, a year after assuming ownership.

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NOV 14 1980

INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
Office of the Secretary, Boston

Community: Mid-Cambridge	Form No: MC II.C.3
Property Name: North Avenue Congregational Church	

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

The North Avenue Congregational Church is significant as a work of architecture, for its associations with architect Isaac Melvin, and for its associations with the development of North Cambridge. North Avenue Congregational Church is the only example in Cambridge of the heavily pedimented, porticoed Greek Revival style church of the 1840s. It is especially significant for its use of an Egyptian architectural motif with capitals of the columns flanking the main entrance; such details are rare on Massachusetts churches, and only the Mount Auburn Cemetery gate (1831, N.R.) provides a local precedent.

Isaac Melvin was a housewright turned architect in the New England tradition. Practicing in Cambridge from 1837 to 1850, he was architect for several important houses in Mid Cambridge and for Dane Hall of Harvard University (now demolished). His own house, 19 Centre Street, is listed on the National Register.

The relocation of the Church from Harvard Square to North Cambridge in 1867 reflects the growing importance of that community. After the opening of the Fitchburg Railroad station in Porter Square in 1843, North Cambridge became a bedroom suburb of Boston. While Porter Square itself retained its earlier character as a stagecoach stop and cattle market, North Avenue from Porter Square to Harvard Square quickly became the most prestigious address in Cambridge. By 1875, the entire avenue was lined with elaborate mansions in the Greek Revival and Second Empire styles, almost all built by Boston businessmen who commuted by horse car to Porter Square and thence by train to Boston. The North Avenue Congregational Society was made up of these men, who by their purchase of the Old Cambridge Baptist Church, hoped to demonstrate the importance and stature of their community.

North Avenue Congregational is significant under Criterion A for its role in the development of the North Avenue neighborhood, and under Criterion C as an important example of a Greek Revival church.

Staple to Inventory form at bottom

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form



Continuation sheet

Item number

Page 10 of 17

Multiple Resource Area  
Thematic Group

Name Cambridge Multiple Resource Area

State MA

Nomination/Type of Review

Date/Signature

91. Cummings, e. e., House

Substantive Review

Keeper

Bruce M. Doyle 6-30-83

Attest

92. Divinity Hall

*owner objection withdrawn*

DOE/OWNER OBJECTION

Keeper

Patrick Andrews 9/12/86

Attest

Beth L. Savage 9/12/86

93. North Avenue Congregational Church

Keeper

Bruce M. Doyle 6-30-83

Attest

94. Prospect Congregational Church

Substantive Review

Keeper

William A. Brackham 4.13.82

Attest

95. University Museum

*owner objection withdrawn*

DOE/OWNER OBJECTION

Keeper

Patrick Andrews 9/12/86

Attest

Beth L. Savage 9/12/86

96. Old Cambridge Baptist Church

Keeper

William H. Brackham 4.13.82

Attest

97. Ware Hall

Keeper

Bruce M. Doyle 6-30-83

Attest

98. Cambridge Public Library

Keeper

William H. Brackham 4.13.82

Attest

99. Church of the New Jerusalem

Substantive Review

Keeper

Bruce M. Doyle 6-30-83

Attest

100. Busch-Reischinger House

DOE/OWNER OBJECTION

Keeper

6-30-82

Attest

Harold

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

Substantive Review

North Avenue Congregational Church (Cambridge MRA)  
Middlesex County  
MA

Working No. 11-1480-2867

Fed. Reg. Date: 2-7-84

Date Due: 7/4/83

Action:  ACCEPT 6/30/83

RETURN

REJECT

Federal Agency: \_\_\_\_\_

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

Substantive Review:  sample  request  appeal  NR decision

Reviewer's comments:

NOMINATION UNDER CRITERION B  
FOR ASSOCIATION WITH MELVILLE  
IS A MISTAKE. SIGNIFICANCE FOR AN  
ARCHITECTURE <sup>BUILDING</sup> IS UNDER CRITERION C.

Recom. / Criteria A+C

Reviewer Mar May 1

Discipline A-LT

Date 6/30/83

see continuation sheet

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

1. Name

2. Location

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
	Public Acquisition	Accessible	

4. Owner of Property

5. Location of Legal Description

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
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<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date _____
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Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

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

## 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 *SEE COMMENT.*
- 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 \_\_\_\_\_

USGS Reference \_\_\_\_\_

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: 202 272-3504

Comments for any item may be continued on an attached sheet



1105-15

NOV 14 1980

0490

Cambridge MA, Ma  
North Avenue Congregational Church

1803 Massachusetts Ave.

1105-15

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

Multiple Property Cover Sheet Reference Number: 64000275