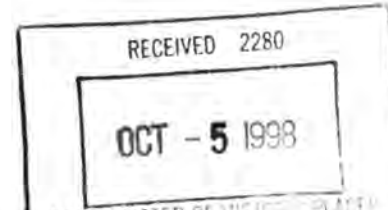


United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service



National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form

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 ROSLINDALE BAPTIST CHURCH

other names/site number \_\_\_\_\_

2. Location

street & number 52 CUMMINS HIGHWAY not for publication

city or town BOSTON (ROSLINDALE) vicinity \_\_\_\_\_

state MASSACHUSETTS code MA county SUFFOLK code 025 zip code 02131

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

9/28/98  
Date

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): \_\_\_\_\_

Edson H. Beall  
Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action 11.5.98

Roslindale Baptist Church  
Name of Property

Suffolk Co., Mass.  
County and State

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**

(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

**Number of Resources within Property**

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1		building
		sites
		structures
		objects
1		Total

**Name of related multiple property listing**

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

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

RELIGION \_\_\_\_\_  
EDUCATION \_\_\_\_\_  
SOCIAL \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

RELIGION \_\_\_\_\_  
EDUCATION \_\_\_\_\_  
SOCIAL \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions)

STICK STYLE \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Materials**

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation granite  
walls clapboards, wood shingle  
\_\_\_\_\_  
roof asphalt shingles  
other \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Narrative Description**

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

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service****National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**Section number 7 Page 1Roslindale Baptist Church  
Boston (Roslindale) (Suffolk Co.), Mass.**7. DESCRIPTION**

The Roslindale Baptist Church is located at 52 Cummins Highway, Roslindale, Massachusetts. Built in 1884-1889, by builder Alexander Rogers, from designs provided by the Boston architectural firm of Silloway and McKay, the rear Sunday School addition was designed by West Roxbury architect Oscar A. Thayer in 1915. This wooden church is a substantially intact Stick Style ecclesiastical building. It is the finest example of this historic architectural style in Roslindale-West Roxbury. The Roslindale Baptist Church retains integrity of location, design, siting, materials, feeling, association, and workmanship and is of local significance, fulfilling criteria A and C of the National Register of Historic Places.

Located at the northwest corner of Cummins Highway and Florence Street, one block east of Roslindale Square, the Roslindale Baptist Church stands on a roughly rectangular lot encompassing 11,530 square feet. It is a key resource within Roslindale Village's collection of architecturally significant mid-19th to early 20th century buildings by virtue of its soaring steeple as well as its intact form and decorative surface elements. Surrounded on all sides by wooden residences dating from the mid 19th to early 20th century, the church stands on level ground. The Roslindale Baptist Church exhibits the Stick Style's trademark picturesque profiles achieved via steeply pitched roof configurations.

In typical Stick Style fashion the wall surfaces are treated as decorative elements rather than merely as structural plane. The church's walls exhibit clapboards overlaid with horizontal and vertical boards. Corner boards provide vertical accents at the edges of the church while horizontal boards serve as belt and string courses. Scallop - shaped wood shingles enliven this building's wall surfaces. A band of wood shingles separates the first and second floors of the east and west walls, while wood shingles cover wall surfaces above the first floor of the main facade. The pointed arches of the Church's windows and moldings allude to the Stick Style's evolution from the Carpenter Gothic Revival style popular in America during the 1840s and 1850s.

The Roslindale Baptist Church consists of four wooden structural components. The stairhall, bell tower and auditorium components were built during the 1880s and include: 1) the main facade's 3-story, gable roofed stair hall; 2) a square, 80 foot-tall, steeple-topped bell tower at the church's southeast corner; 3) a large 2.5 -story gable roof - enclosed component containing the Sanctuary or Auditorium and other rooms abutting the main stairhall's north wall. The fourth component is a 2-story Sunday School structure added to the north wall of the original church in 1915. At the time of the Sunday School's construction, the Cummins Highway entrance was remodeled in a manner compatible with the Georgian Revival elements of the addition. The original church and its addition rise from granite block and rubble stone foundations, respectively. The

**(continued)**

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service****National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**Section number 7 Page 2Roslindale Baptist Church  
Boston (Roslindale) (Suffolk Co.), Mass.

structural components of the 1880s church are enclosed by intersecting gable roofs clad with asphalt shingles. The Sunday School Addition culminates in a flat roof encircled by a low parapet.

**Main (South) elevation: Stair Hall Component**

The 3-story, L-shaped stair hall component projects from the south wall of the main block. The gables of the stair hall's two perpendicular segments face south and east and are of unequal width. The south facing segment is the wider of the two, exhibiting the main entrance while a large stained glass window spans the upper floors.

The Church's main entrance is recessed within a shallow, pedimented Tuscan-columned porch. This porch appears to have been added when the rear, Georgian Revival Sunday School addition was built in 1915.

A short flight of concrete steps with low shoulder blocks of the same material lead to multi-panel double doors. Rising from a continuous sill course above the portico's gable roof is a large stained glass window spanning the second and third floors. This window culminates in a segmental arch and is divided into 12 segments by heavy wooden enframements. Extending from this windows upper enframements to the corner boards of the stair hall component are horizontal boards. In typical Stick Style fashion, the corner boards rest atop wood shingles. Culminating in a steeply-pitched gable with return eaves, single saw cut brackets are in evidence at the sides of this gable. Above this gable's intersection with the auditorium's south gable are two small, square attic windows.

To the left of the entrance bay is the recessed south facade of the stair hall's western component. On the first floor, narrow double windows rise to a continuous sill course. Spanning the upper floors is a tall and narrow stained glass window set within a molded arched enframement. Above the cornice, the south roof slope of the stair hall's west gable intersects with its south gable.

A drawing of this building on the cover of a 1912 church history shows ornamental iron cresting accenting the roof ridges of all of the Church's gables. None of this cresting remains. Additionally, this drawing indicates that a stucco-covered border and stick work once accented the apex of the stair hall's south gable. These treatments were no longer in evidence by 1925.

**The Bell Tower**

Soaring 80 feet above the south east corner of Cummins Highway and Florence Street, the bell tower of the Roslindale Baptist Church is composed of four components: base, mid-section, belfry and steeple.

**(continued)**

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service****National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**Section number 7 Page 3Roslindale Baptist Church  
Boston (Roslindale) (Suffolk Co.), Mass.

The square base of the tower is clad with clapboards. Exhibiting a continuous belt course beneath the windows of the south and east walls, vertical boards accent the base's corners. Fully enframed double stained glass windows with a molded cornice. Above the cornice, flared aprons are covered with scalloped wooden shingles.

Sheathed with rectangular wooden shingles and accented by simple corner boards, the bell tower's second component culminates in steeply pitched pointed arches, which speak to the Stick Style's roots in the Carpenter Gothic style. This component's south and east walls are pierced by tall and narrow stained glass windows. These windows culminate in a segmental arch and are accented by arched moldings. Enlivening the apex of the windows' arches are sunburst motifs rendered in low relief.

The pointed arches of the second component culminate at a point just above the sills of the belfry's arched openings. According to a 1912 line drawing of the church, the sides and edges of these arches were originally accented by narrow, horizontal boards and small square shingles, respectively. Additionally, this drawing suggests that the gables were pedimented and contained ornamental stickwork while directly below, stucco or some other ornamental surface treatment accented the upper portion of the walls. Covered with rectangular wooden shingles, the belfry is essentially square and pierced on four sides by broad arched openings. The belfry's walls exhibit a subtle flaring - out below sill-level. Visible within the arched openings of the belfry is the church's original bell, installed during the fall of 1912.

Rising from a flared base, the steeple gradually narrows, culminating in a metal weather vane. A 1925 photograph of the church shows a weather vane that is different from the one currently rising from the top of the steeple. The steeple's original slates were replaced by asphalt shingles in 1944.

The East Elevation: Auditorium and Sunday School Addition.

The east or Florence Street facade is composed of the three-bay walls of the auditorium and Sunday school addition. Reading from south to north, the first floor exhibits fully enframed single and double windows containing diamond-shaped stained glass set within 1/1 and 2/2 wood sash. The windows extend from a continuous belt course to the lower of two string courses. Running between the two string courses are wood shingles. At the northern end of the auditorium's east facade is an entrance exhibiting a modern replacement door surmounted by a multi-pane transom. The entrances consist of simple pilasters and cornice-headed entablature. The entrance enframements evidently date to 1915. Located at the center of the auditorium's upper wall is a tall double stained glass window. A small diamond-shaped window is nestled between the pointed arches of these

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places  
Continuation SheetSection number 7 Page 4Roslindale Baptist Church  
Boston (Roslindale) (Suffolk Co.), Mass.

windows. This window is sheltered by a low, steeply pitched gable. The double window is flanked by tall and narrow square headed windows set within pointed arch enframements.

Above the entrance a multi-pane Palladian window extends from an ornamental panel to an arched molding sheltered by a small, low pitched gable. Flanking the Palladian window are windows containing 6/6 wood sash. Rising above a simple cornice is a low parapet which encloses the flat roof of the addition. The 1915 Sunday School addition's east wall is characterized by Georgian Revival surfaces treatments. Rooted in rational Renaissance and Classical architectural traditions, the elements of the Sunday School wing contrast to those of the original church, its Stick Style treatments and picturesque profiles derived from romantic, Medieval modes.

North Elevation: Sunday School Addition.

The four bay clapboard-clad north elevation is devoid of formal surface treatments with exception of a string course between the first and second floors and a molded cornice. Reading from east to west on both the first and second floors are single and three double windows. The single window contains 6/6 wood sash while the double windows contain 6/9 wood sash.

West Elevation: Sunday School Addition, Auditorium and Stair Hall Components

Reading from north to south, the 2-bay, clapboard- sheathed west facade of the Sunday school addition is completely devoid of formal surface treatments. A back door is situated near the northwest corner of this facade. This door is surmounted by a small square window. To the south of this entrance is a double window. The two standard size windows on the second floor contain 6/9 wood sash.

The west wall of the auditorium echoes that of the east elevation with the exception of four rather than three bays on the first floor. Reading from north to south, the first floor exhibits two single windows followed by double and single windows. These windows contain stained glass set within 2/2 wood sash. The first floor is set off from the third floor by a band of wood shingles running between wooden string courses. The upper walls of the auditorium exhibit a tall double stained glass window flanked by tall narrow stained glass windows. The center window culminates in pointed arches.

Nestled between these arches is a diamond-shaped window. Extending through the roof's cornice line, this window is sheltered by a small, low pitched gable. The flanking windows are square headed and set off by pointed arch moldings. The west wall of the stair hall component extends a few feet beyond the wall of the auditorium. Pierced by fully enframed double windows, the upper wall surface exhibits a tall segmental arch

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United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 5

Roslindale Baptist Church  
Boston (Roslindale) (Suffolk Co.), Mass.

stained glass window set within an arched surround. A raised sunburst motif is in evidence just below the arch of this surround. The west facade of the stair hall culminates in a steeply pitched gable.

Roslindale Baptist Church: Interior Plan Described

The south (main) facade's center entrance opens on to a rectangular vestibule. This vestibule's stairways provide access to the auditorium on the second floor and the fellowship room on the first floor. Flanking the main entrance, two flights of stairs ascend to the second floor stair hall. A short flight of stairs located on the east side of the vestibule descend to the segment of the first floor hall located within the bell tower. Entrances on the north wall of the first floor room provide access to the first floor's fellowship room. The fellowship room is a large rectangular space located directly below the auditorium.

Near the northwest corner of the fellowship room, a door opens into a kitchen while a door at the northeast corner provides access to the side or Florence Street entry. The kitchen and Florence Street entry represent the northern extent of the 1880s building. Abutting the north wall of the original church structure is the two-story 1915 Sunday school addition. Separating the small, secondary entry of the original church from the addition's first floor entrance hall is an iron, fire proof door. The addition's entrance hall contains a stairway leading to the second floor. A door on the entrance hall's west wall provides access to a rectangular chapel. Contiguous with the west wall of the chapel is a long rectangular room. The second floor of the Sunday school addition contains a stair hall, pastor's office and two classrooms which originally served as "Ladies Parlors".

Turning to the second floor of the 1880s block, it should be noted that 80% of this floor is occupied by the auditorium which is open to the rafters. Running the length of the auditorium's south wall is a stair hall. Two flights of stairs link this stair hall with the gallery.

The original church does not have a below-grade basement. The basement of the addition encompasses a stair hall and rest rooms at the north east corner while the furnace room occupies the north west corner. The southern half of the basement contains a large, unfinished rectangular storage area.

Interior Features: Main Vestibule, Stair Hall Component.

Representing an intermediary level between the stair halls of the first and second floors, the main vestibule's walls exhibits tongue and groove wainscoting. Stairways flanking the entrance ascend to the second floor hall. At the eastern end of the vestibule a short flight of stairs descend to the segment of the first floor hall located within the bell tower. This

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service****National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**Section number 7 Page 6Roslindale Baptist Church  
Boston (Roslindale) (Suffolk Co.), Mass.

stairway, like all of the stairways in the 1880s structure, retain turned balusters, molded railings and ball finial-topped newel posts.

First Floor Fellowship Room

To the north of the first floor stair hall is a large rectangular fellowship room. Located directly below the auditorium, the fellowship room retains hard wood floors, painted wainscoting and iron support poles. This room's stained glass windows contain diamond-shaped panes of a gold coloration. The fellowship room's ceiling is characterized by modern acoustic tiles interspersed with lighting panels.

The Kitchen

The kitchen at the north west corner of the fellowship room is very intact, retaining pairs of handsome wooden cabinets on its east and west walls. The walls of this room also exhibit tongue and groove wainscoting.

The Florence Street Entry

The Florence Street entry's historic fabric includes tongue and groove wainscoting. Still intact are the balusters and railing of a short flight of stairs that descend to the fellowship room.

The Second Floor Hall

This space is illuminated by stained glass windows located at the east, west and center of the south facade. Original tongue and groove wainscoting is still intact in the first floor hall. Three pairs of double doors open on to the auditorium, retaining late 19th century hinges and door knobs. In general, the Roslindale Baptist Church retains a high percentage of its original hardware.

The stair halls on the south side of the building possess a fine but endangered collection of nine colorful stained glass windows. These windows are of the painted rather than opalescent variety. The first floor windows contain diamond shaped panes of a gold coloration. The tall windows of the upper floors exhibit geometric designs rather than pictorial images. Typically, the windows of the stair hall and auditorium are characterized by vivid primary colors. In general most of the church's stained glass windows exhibit broken or missing panes and are devoid of protective covering. In addition to compromising the aesthetic qualities of the church, broken windows have caused heat loss and water damage and have resulted in an underutilization of the auditorium. Currently, worship services are held in the fellowship room.

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 7

Roslindale Baptist Church  
Boston (Roslindale) (Suffolk Co.), Mass.

The Auditorium

The auditorium contains pews ranged in a semicircular configuration facing an altar which is situated on a low wooden platform set within a broad proscenium arch. The platform exhibits rectangular panels with molded edges. The walls of the auditorium are plaster with walnut tongue and groove wainscoting. Exhibiting handsome carved curvilinear profiles, the pews appear to be original to the late 19th century.

Situated in the northeast corner of the auditorium is the original Cole & Woodbury pipe organ which shares a low platform with the choir. This area is enclosed by a solid paneled railing.

The six stained glass windows of the auditorium, like those located elsewhere in the building, are in need of cleaning and repair. The auditorium's east and west walls exhibit tall double windows flanked by single windows of nearly identical height. The center windows exhibit memorial inscriptions set within Colonial Revival scroll and urn enframements in the lower sash.

The upper sash exhibit circular medallions depicting images such as sheaves of wheat and castle-like structures. The multi-pane opaque glass of the flanking windows effectively contrast with the colorful glass of the peripheral glass borders and upper sash's medallions. The stained glass windows of the auditorium's west wall echo the configuration and coloration of the east wall's windows.

The auditorium's ceiling is in the form of a ribbed barrel vault. The lighting fixtures suspended from the ceiling appear to date to the mid-20th century and represent replacement features that complement rather than detract from the predominant late-19th century treatments. These fixtures are in the form of octagonal lanterns consisting of milk glass panels encased in a bronze framework exhibiting arched and oval shapes.

The Gallery

The gallery above the auditorium's south side retains its solid, serpentine railing, exhibiting recessed rectangular outer panels and moldings. Additionally, the gallery retains turned stairway elements and hardwood floor. Most of the gallery's pews are no longer in place. The ceiling above the south east corner of the gallery exhibits stains caused by water damage.

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 8

Roslindale Baptist Church  
Boston (Roslindale) (Suffolk Co.), Mass.

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### The Sunday School Addition.

The rooms of the 1915 Sunday School exhibit little in the way of noteworthy vintage features. Modern paneling and suspended ceilings are in evidence through out. The stair hall of the addition, however, retains newel posts , slat-work balusters and railings that reflect the influence of the Craftsman and Mission styles popular during the World War II era.

(end)

Roslindale Baptist Church

Name of Property

Suffolk, Mass.

County and State

**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.)

**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 # \_\_\_\_\_

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE

EDUCATION

RELIGION

SOCIAL HISTORY

**Period of Significance**

1884-1948

**Significant Dates**

1884-1889

1915

**Significant Person**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

**Cultural Affiliation**

**Architect/Builder**

Thomas Silloway, Henry McKay

Oscar A. Thayer

**Primary location of additional data:**

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

Name of repository: \_\_\_\_\_

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service****National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**Section number 8 Page 1Roslindale Baptist Church  
Boston (Roslindale) (Suffolk Co.), Mass.**8. Statement Of Significance**

The Roslindale Baptist Church is significant as Roslindale's oldest Baptist church structure. This wooden ecclesiastical building is an intact, well-rendered example of the Stick Style with an early 20th century Georgian Revival addition. Organized in 1875, the Roslindale Baptist Church was built in 1884-1889 by the Boston Architectural firm of Silloway and Mc Kay. Additionally, the Roslindale Baptist Church provides physical evidence of the late 19th century maturation of Roslindale Village, a community that began to develop as early as 1805. The Roslindale Baptist Church retains integrity of location, design, siting, materials, feeling, association, and workmanship and is of local significance, fulfilling criteria A and C of the National Register of Historic Places.

The Roslindale Baptist Church is located at 52 Cummins Highway, one block south of Roslindale Square. The community has never existed as an independent town, and its boundaries have been difficult to define. Roslindale is roughly bounded by Forest Hills Cemetery and the Arnold Arboretum to the north, Mount Hope and Calvary Cemeteries to the east, the Stony Brook Reservation to the south and the north slope of Bellevue Hill to the west. Roslindale, as part of West Roxbury, was annexed to the City of Boston on May 29, 1873. Built between 1885 and 1889, the Roslindale Baptist Church represents a late, architecturally significant addition to the formerly rural village that evolved around the crossroads at Washington and South Streets, later Roslindale Square.

The beginnings of the Roslindale Baptist Church may be traced to two sources: the Sabbath School of the South Evangelical Church of West Roxbury and the Jamaica Plain Baptist Society. The establishment of the Sabbath School on May 27, 1855 led to the formation of several churches in Roslindale, including Roslindale Baptist Church. The Sabbath School was located in the Primary School House No.5 on Poplar Street. During the fall of 1859, preaching services were added to those of the Sabbath School, and three years later, "The Roslindale Evangelical Union Society" was formed on August 4, 1862.

The members of this society tried to organize a Church of Christ or Union Church. For reasons that are unclear, this society was unsuccessful in its efforts to establish a church in Roslindale. Although these organizational efforts did not reach fruition, there remained individuals in the community seeking to fulfill their spiritual needs. In the spring of 1873, John Weld and Rev. H. F. H. Miller, at the behest of Baptist families in Roslindale village, sought advice from members of the Jamaica Plain Baptist Church. The Jamaica Plain church generously offered to defray the expenses of the fledgling Roslindale Baptist Society for the first month, with several members pledging further financial assistance. The first Baptist preaching in Roslindale occurred in the upper class-room of the Florence Street School on June 1, 1873. The first preacher was Dr. Samuel F. Smith, author of the song "America".

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places  
Continuation SheetSection number 8 Page 2Roslindale Baptist Church  
Boston (Roslindale) (Suffolk Co.), Mass.

A Sabbath School was formed on July 6, 1873, with eleven members present. In the fall of 1873, West Roxbury, having been annexed to Boston, the city authorities refused to permit the further use of the school building for religious purposes. Worship services were conducted in "the small white house of Amasa Wood" which stood on the corner lot directly opposite the main facade of the present church. On March 13, 1875, a meeting was held at Wood's home for the purpose of forming a church. On March 31, 1875, representatives from seven neighboring Baptist Churches attended a council "to consider the advisability of recognizing the infant church" and voted to recognize Roslindale Baptist Church.

From 1874 until 1880, the worship services of the Roslindale Baptist society were conducted in Association Hall (no longer extant), a meeting room on the second floor of "a large building" that had been moved from West Roxbury to Roslindale in 1866. Association Hall's interior was described as "a low studded room reached by two flights of stairs, heated by a stove and lighted by kerosene. The floor was so uneven that all the legs of a settee could not reach it at the same time and so slippery with dancing wax that one needed to pay careful heed to his steps. The windows and blinds rattled with every passing breeze, and ventilation was an unknown quantity."

In May, 1877, George W. Thomas, a Newton Seminary student, was engaged to succeed Dr. Smith. Under Thomas' inspiring leadership the congregation expanded and financial aid was secured from the Massachusetts Baptist Convention. On May 12, 1879, the church was incorporated under the Statutes of Massachusetts with the following officers: Treasurer, Mr. James Charlton; Clerk, Mr. John Weld, Executive Committee, Mr. B. F. Pike, Mr. A. F. Sherman, and Mr. John M. Shaw. Following the untimely death of pastor Thomas in April, 1881 there followed a three - year period without permanent pastoral leadership for the congregation. The commencement of the five-year pastorate of John Monroe Wyman in April, 1884 heralded a new era of stability and expansion for the church.

In March, 1885, the Roslindale Baptists purchased the 6,344 square foot lot at the corner of Ashland Street (Cummins Highway) and Florence Street for \$1,000.00 from Mrs. Susan L. Barton. The church was built on the large side yard located to the south of the Barton house.

Cummins Highway was originally called Ashland Avenue and later Ashland Street. Running from 726 South Street at Poplar Street to Florence Street, Ashland Street was set out between 1843 and 1848.

Comprised of prosperous local tradesmen, artisans and a farmer, the building committee of the Roslindale Baptist Church hired the Boston architectural firm of Silloway and McKay to provide a design. Contractor Alexander Rogers built the church.

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United States Department of the Interior  
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places  
Continuation SheetSection number 8 Page 3Roslindale Baptist Church  
Boston (Roslindale) (Suffolk Co.), Mass.

The architectural partnership of Thomas W. Silloway and Henry L. McKay, was based at Green Street, Cambridge. By 1886, their office is listed at 54 Devonshire Street, Boston. Little is known of their work with the exception of a Middlesex County building erected at an unspecified date in East Cambridge between the Women's Prison and Hospital. While still in partnership with McKay, Silloway participated in reconstruction work in Charleston, South Carolina following the earthquake of 1886. The Roslindale Baptist Church was completed in 1889 shortly after the demise of the partnership.

Thomas W. Silloway (1828- 1910) was an important and prolific architect of New England ecclesiastical and public buildings during the second half of the 19th century. Silloway is credited with the design of an estimated four hundred churches during his long and distinguished career. A native of Newburyport, Massachusetts, Mr. Silloway moved to Boston in 1851, studied for the ministry, and was ordained a Unitarian clergyman in 1862. The year before his ordination he designed the Cambridge Street Universalist Church in Allston-Brighton, and also served as minister of this church. Silloway's ornate Queen Anne house is still standing at 40 Gordon Street in Allston Heights.

Even before his ordination, Silloway pursued an architectural career that would supersede his ministry by 1867. As early as 1854, Silloway designed the Town Hall of Milford, MA. During the mid-1850s, he remodeled the Revere Meeting House and Cambridge Universalist Church, now located at 8 Inman Street. Additionally, the Church of the Unity, 91 West Newton Street, Boston's South End, is credited to Silloway. Further afield he provided designs for buildings at Goddard Seminary at Barre Vermont (1860s and 1870s) and in 1872 was hired to design buildings at Buchtel College in Akron, Ohio. He reportedly was involved in the design of the Vermont State House at Montpelier Vermont. During the 1870s, Silloway was engaged in a number of church projects including The Pilgrim Church at 35 Magazine Street, Cambridge (1870-1872, with J. H. Sparrow, architect), the remodeling of Roxbury's Ruggles Street Baptist Church c.1877 and the vestry addition to the Prospect Congregational Church at 99 Prospect Street, Cambridge in 1879-1880.

After the Silloway and McKay firm disbanded c.1887, Silloway set up his own office at Park Square, Boston. Late examples of his work included the church and parsonage for the Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church (1898-1900) at 85 West Newton Street, Boston and the Jenkins Memorial Library, North Conway, New Hampshire(1900-1901). Silloway died at Allston Heights in March,1910.

Henry L. Mc Kay's career is considerably less well documented than that of Thomas W. Silloway. Evidently active during the 1880s and 1890s, McKays church projects included the Charles River Baptist Church in Cambridge; First Baptist Church, Malden, MA;

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places  
Continuation SheetSection number 8 Page 4Roslindale Baptist Church  
Boston (Roslindale) (Suffolk Co.), Mass.

Dearborn Street Church, Roxbury; and the Prospect Hill Congregational Church in Somerville (construction dates unspecified). McKay's residential work included a house for H. Holloran, Ward Street, Roxbury (c.1888), and a seven-story apartment hotel building at 186-188 Commonwealth Avenue (1891).

That Silloway and McKay's chose a Stick Style design for the Roslindale Baptist Church may lie with Silloway's predilection for picturesque styles that were au courant at the start of his career during the 1850s; he may have deemed the Stick Style sufficiently picturesque so as to compliment the Roslindale Baptist Church's still rural surroundings. Popular between the mid-1860s to c. 1880, the Stick Style would have been viewed by critics as a retardataire architectural mode by the time of the church's completion in 1889.

The Stick Style is associated with the vernacular architecture of American suburbs and countryside rather than the academic church design of urban centers which relied on masonry materials and variants of Renaissance Revival and especially the English Gothic Revival style. In part, the importance of the Roslindale Baptist Church lies in the fact that so few ecclesiastical buildings designed in this style were built and/or survive within Boston and vicinity. One of the rare surviving Boston Stick Style church buildings is St. John's Episcopal Parish House on Devens Street, Charlestown. Designed as a chapel by Ware and Van Brunt during the early 1870s it was hoisted on top of a brick first floor during the early 1900s.

Marcus Whiffen in American Architecture Since 1780, A Guide to the Styles explains that "Stick Style buildings have tall proportions with high, steep roofs, frequency of complex plan and irregular silhouette...Diagonal 'stickwork' is one of the most characteristic features of the style. Walls may be faced with vertical boards and battens or (in the final development of the style) with horizontal clapboards having an overlay of other boards - vertical and horizontal, and sometimes diagonal." Initially discussed and illustrated in the works of landscape architect and critic Andrew Jackson Downing during the 1840s at the Cottage Style and Swiss Cottage Style, the full-blown Stick Style emerged during the mid 1860s in the designs of Gervase Wheeler and Richard Morris Hunt. According to Lester Walker in American Shelter, "Downing's insistence on 'truthfulness' in wooden buildings had caused many architects and builders to begin to expose important balloon frame members on the facade of their structures."

British architect Gervase Wheeler's illustrations of Stick Style residences appear in Downing's Rural Homes series published in eight editions between 1851 and 1869. Together with Downing's essays, Wheeler's drawings had a considerable influence on the work of American architects and builders. Richard Morris Hunt, a contemporary of Wheeler, designed Griswold House, in Newport, Rhode Island, in 1862. An early, high-

(continued)

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service****National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**Section number 8 Page 5Roslindale Baptist Church  
Boston (Roslindale) (Suffolk Co.), Mass.

profile example of the Stick Style, Hunt brilliantly illustrated his architectural mode's potential for picturesque effects via his incorporation of Medieval Half-Timbered, Early Gothic Revival, Carpenter Gothic and Swiss Cottage Styles into a single design. All things considered, the historical significance of the Roslindale Baptist Church is inextricably bound to the fact that it is a relatively "pure" example of the Stick Style created at a time when the popularity of the style was well into its decline.

Returning to the history of the church, the cornerstone was laid November 28, 1884. The exterior of the building was completed and the vestry made ready for occupancy June 1, 1885, at a cost of \$8,400 (evidently the vestry is the first floor fellowship room currently used for worship services).

On June 14, 1888, the Church voted to authorize the completion of the Silloway and McKay-designed auditorium. Hersee Brothers were awarded the contract for carpenter work. The organ was built by Cole and Woodbury at a cost of \$1000. Dedicated on June 17, 1889, the total cost of the Roslindale Baptist Church's building and land was \$17,000. The Massachusetts Baptist Convention contributed \$2,166 toward the construction, Jamaica Plain industrialist Benjamin F. Sturtevant, inventor of the Sturtevant blower, gave \$1700 towards the Baptists' building campaign.

In the fall of 1890, a bell was placed in the belfry. The five hundred dollar cost of the bell was funded by Samuel F. Dearborn in memory of Deacon John F. Weld.

The early years of the church coincided with a period of unprecedented expansion of transportation networks in Roslindale and West Roxbury with the expansion of streetcar lines (1896) and the completion of the extension of the elevated railroad from Roxbury's Dudley Station to Forest Hills.

Two weeks after the Roslindale Baptist Church's completion, J. M. Wyman, resigned as pastor of the church on July 7, 1889, accepting a ministry in Augusta, Maine. Reverend Wyman was succeeded by Rev. Erwin Dennett of Franklin, MA. Between 1895 and 1905 additional land at the northwest corner of the lot was purchased resulting an increase in size from 6,344 to 11,530 sq. ft.

During the first quarter of the 20th century, the Roslindale Baptist Church reached out to the Roslindale community, expanding upon its role as a provider of spiritual, social and educational services to the community. On January 20, 1902, forty-two men met in the vestry to form the "Men's League". Evidently the older members acted as mentors to young men who were "training to take an active part in the civic and religious affairs of the community". By 1912, the Men's League had grown to a membership of 178.

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**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service****National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**Section number 8 Page 6Roslindale Baptist Church  
Boston (Roslindale) (Suffolk Co.), Mass.

On October 31, 1910, Rev. Floyd L. Carr began his extraordinarily productive seven - year pastorate. In 1911, the mortgage was paid off, the rectory sold and a new mortgage of \$6,000 was placed on the Church property. Under Carr's leadership, new parishioners joined the church. In 1912, the total number of parishioners was 467 and 410 children attended the Sabbath School.

The growth of the congregation necessitated the construction of an addition to the back of the church to house the Sunday School and social programs. Built in 1915 at an estimated cost of \$8,000.00, the new wing's first floor contained the Sunday School named Weld Hall in honor of one of the Church's principal founders, John Weld. The Ladies's Parlors (also used as two class rooms) were located on the floor above. The new addition enabled the church to host community youth groups such as the Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts, Camp Fire Girls and Pathfinders as well as religious organizations encompassing the Men's Union, the Women's Society, the Christian Endeavor Society and Hearthstone Class for young married couples.

The Roslindale Baptist Church's Sunday School addition represents the work of West Roxbury architect Oscar A. Thayer. Little information exists regarding Thayer's architectural career which spanned the first half of the 20th century. Despite the longevity of his career very little information has been uncovered identifying examples of his work. The Boston Public Library architect's files only listing for Oscar A. Thayer's work is a two-family wooden dwelling on Upton Street near Grant Street, Allston that he designed for Martin G. and Martha Johnson in 1898.

By 1925, the church had a membership of 492 and a Sunday School enrollment of 464, including a primary (or nursery) department of 76. In April, 1929, the way was paved for women to take a leadership role within the church. At that time it was proposed that Deaconess's have the same powers and duties as Deacons. By January, 1932, the church membership numbered 567. During the Great Depression the budgets of the church's social programs were drastically cut, never to recover to pre-Depression levels of funding and participation.

Between 1920 and 1945 the church facility was subject to various additions, alterations and improvements. During the early 1920s, a new lighting system was installed in the auditorium, and changes made in the pulpit and reading desk. The old settees in the vestry were replaced by new chairs, and a new piano was placed in the auditorium, gifts of the Women's Society. A piano was purchased for Weld Hall, and the room was attractively furnished with curtains, pictures and a clock. In 1926, the organ was electrified at a cost of \$338.00.

(continued)

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service****National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**Roslindale Baptist Church  
Boston (Roslindale) (Suffolk Co.), Mass.Section number 8 Page 7

During the early 1930s, "the choir was rebuilt, and the Pulpit desk and platform made more attractive." In 1941 the Sanctuary, hall and vestibule were redecorated although the details of this redecoration are not elaborated upon in church histories.

Originally covered with slate shingles, the church's roof and spire were covered with asphalt shingles in 1937 and 1944, respectively.

After World War II the Church continued its out-reach to the youth of the community. In 1949 Maurice McFarlane, a student at Andover-Newton Seminary, conducted successful fellowship programs for the youth of the community. In 1950, the Church celebrated its 75th anniversary with a membership of 550 and a Church School with 133 students. For many years the Church depended on volunteers from the congregation and youth workers hired by the Board of Christian Education to redecorate the building. During the early fall of 1949, the Vestry was completely redecorated and a new lighting system installed in the basement. These improvements were made possible by the volunteer efforts of the men of the congregation.

In 1953, the congregation embarked on an ambitious fund raising campaign called "Program of Progress". This program raised \$15,000.00 that was utilized to "completely redecorate the church inside and out." The exterior of the building was painted for the sum of \$1,190.00. The upper hall at the Pastor's study and stairway and lower hall was refinished. A partition of double thickness was installed at a cost of \$415.00 in Weld Hall, to create a primary and nursery room. The stained glass in the sanctuary was repaired at a cost of \$400.00. During the mid-1950s, the Sanctuary was painted pastel green. New red carpeting was installed over the Sanctuary floor and new pulpit furniture and draperies were purchased to enliven this space. Despite these renovations to the Sanctuary's interior, the basic form of this space has remained unchanged and a high percentage of original woodwork, furniture and stained glass is still in evidence.

During the late 1950s, a Boy Scout Troop was reorganized under the leadership of Rev. Arthur L. Hanson. Additionally, Rev. Hanson organized a program of activities for primary school children called "Fun for All." By the early 1960s, the membership of the church was in decline, a trend that has only recently begun to reverse itself. The Roslindale Baptist Church's congregation became largely a church of senior citizens without the financial means to continue the various spiritual and social outreach programs for which the church had become widely known. This reversal of fortune occurred, in part, because of Reverend Hanson's untimely death in 1960 at the age of 44. Reportedly, a number of parishioners lost faith in the church's ability to carry on without their beloved leader. The loss of membership resulted in a frustrating lack of finances. Robert E. Heskett, began his six-year ministry in October, 1963. Rev. Heskett worked tirelessly to "try and improve the growing apathy" and bleak financial situation. Despite having to

(continued)

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service****National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**Section number 8 Page 8Roslindale Baptist Church  
Boston (Roslindale) (Suffolk Co.), Mass.

work as a part-time teacher in the Boston Public School system, Rev. Heskett tended to the spiritual needs of the congregation with the help of youth workers from public and divinity schools. Mr. Heskett was the first Pastor who acknowledged and practiced psychotherapy, both individual and group. He initiated programs in which groups met to discuss common problems. Due to financial inability to support a full time minister, Rev. Heskett resigned in September, 1969, to assume pastoral duties in New Bedford.

By the time of the Roslindale Baptist Church's 100th Anniversary in 1975, the membership numbered 112, with two thirds of this group over the age of 75. Under the leadership of Reverend Robert Stetson the Roslindale Baptist Church continues to meet the spiritual needs of an aging congregation and financial challenges faced by an urban American ministry at the turn-of-the-millennium.

(end)

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 9 Page 1

Roslindale Baptist Church  
Boston (Roslindale) (Suffolk Co.), Mass.

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

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(continued)

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

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 9 Page 2

Roslindale Baptist Church  
Boston (Roslindale) (Suffolk Co.), Mass.

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

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 10 Page 1

Roslindale Baptist Church  
Boston (Roslindale) (Suffolk Co.), Mass.

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**10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundaries of the Roslindale Baptist Church run west from Florence Street continuing along Cummins Highway to the boundary line shared with the house at 48 Cummins Highway. Turning northward, the church's boundary continues in an irregular line as far as the old Barton house at 70 Florence Street. Continuing eastward to Florence Street, this boundary turns south to the point of commencement at the north west corner of Florence Street and Cummins Highway .

Verbal Boundary Justification

The boundaries as nominated are the current and historic boundaries of the Roslindale Baptist Church, since its construction in 1884-1889.

(end)

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Roslindale Baptist Church  
Boston (Roslindale) (Suffolk Co.), Mass.

Section number photos Page \_\_\_\_\_

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## PHOTOGRAPHS

Photographer: Edward Gordon, 1998  
Negatives in possession of photographer.

1. Corner of Cummins Highway and Florence Street, camera facing N
2. South facade, camera facing NW
3. Interior of auditorium, facing NE

(end)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY Roslindale Baptist Church  
NAME:

MULTIPLE  
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: MASSACHUSETTS, Suffolk

DATE RECEIVED: 10/05/98 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 10/20/98  
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 11/05/98 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 11/19/98  
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 98001330

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 11.5.98 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

RECOM./CRITERIA \_\_\_\_\_

REVIEWER \_\_\_\_\_ DISCIPLINE \_\_\_\_\_

TELEPHONE \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

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



ROSLINDALE BAPTIST CHURCH  
BOSTON (SUFFOLK CO) MA

ED GORDON photo 1998

view looking N

PHOTO 1



ROSLINDALE BAPTIST CHURCH  
BOSTON (SUFFOLK CO) MASS

ED GORDON photo 1998

View looking NW

PHOTO 2



One Lord, One Faith, One Baptism

RUSLINDALE BAPTIST CHURCH

BOSTON (SUFFOLK CO) MA

ED GORDON 1998 PHOTO

INTERIOR OF AUDITORIUM

Photo 3



*Roslindale Baptist Church*  
**Boston South**  
 MASSACHUSETTS  
*52 Cummins Highway*  
 1:25 000-scale metric  
 topographic map  
*Roslindale MA*

7.5 X 15 MINUTE QUADRANGLE SHOWING

- Contours and elevations in meters
- Highways, roads and other manmade structures
- Water features
- Woodland areas
- Geographic names

GEOLOGICAL SURVEY  
 1987

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 1987. Supersedes Newton and Boston South 1:25,000-scale maps dated 1970.

Selected hydrographic data compiled from NOS charts 13270 (1982) and 13272 (1982). This information is not intended for navigational purposes.

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

10,000-foot grid ticks based on Massachusetts coordinate system, established under 1927 North American Datum.

To place on the projected North American Datum 1983, move the projection lines 6 meters south and 42 meters west as shown by dashed corner ticks. There may be private subdivisions within the boundaries of the National 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  
 DEPTH CURVES AND SOUNDINGS IN METERS  
 DATUM IS MEAN LOW WATER  
 THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE TWO DATUMS IS VARIABLE  
 SHORELINE SHOWN REPRESENTS THE APPROXIMATE LINE OF MEAN HIGH WATER  
 THE MEAN RANGE OF TIDE IS APPROXIMATELY 2.5 METERS

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS

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

UTM grid convergence (GN and magnetic declination) (M) Diagram is approximate

ADJOINING MAPS	1	2	3
1	1	2	3
2	4	5	6
3	7	8	9

1 Maynard  
 2 Boston North  
 3 Lynn  
 4 Framingham  
 5 Hull  
 6 Melrose  
 7 Needham  
 8 Weymouth



**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 gage, narrow gage	
Bridge, drawbridge	
Footbridge, overpass, underpass	
Build-up area: only selected landmark buildings shown	
House, farm, church, school, large structure	
Boundary:	
National, with monument	
State	
County, parish	
Civil township, precinct, district	
Incorporated city, village, town	
National or State reservation: small part	
Land grant with monument: land 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	
Campground, picnic area; U. S. location monument	
Well, water, well, spring	
Mine shaft; prospect; shaft or ore	
Control: horizontal station; vertical station; spot elevation	
Contours: index; intermediate; supplementary; depression	
Disturbed surface: strip mine, lava, sand	
Sounding depth curve	
Perennial lake and stream; intermittent lake and stream	
Rapids, large and small; falls, large and small	
Submerged marsh; marsh, swamp	
Land subject to controlled inundation, wetland	
Scrub; mangrove	
Orchard; vineyard	

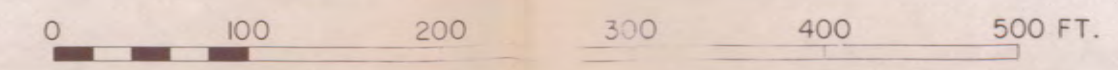
*Roslindale Baptist Church, 52 Cummins Highway, Roslindale, MA*

CITY OF BOSTON  
TOPOGRAPHIC AND PLANIMETRIC SURVEY



Prepared under the direction of the Boston Redevelopment Authority  
Control based on U.S.C. & G.S. and the Mass. Geodetic Survey  
Mapped by Lockwood, Kessler & Bartlett, Inc.  
Photography by Lockwood, Kessler & Bartlett, Inc., Dec. 1964, Apr. 1965  
North American Datum 1927, Vertical Datum Based on Boston City Base  
Property Data derived from City of Boston Assessors Plans.

*Roslindale Baptist Church  
52 Cummins Hwy, Roslindale, Boston, Suffolk  
Detail of BRA map*



CONTOUR INTERVAL 5'  
500 FOOT GRID BASED  
ON MASSACHUSETTS COORDINATE SYSTEM, MAINLAND ZONE  
THE LAST THREE DIGITS OF THE LOT NUMBERS ARE OMITTED

SHEET INDEX

13N-6E	13N-7E	13N-8E
12N-6E	12N-7E	12N-8E
11N-6E	11N-7E	11N-8E

BOSTON  
MASSACHUSETTS  
1965



**The Commonwealth of Massachusetts**

September 29, 1998

William Francis Galvin, Secretary of the Commonwealth  
Massachusetts Historical Commission

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:

Roslindale Baptist Church, 52 Cummins Highway, Boston (Roslindale),  
(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,

Betsy Friedberg, National Register Director  
Massachusetts Historical Commission

cc: Matthew Kiefer, Acting Chair, Boston Landmarks Commission  
Edward Gordon, Preservation Consultant  
Hon. Thomas M. Menino, Mayor, City of Boston  
Maura Fitzpatrick Sklarz, Boston Landmarks Commission  
Rev. Robert Stetson, Roslindale Baptist Church