

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only

received **MAY 23 1983**

date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

**1. Name**

historic First Universalist Church

and/or common <sup>use this</sup> Greek Orthodox Church (preferred)

**2. Location**

street & number 735 Massachusetts Avenue

N/A not for publication

city, town Arlington

N/A vicinity of

state Massachusetts

code 025

county Middlesex

code 017

**3. Classification**

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> <u>N/A</u> process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

**4. Owner of Property**

name St. Athanasius the Great Greek Orthodox Church

street & number 735 Massachusetts Avenue

city, town Arlington

N/A vicinity of

state Massachusetts

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Middlesex County Courthouse - South District Registry of Deeds

street & number 208 Cambridge Street

city, town East Cambridge

state Massachusetts

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**

title Inventory of the Historic Assets of the Commonwealth#531

has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date 1981

federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records Massachusetts Historical Commission

city, town Boston

state MA

## 7. Description

Greek Orthodox Church, 735 Mass Ave Arlington, MA

<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> original site
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> moved date 1860
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		(several feet on original lot)

### Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The St. Athanasius The Great, Greek Orthodox Church is located on Massachusetts Avenue, a major thoroughfare, in the center of the town of Arlington, Massachusetts.

When originally constructed in 1841 for the First Universalist Church of Arlington the wood-frame building was a modest box-like structure, 56' x 46', designed in the Greek Revival style and painted white. Unencumbered by neighboring structures, the church was visible from all sides. Early views show a row of mature elm and maple trees lining Massachusetts Ave. The trees are long since gone and later 19th century infill construction adjacent to the church now focus emphasis on the main facade.

The present elaborate Romanesque Revival appearance of the church is the result of alterations made in 1860 after the designs of Boston area architect, Thomas W. Silloway. Revocations included replacement of the original simple tower with an ornate three stage tower and 90' high spire; relocation of the structure back from Massachusetts Avenue on its lot and addition of a six foot high raised basement and the present two stage projecting frontispiece. Due to structural damage incurred in the 1938 hurricane the spire portion of the tower was subsequently removed and the present seven foot high dome constructed. The remainder of the tower's ornamentation, however, remains intact.

The main body of the church is rectangular in plan, 4-bays wide on its side elevations, rises 2-stories from its raised basement with horizontal sheathing at the basement level and clapboards above. Architectural detailing includes a full entablature with dentils, channelled corner pilasters (original) and drip hood mouldings and bracketted sills at the windows (1860 additions). A low gable roof covers the building.

The 2-story, 3-bay projecting frontispiece repeats the major trim elements of the main body in more ostentatious and heavier manner including a full entablature with a raking modillion course and convex frieze. The shallow central bay is composed of monumental composite columns, rising from panelled pedestals and supporting the entablature and pediment. Filling the space created by this frame, the double door entrance consists of a 28-panelled rectangular section surrounded by an eared architrave, surmounted by a circular light trimmed with a heavy projecting moulding and crowned with an scroll-like acanthus leaf motif. The flushboarded flanking bays have bold channelled corner pilasters, also rising from panelled pedestals, and are marked at mid-height by a flat circular motif.

Above the frontispiece rises an elaborately decorated wood tower constructed in three stages. The first stage is square in plan on a short clapboarded base. The front and side faces display large blind oculi infilled with a painted Greek cross surrounded by scroll moulding and framed by corner quoins and an irregular overhanging cornice. The second stage belfry is identical on each face; mirroring in smaller scale the central entrance bay. An arched opening with fixed louvers spanned at the base by a low balustrade is flanked by columns supporting a full entablature and pediment. The second stage houses a bronze bell, exceeding four feet

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National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

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received

date entered

Continuation sheet Greek Orthodox Church Item number 7 Page 1

in diameter and cast in 1867 by Henry M. Hooper Company of Boston. Sumptuous detailing characterizes the octagonal third stage with arched windows openings separated by columns and finished with a complex entablature with rows of dentils and cables. Finally, the simple flushboarded dome, seven feet high, is crowned with an undecorated wooden cross.

The interior of the church is simple in plan and detailing. In 1926 a brick one-story parish house was added to the rear of the church.

Although the Greek Orthodox Church has been altered and moved, these changes occurred 123 years ago and have greatly added to the architectural significance of the structure. It will soon undergo a major stabilization funded by a Community Development Block Grant and private donations.

Part 8 Continued

After examination by a committee appointed for the purpose of choosing a new minister, and which met at the hotel (Arlington House, now gone), Mr. Frederic H. Hedge was chosen minister. Hedge, a Unitarian, was not popular with the Universalists, who decried his liberal views, echewing those of Rev. Mr. Fiske. Hedge struggled to keep the congregation together without success. He resigned under pressure in 1835. Hedge's successor, Mr. David Damon, himself a Unitarian, could not heal the rift and in 1840 the Universalists, after a bitter dispute as to which faction should stay and which should leave, departed to found their own parish. Changing their name from Universalists to Orthodox Congregationalists, or Trinitarians, they acquired land opposite Academy Street on Massachusetts Avenue, and set about constructing their own church structure consecrated January 20, 1841, which survives to this day (in somewhat altered form) as the Greek Orthodox Church of St. Anthanasius The Great (subject of this nomination).

The four separate sub-units of the original First Parish Church co-existed in relative harmony for the duration of the 19th century, a period of relative colorless religious observance in the Town. The Baptists went on to construct several buildings, the most recent of which was built in 1903 and occupies a site at the corner of Ramsdell Court and Mass. Avenue and Pleasant Street (destroyed by fire 1975). During its history a succession of distinguished ministers preached from its pulpit. The first of these was Josiah Crosby Waldo (1841 to 1847). While it is not necessary to recite the list, it is interesting to note that in keeping with the humanist views of the sect, these men all played civic roles in their days, from editing newspapers to serving on School Committees, trusteeships of universities (William S. Gibbs, Tufts University 1860-66), to activity in the movement of Christian Science (Harry Hay Fisher 1893-1909).

The Greek Orthodox congregation which took over the church structure in 1964, like many sects before it, had never had its own place of worship in Arlington. Rather families of Greek extraction had worshipped at 14 Magazine Street in

## 8. Significance

Greek Orthodox Church, 735 Mass Ave, Arlington, MA

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

**Specific dates** 1841 original **Builder/Architect** Thomas W. Silloway (1860 alterations)  
1860 altered construction

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Saint Athanasius The Great Greek Orthodox Church possesses integrity of location, materials, workmanship, association and design since 1860. Although moved in 1860, it was simply relocated back several yards from Massachusetts Avenue on its original lot. It stands as an unusual and outstanding local example of Romanesque Revival architectural design and continues to reflect its long association with the historical development of Arlington. Thus the Greek Orthodox Church meets criteria A and C of the National Register of Historic Places.

Conformity in religious matters was demanded of the earliest settlers in Menotomy (later West Cambridge and now current day Arlington). Any "free man" must have been "an orthodox member of the church, at least 20 years old, worth L200, and taken an oath to be a true and faithful subject and yield assistance and support to the church and the Commonwealth". For a full 150 years, between 1630 and 1780, the "First Parish" was the only recognized, legally sanctioned congregation in Arlington. Until, 1732 the house of worship itself was in present day Harvard Square. That year, after over a decade of petitions, Menotomy was granted its own "2nd Precinct" parish, which in its turn usurped the fidelity of all residents of the Village who were compelled to attend worship service except for "just cause".

The first church structure in Arlington was constructed by the residents of Menotomy and first opened for services in February of 1735. It measured 36' x 46' and contained 18 pews. Seating priority was a function of wealth and prestige within the Village, contributions to the minister's annual stipend, and "age and honor" in that order. The 2nd Precinct Parish was formally organized in 1739 and the Reverend Samuel Cooke of Cambridge was installed as minister.

By the year 1790, the Baptists who had been agitating for religious autonomy since the early 18th century had finally broken with the First Parish Church and established their own meeting house. Those remaining in the "mother church", were by no means in complete harmony with each other. The rigid Calvinism which had endured for almost two centuries in the precinct of West Cambridge was subject to re-examination by the congregation during the period of enlightenment in the 1820's. Upon the retirement of the Reverend Thaddeus Fiske on April 13, 1828, the sentiments for and against a more liberal pastorate were so intense that Fiske's sermon was distributed in print; he was not allowed to deliver it personally.

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

Arlington Advocate. News articles, Aug. 21, 1896; Jan. 29, 1916; Aug. 6, 1920; Jan. 1, 1926; July 23, 1926; Oct. 6, 1938; Oct. 21, 1938.  
Arlington Celebrates the Growing Years 1875-1975. Arlington: 1975  
Arlington Historical Commission. Mill Brook Valley A Historical and Architectural Survey Arlington, MA 1976.

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property .28 acres

Quadrangle name Lexington

Quadrangle scale 7.5 Minute

UTM References

1:25000

A 

1	1	9
3	2	2
4	9	0

4	6	9	8	0	1	6	1	0
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

  
Zone Easting Northing

B 


  
Zone Easting Northing

C 


  
E 


  
G 


D 


  
F 


  
H 


### Verbal boundary description and justification

This nomination includes the lot presently and historically associated with the Church  
Please see attached assessor's map.

### List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state N/A code county code

state code county code

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Virginia A. Fitch, Preservation Planner with Frederick W. Lyman, American Landmarks Inc. and Jeffery A. Luxenberg, City Planning and Urban Design Consultant

organization Massachusetts Historical Commission date February, 1983

street & number 294 Washington Street telephone 727-8470

city or town Boston state Massachusetts

## 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national  state  local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature Patricia Z. Weslowski

title State Historic Preservation Officer

date 4/28/83

For NPS use only

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

Entered in the  
National Register

date 6/23/83

for Allores Byers  
Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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

**National Register of Historic Places  
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date entered

Continuation sheet Greek Orthodox Church

Item number 8

Page 2

Cambridge for many years. The first minister of the Arlington Church was the Reverend Arthur Koutinas who served for ten years until 1974. Upon his retirement the membership chose the Reverend A.T. Metazas, who has served until the present.

Architecturally, the Greek Orthodox Church has been noted as one of the finest mid to late 19th century Romanesque Revival churches in the Boston area (see Historic and Archaeological Resources of the Boston Area, MHC 1982, p. 158). The quality of its architectural design and detail are attributed to a leading local ecclesiastical architect and former Universalist pastor Thomas W. Silloway (1828 to 1910), and thought to have been produced at the turning mill of Cyrus Cutter which once stood on Mill Street in Arlington (Arlington Advocate, October 27, 1938, p.8). An early 20th century historian remarked that its elaborate tower and spire have "been admitted (as)... one of the finest specimens of its kind in Boston or vicinity". (Parker, 1907, p.230).

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

Greek Orthodox Church  
Middlesex County  
MASSACHUSETTS

MAY 23 1983

Working No. \_\_\_\_\_  
Fed. Reg. Date: 2-7-84  
Date Due: 6/23/83 - 7/7/83  
Action:  ACCEPT 6/23/83  
 RETURN \_\_\_\_\_  
Entered in the National Register  REJECT \_\_\_\_\_  
Federal Agency: \_\_\_\_\_

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

Substantive Review:  sample  request  appeal  NR decision

Reviewer's comments: \_\_\_\_\_

Recom./Criteria \_\_\_\_\_  
Reviewer \_\_\_\_\_  
Discipline \_\_\_\_\_  
Date \_\_\_\_\_  
 see continuation sheet

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

1. Name

2. Location

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
	Public Acquisition	Accessible	

4. Owner of Property

5. Location of Legal Description

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

7. Description

Condition:		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

## 8. Significance

Period \_\_\_\_\_ Area of Significance—Check and justify below

Specific dates \_\_\_\_\_ Builder/Architect \_\_\_\_\_

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

- 301 8 S YAM
- 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

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## 10. Geographical Data

Acres of nominated property \_\_\_\_\_  
Quadrangle name \_\_\_\_\_  
USGS References \_\_\_\_\_

Verbal boundary description and justification \_\_\_\_\_

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## 11. Form Prepared By

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## 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 \_\_\_\_\_

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## 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



Greek Orthodox Church  
Arlington, MA

PHOTOGRAPH IDENTIFICATION

Community: Arlington, MA

Photographer: Jeffery A.  
Luxenberg

Date of Photo: 10/16/80

Location of Neg: Arlington

Historical Commission

View: Front (South) & West  
Elevations

PHOTO #1 of 5.



Greek Orthodox Church  
Arlington, MA

PHOTOGRAPH IDENTIFICATION

Community: Arlington, MA

Photographer: Jeffery A.  
Luxenberg

Date of Photo: 10/16/80

Location of Neg.: Arlington  
Historical Commission

View: Interior (looking  
South)

PHOTO #2 of 5.



Greek Orthodox Church

Arlington, MA

PHOTOGRAPH IDENTIFICATION

Community: Arlington, MA

Photographer: Jeffery A.  
Luxenberg

Date of Photo: 10/16/80

Location of Neg.: Arlington  
Historical Commission

View: Interior(looking North)

PHOTO #3 of 5.



Greek Orthodox Church  
Arlington, MA

PHOTOGRAPH IDENTIFICATION

Community: Arlington, MA

Photographer: Jeffery A.  
Luxenberg

Date of Photo: 10/16/80

Location of Neg.: Arlington  
Historical Commission

View: West Elevation

PHOTO #4 of 5.



Greek Orthodox Church

Arlington, MA

PHOTOGRAPH IDENTIFICATION

Community: Arlington, MA

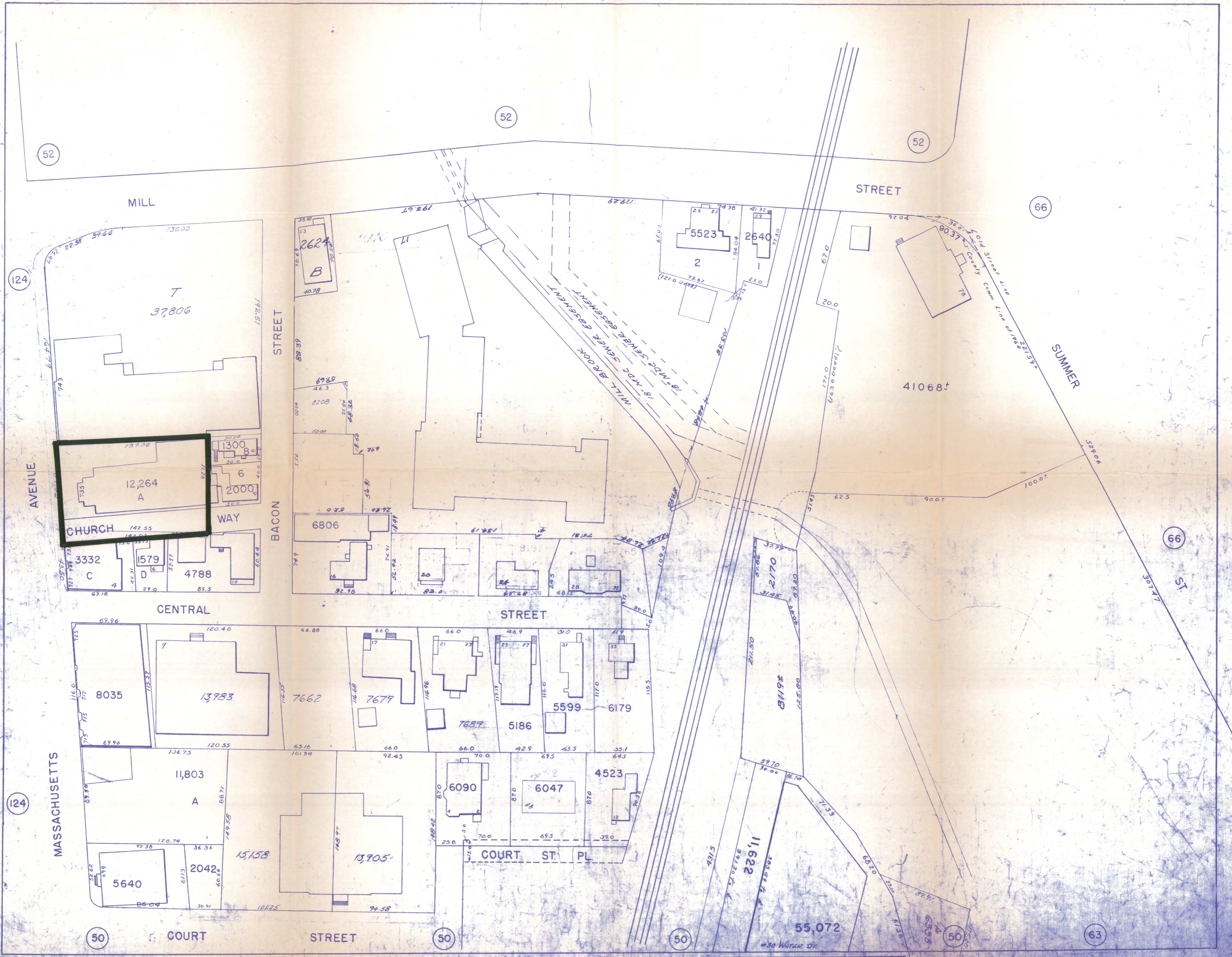
Photographer: Jeffery A.  
Luxenberg

Date of Photo: 10/16/80

Location of Neg.: Arlington  
Historical Commission

View: East Elevation (inc.  
Parish House Addition)

PHOTO # 5 of 5.



52

52

52

66

124

MILL

STREET

T  
37,806

BACON STREET

2624  
B

5523  
2

2640  
1

41068†

SUMMER

AVENUE

CHURCH WAY

12,264  
A

2000  
6

BACON STREET

6806

20

24

28

32

2170

CENTRAL

STREET

8035

13,983

7662

7679

7689

5186

5599

6179

6118

5640

11,803  
A

15,158

13,905

6090

6047

4523

COURT ST. PL.

11,622

55,072

66

ST.

124

MASSACHUSETTS

50

COURT

STREET

50

50

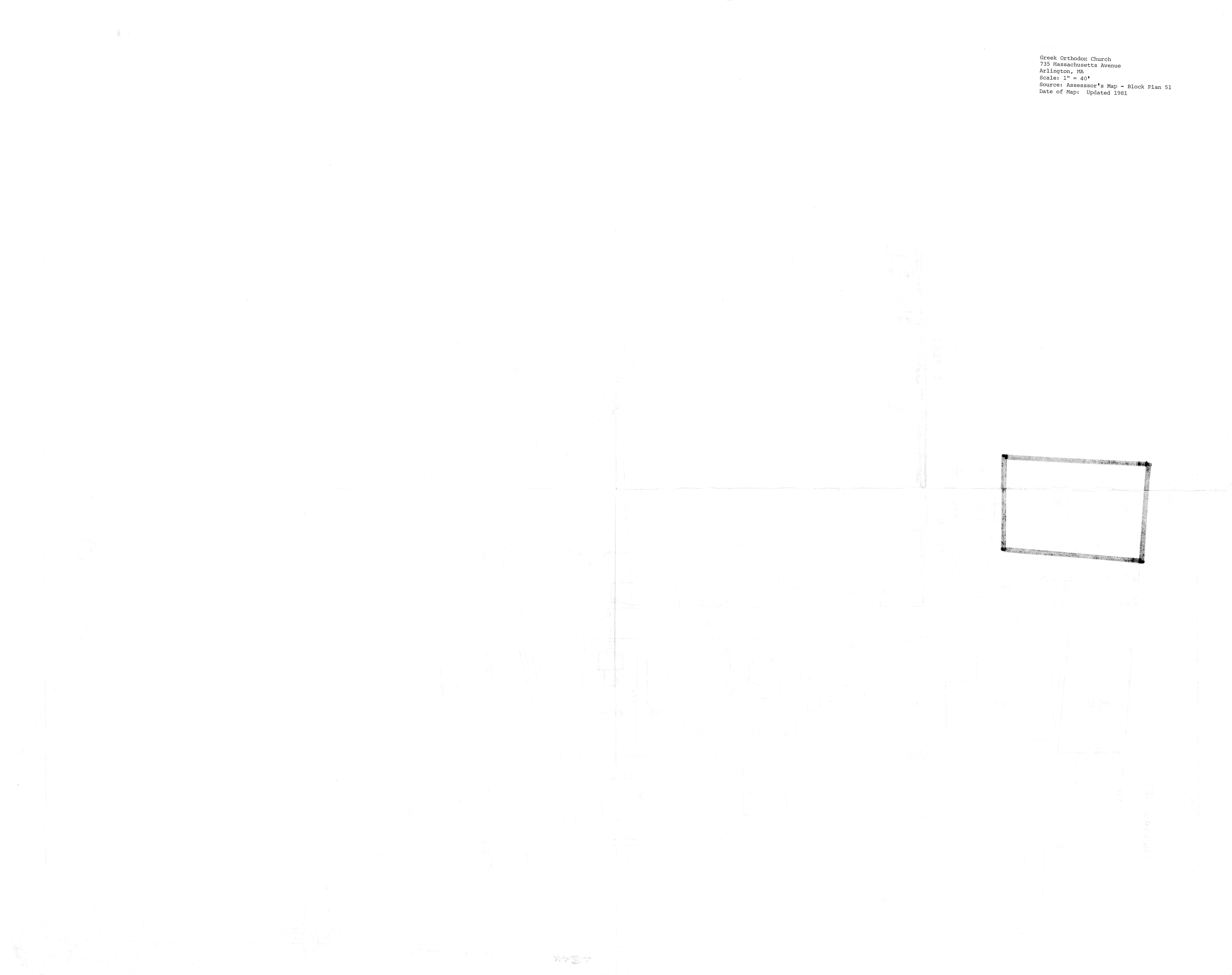
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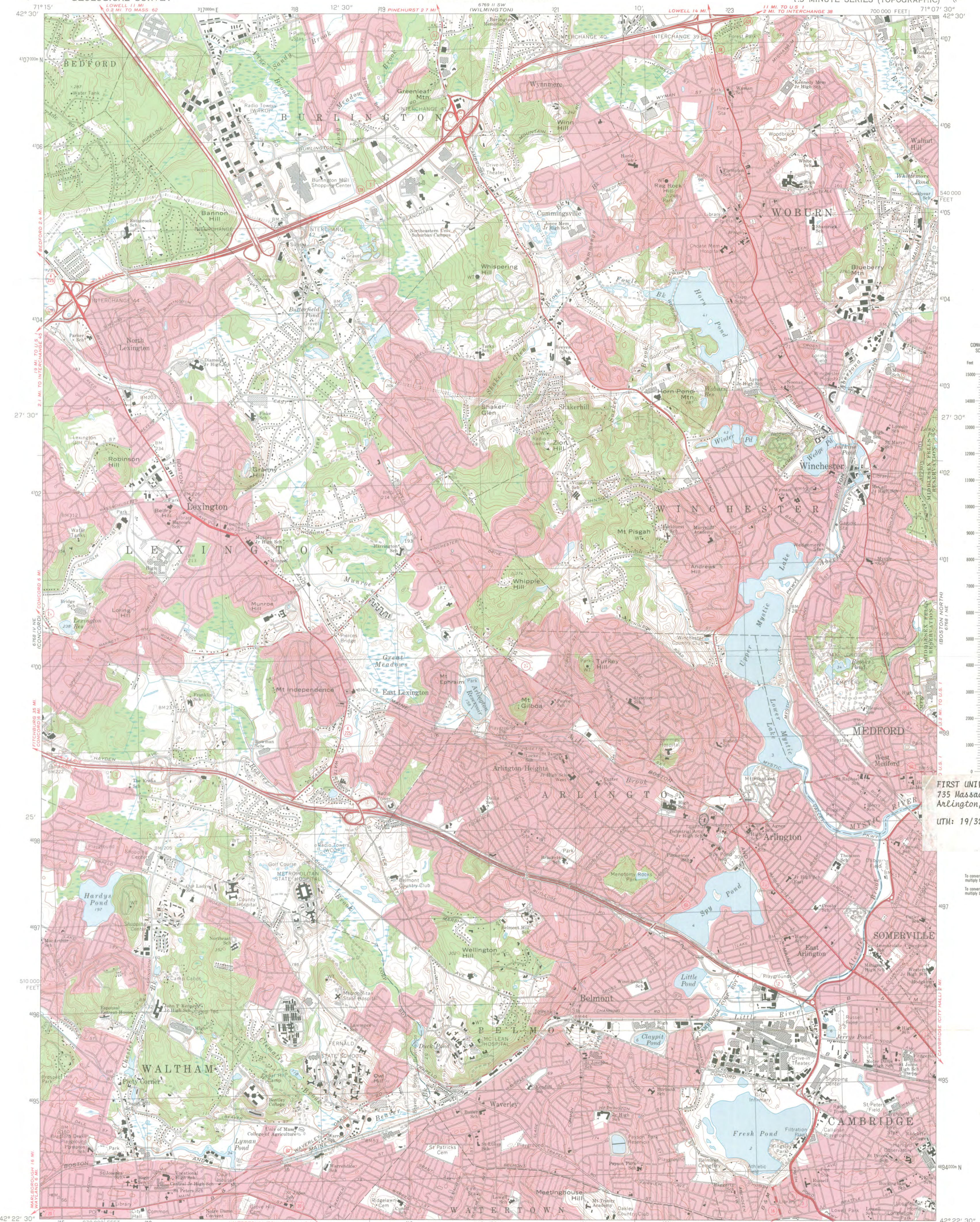
63

SCALE 0 40 80 60 FEET

BLOCK PLAN NO. 51

Greek Orthodox Church  
735 Massachusetts Avenue  
Arlington, MA  
Scale: 1" = 40'  
Source: Assessor's Map - Block Plan 51  
Date of Map: Updated 1981

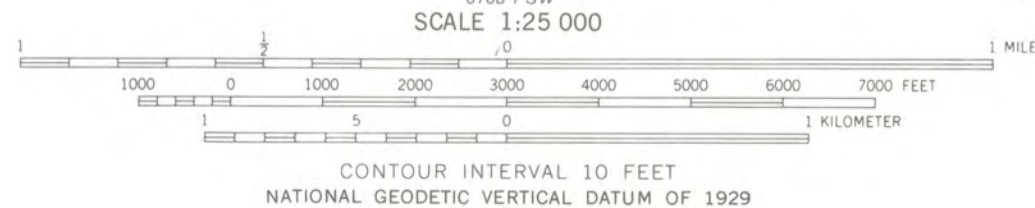
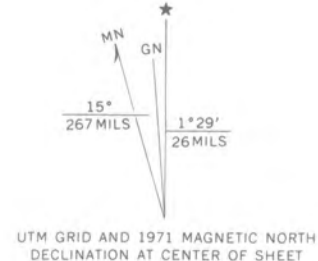




FIRST UNIVERSALIST CHURCH  
735 Massachusetts Avenue  
Arlington, Ma  
UTM: 19/322490/4698060

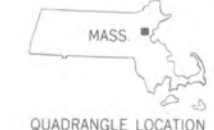
To convert feet to meters  
multiply by 3048  
To convert meters to feet  
multiply by 3.2808

Mapped, 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 planetable 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,  
zone 19  
Red tint indicates areas in which only landmark  
buildings are shown



ROAD CLASSIFICATION

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



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

LEXINGTON, MASS.  
N422.5—W7107.5/7.5  
1971  
AMS 6768 | NW—SERIES V814

Greek Orthodox Church  
Arlington, Middlesex, MA  
USGS Lexington quadrangle -  
1971  
7.5 Minute Scale: 1:25 000