

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE:
Massachusetts
COUNTY:
Norfolk
FOR NPS USE ONLY
ENTRY DATE
APR 18 1974

1. NAME

COMMON:

First Parish Unitarian Church (use for publication)

AND/OR HISTORIC:

Church of Christ, Medfield; First Congregational Parish

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:
North Street

CITY OR TOWN:

Medfield

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT:

10th

STATE

Massachusetts

CODE

025

COUNTY:

Norfolk

CODE

021

3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
☐ District ☒ Building ☐ Site ☐ Structure ☐ Object	☐ Public ☒ Private ☐ Both	Public Acquisition: ☐ In Process ☐ Being Considered	☒ Occupied ☐ Unoccupied ☐ Preservation work in progress
			Yes: ☒ Restricted ☐ Unrestricted ☐ No

PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

☐ Agricultural	☐ Government	☐ Park	☐ Transportation	☐ Comments
☐ Commercial	☐ Industrial	☐ Private Residence	☐ Other (Specify)	
☒ Educational	☐ Military	☒ Religious		
☐ Entertainment	☐ Museum	☐ Scientific		

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:

First Parish Unitarian, Medfield

STREET AND NUMBER:

North Street

CITY OR TOWN:

Medfield

STATE:

Massachusetts

CODE

025

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC:

Norfolk County Registry of Deeds

STREET AND NUMBER:

650 High Street

CITY OR TOWN:

Dedham

STATE

Massachusetts

CODE

025

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:

Inventory of Historic Assets of the Commonwealth

DATE OF SURVEY: 1971

☐ Federal☒ State☐ County☐ Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:

Massachusetts Historical Commission

STREET AND NUMBER:

40 Beacon Street

CITY OR TOWN:

Boston

STATE:

Massachusetts

CODE

025

SEE INSTRUCTIONS



STATE: Massachusetts
COUNTY: Norfolk
ENTRY NUMBER: APR 18 1974
DATE: FOR NPS USE ONLY

7. DESCRIPTION

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

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The First Parish Unitarian on North Street is situated in a commanding spot, facing what was once the Town Green and is now a commercial district. The white clapboard Greek Revival structure rises above the encroaching commercial area as one of the few historically significant buildings in the entire downtown area. The church is situated on approximately 1.3 acres of gently sloping sparsely wooded land.

The main structure was designed by Captain Joseph Bacon and constructed in 1789, using some materials from the previous meetinghouse of 1706. The entire framing of the church is of unusually heavy 14" hand hewn oak. Both the principal rafters and the tie beams are bowed in a manner similar to those in the Old Ship Church in Hingham, and possibly were part of the materials salvaged from the earlier meetinghouse.

In 1839 the building underwent a major remodeling "so as to render it more adapted to the state of the parish and more conformable to the taste of the present time". While no professional architect was consulted, some of the alterations reveal a strong similarity to illustrations in Asher Benjamin's popular pattern book, The Practice of Architecture (1833). Major changes included turning the church to face south on the main road, raising the foundation to create a two-story building and allow for a vestry, and adding a Doric hexastyle porch, with a new bell tower and steeple. Three entrance doors on the church front are framed in the Greek Revival manner; this style is also reflected in the anthemion devices and the four corner Doric pilasters with recessed panels.

The three-staged bell tower contains the town clock, installed in 1861, with octagonal dials on all four sides. It is probable that brackets were added at this time at the cornice, in the pediment, and on the clock tower. The present bell was installed in 1868. The original 60' x 45' area of the church was increased in 1915 when a 7' addition was constructed on the rear of the building, containing a round stained glass Tiffany-style window. The last major change occurred to the church when the 1938 hurricane brought down the steeple which was never replaced due to lack of funds.

The building has white clapboard siding, a black asphalt shingle roof, and diamond-paned stained glass windows on the main floor (four on the east side, three on the west). These side windows all have inside shutters. Ground floor windows are small pane frosted glass, with stained glass side panels. The main floor contains a vestibule and an auditorium with a small balcony across the south side. The vestry and an adjacent room have wainscotting reported to be panelling from the 1789 pews.



SEE INSTRUCTIONS

8. SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

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

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) 1789 and 1839

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

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

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Since the founding of the first meetinghouse in 1653 on this site, the Medfield townspeople have shown unflagging interest in the image of the First Congregational Church (now Unitarian) in their townscape. In 1839 when the church was turned to face south on the main road, and Greek Revival details were added, the townspeople stressed the importance of the church being "an ornament to this village". A main road was also widened and obstructions removed in order to create a clear view of the church. The many remodellings and enhancements that took place from the 18th c. through the 20th c. demonstrate the community's continual concern for the church as a valuable asset to the town center. Today the church remains the visual focus of the town center, and in the midst of the commercial encroachment, rests as one of the few significant structures, both historically and architecturally.

The first substantial construction of the church in 1789 was a major issue in town meetings from 1786 to 1788, since at that time the Congregational Church in Massachusetts was supported by local taxation. The church of 1789 became the "publick meeting house" in which town meetings continued to be held even after the separation of church and state. After the 1839 remodeling, practically all town meetings were held in the newly created vestry of the church until the Town Hall was completed in 1872. The clock in the tower is still maintained by the town of Medfield.

The church experienced a schism in 1828, when certain members withdrew and formed a Second Congregational Society, but the church stayed in the hands of those who remained and the First Parish became Unitarian.

Famed parishioners include Hannah Adams (1775-1831) author of many well known religious histories, and Lowell Mason (1792-1872) who later became the founder of musical instruction in United States public schools.



9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

1. Town of Medfield-- Town Meeting Records
2. First Parish Unitarian, Medfield--Records
3. Benjamin, Asher, Practice of Architecture, original 1833, reprint 1917, New York.
4. Lafever, Minard, The Beauties of Modern Architecture, original 1835, reprint 1968, New York.

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds
NW	° ' "	° ' "		42 °	11 ' 14 1/2 "	71 ° 18 ' 25 "
NE	° ' "	° ' "				
SE	° ' "	° ' "				
SW	° ' "	° ' "				

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: 1.3 acres

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

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE



11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:
Mindy Arbo, for Elizabeth R. Amadon State Survey Director

ORGANIZATION: Massachusetts Historical Commission DATE: March 5, 1974

STREET AND NUMBER:
40 Beacon Street

CITY OR TOWN: Boston (617) 727-8470 STATE: Massachusetts 02108 CODE: 025

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

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

National ☐ State ☐ Local ☒

John F. X. Davoren
Name: Honorable John F. X. Davoren
Secretary of the Commonwealth

Title: Chairman, Massachusetts Historical Commission

Date: March 14, 1974

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

Director, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date: 4/18/74

ATTEST:
Keeper of The National Register

Date: 4. 18. 74

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

PROPERTY First Parish Unitarian Church STATE Mass.

WORKING NUMBER 3, 29, 74, 481

TECH REVIEW

PHOTOS 1

MAPS 1

Norfolk

CONTROL REVIEW

cm
4.2.
74

OK

HISTORIAN

I Question music, literature & political significance,
but it meets requirements under architecture

Accept
R Luce 4/3/74

ARCHITECTURAL HISTORIAN

Accept
H. J. and
4/3/74

ARCHEOLOGIST

REVIEW UNIT CHIEF

Accept
Cole
4-12-74

BRANCH CHIEF

Accept
H. J. and
4-17-74

KEEPER

Wm
4/18/74

National Register Write-up 6-7-74

Send-back _____

Federal Register entry June 4, 1974

Re-submit _____

Entered

APR 18 1974



from Mass. Historical Commission

FORM 10-301 A
(6/72)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
PROPERTY PHOTOGRAPH FORM

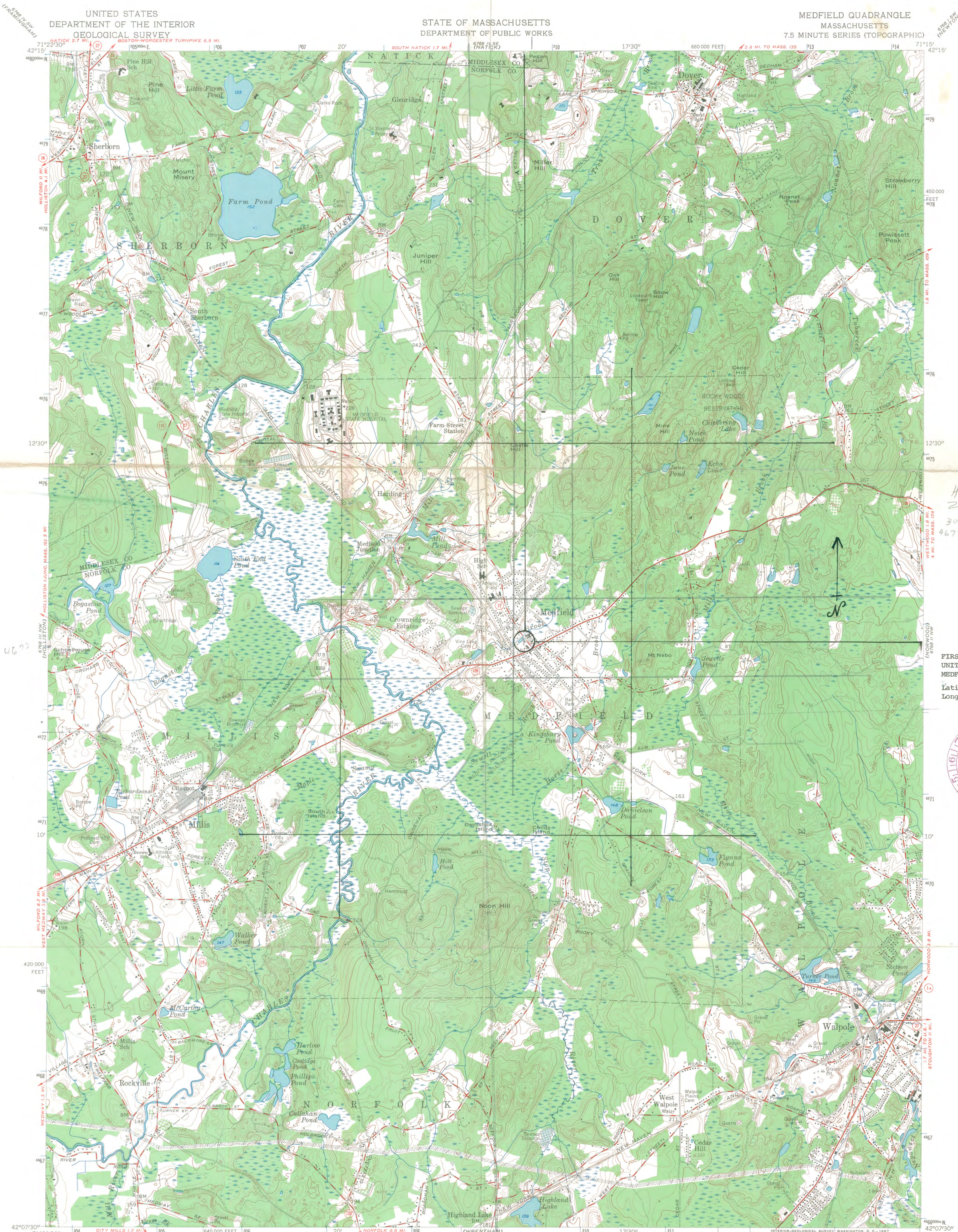
(Type all entries - attach to or enclose with photograph)

1. NAME COMMON		AND/OR HISTORIC	NUMERIC CODE (Assigned by NPS)
First Parish Unitarian Church		Church of Christ, Medfield. First Congregational Parish	APR 18 1974
2. LOCATION STATE		COUNTY	TOWN
Massachusetts		Norfolk	Medfield
STREET AND NUMBER			
North Street			
3. PHOTO REFERENCE PHOTO CREDIT		DATE	NEGATIVE FILED AT
Philip S. Taylor		March 25, 1973	
4. IDENTIFICATION DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC.			

Facade view of First Parish Unitarian Church facing south on North Street

GPO 932-009

PROPERTY OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

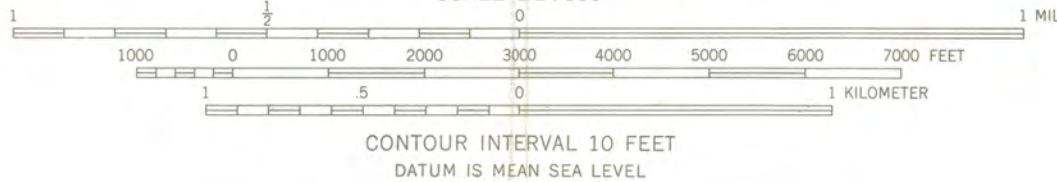
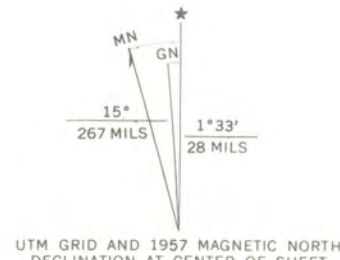


4B
2019
309 500
4672920

FIRST PARISH CHURCH
UNITARIAN;
MEDFIELD
Latitude: 42° 11' 14"
Longitude: 71° 18' 25"



Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey
Control by USGS, Massachusetts Harbor and Land Commission
and Massachusetts Geodetic Survey
Topography by planetable surveys 1937-1938
Culture revised 1957
Polyconic projection. 1927 North American datum
10,000-foot grid based on Massachusetts coordinate system,
mainland zone
1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks,
zone 19, shown in blue



CONTOUR INTERVAL 10 FEET
DATUM IS MEAN SEA LEVEL

ROAD CLASSIFICATION
Heavy-duty ——— Light-duty ———
Medium-duty ——— Unimproved dirt ———
State Route ○



THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS
FOR SALE BY U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, WASHINGTON, D.C. 20242
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

MEDFIELD, MASS.
N4207.5-W7115.7.5

1957

AMS 6768 III NE-SERIES V814

U.S. Productive Surveys
 Map
 (Received
 May 1960)
 from
 S. J. ...
 May 1960
 1960
 1960

ENTRIES IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

STATE MASSACHUSETTS

Date Entered APR 18 1974

<u>Name</u>	<u>Location</u>
The Grange	Lincoln Middlesex County
Dorchester North Burying Ground	Boston (Dorchester) Suffolk County
First Parish Unitarian Church	Medfield Norfolk County
Copp's Hill Burial Ground	Boston Suffolk County
Holbrook, Dr. Amos, House	Milton Norfolk County
Winthrop Building	Boston Suffolk County

Also Notified

Hon. Edward M. Kennedy	State Historic Preservation Officer
Hon. Edward W. Brooke	Hon. John F. X. Davoren
Hon. Robert F. Drinan	Secretary of the Commonwealth
Hon. John J. Monkley	Chairman, Massachusetts Historical
Hon. Margaret M. Heckler	Commission
Hon. James A. Burke	40 Beacon Street
	Boston, Massachusetts 02108

Regional Director, North Atlantic Region

4/22/74

MMott

PR

FEDERAL ASSISTANCE			2. APPLICANT'S APPLICATION	a. NUMBER 795	3. STATE APPLICATION IDENTIFIER	a. NUMBER 77060882
1. TYPE OF ACTION (Mark appropriate box) ☐ PREAPPLICATION ☒ APPLICATION ☐ NOTIFICATION OF INTENT (Opt) ☐ REPORT OF FEDERAL ACTION			b. DATE Year month day 19 78 6 26		b. DATE Year month day ASSIGNED 19 77 07 29	
4. LEGAL APPLICANT/RECIPIENT a. Applicant Name : Commonwealth of Massachusetts b. Organization Unit : Massachusetts Historical Commission c. Street/P.O. Box : 294 Washington Street d. City : Boston e. County : Suffolk f. State : Massachusetts g. ZIP Code: 02108 h. Contact Person (Name & telephone No.) : Patricia L. Weslowski, S.H.P.O. (617) 727-8470			5. FEDERAL EMPLOYER IDENTIFICATION NO. 046-002-284			
7. TITLE AND DESCRIPTION OF APPLICANT'S PROJECT First Parish Unitarian Church Development Project, Medfield, Norfolk County Significant architecturally, as 1789 hand-hewn structural members are extant. The Greek Revival exterior was added in 1839. The church has always been maintained as a center of governmental, religious and artistic activity in town center. Property will remain a church open to the public.			6. PROGRAM (From Federal Catalog) a. NUMBER 1 5 9 0 4 b. TITLE Historic Preservation			
10. AREA OF PROJECT IMPACT (Names of cities, counties, States, etc.) Commonwealth of Massachusetts			8. TYPE OF APPLICANT/RECIPIENT A-State H-Community Action Agency B-Interstate I-Higher Educational Institution C-Substate J-Indian Tribe D-District K-Other (Specify): E-City F-School District G-Special Purpose District Enter appropriate letter ☒ A			
11. ESTIMATED NUMBER OF PERSONS BENEFITING 5.7 million			9. TYPE OF ASSISTANCE A-Basic Grant D-Insurance B-Supplemental Grant E-Other C-Loan Enter appropriate letter(s) ☒ A ☐			
12. TYPE OF APPLICATION A-New C-Revision E-Augmentation B-Renewal D-Continuation Enter appropriate letter ☒ A			13. PROPOSED FUNDING a. FEDERAL \$ 10,000.00 b. APPLICANT 10,500.00 c. STATE .00 d. LOCAL .00 e. OTHER .00 f. TOTAL \$ 20,500.00			
14. CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICTS OF: a. APPLICANT 9 b. PROJECT 10			15. TYPE OF CHANGE (For 18c or 18e) A-Increase Dollars F-Other (Specify): B-Decrease Dollars C-Increase Duration D-Decrease Duration E-Cancellation N/A Enter appropriate letter(s) ☐ ☐ ☐			
16. PROJECT START DATE Year month day 19 77 6 1			17. PROJECT DURATION 40 Months			
18. ESTIMATED DATE TO BE SUBMITTED TO FEDERAL AGENCY 1978 06 26			19. EXISTING FEDERAL IDENTIFICATION NUMBER			
20. FEDERAL AGENCY TO RECEIVE REQUEST (Name, City, State, ZIP code) Dept. of the Interior, Heritage Conservation & Recreation Service			21. REMARKS ADDED ☒ Yes ☐ No			
22. THE APPLICANT CERTIFIES THAT a. To the best of my knowledge and belief, data in this preapplication/application are true and correct, the document has been duly authorized by the governing body of the applicant and the applicant will comply with the attached assurances if the assistance is approved. b. If required by OMB Circular A-95 this application was submitted, pursuant to instructions therein, to appropriate clearinghouses and all responses are attached: ☐ None ☒ Response attached			(1) Office of State Planning ☐ ☒ (2) ☐ ☐ (3) ☐ ☐			
23. CERTIFYING REPRESENTATIVE a. TYPED NAME AND TITLE Patricia L. Weslowski, S.H.P.O. and Acting Executive Director b. SIGNATURE <i>Patricia L. Weslowski</i> c. DATE SIGNED Year month day 19 78 06 26			24. AGENCY NAME Department of the Interior			
25. APPLICANT'S RECEIVED Year month day 19 78 7 6			26. ORGANIZATIONAL UNIT Service Heritage Conservation & Recreation			
27. ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE Grants Administration Div.			28. FEDERAL APPLICATION IDENTIFICATION			
29. ADDRESS 18th and C Streets NW, Washington, D.C. 20240			30. FEDERAL GRANT IDENTIFICATION 25-8901			
31. ACTION TAKEN ☒ a. AWARDED ☐ b. REJECTED ☐ c. RETURNED FOR AMENDMENT ☐ d. DEFERRED ☐ e. WITHDRAWN			32. FUNDING a. FEDERAL \$ 10,000 .00 b. APPLICANT 10,500 .00 c. STATE .00 d. LOCAL .00 e. OTHER .00 f. TOTAL \$ 20,500 .00			
33. ACTION DATE Year month day 19 78 8 23			34. STARTING DATE Year month day 19 78 8 1			
35. CONTACT FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION (Name and telephone number) Stephen D. Newman 202 523-5472			36. ENDING DATE Year month day 19 80 9 30			
37. REMARKS ADDED ☐ Yes ☒ No			38. FEDERAL AGENCY A-95 ACTION a. In taking above action, any comments received from clearinghouses were considered. If agency response is due under provisions of Part 1, OMB Circular A-95, it has been or is being made. b. FEDERAL AGENCY A-95 OFFICIAL (Name and telephone no.) Same as #35			