



Ruthanne Fuller
Mayor

City of Newton, Massachusetts
Department of Planning and Development
1000 Commonwealth Avenue Newton, Massachusetts 02459

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Barney Heath
Director

Re: 19 Highland Ave (Swedenborgian Church)
Landmark Designation

The Swedenborgian Church in Newtonville was constructed in 1893 in a Gothic Revival style. It was designed by architectural firm Cram & Wentworth, and built in a puddingstone construction and limestone trim. Ralph Adams Cram is renowned for his church constructions, 50 of which are on the National Register of Historic Places. He is one of three architects recognized with a Episcopal Feast Day for their contributions to church architecture.

Permit history is very limited for this property, as there have been no exterior alterations to the building in the last century. Three stained glass windows, added in 1916, were designed by Charles Connick Studios. Having such an intact example of Cram & Wentworth Church is an asset to the Newtonville architectural landscape, and elevates the building's architectural significance.

Designating this property as a local historic landmark would require all exterior changes, including siding changes and window replacement, to be approved by the Newton Historical Commission. Staff recommends the use of the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Preservation when reviewing work on this building, allowing for appropriately designed exceptions related to accessibility and safety.

Staff is also recommending that any development on the parcel that is detached from the landmark structure should be reviewed only as to its impact on the historic structure. This is particularly relevant to work on or related to the Parish House, which does not appear have the same level of architectural or historic significance as the main church building.

Attached is the nomination form and current photos.







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Director

Newton Local Landmark Nomination Form

Date:

Address of property:

Please check all that apply:

The property meets one or more of the following nominating criteria per the Local Landmark ordinance as revised:

_____ The property is individually listed on the National Register of Historic Places, or formally listed as eligible for listing on said National Register, individually;

_____ The property is listed on the National Register of Historic Places as part of an historic district, but not individually, or formally listed as eligible for listing on said National Register as part of an historic district, but not individually; or

_____ The property has been determined by the commission or its designee to be historically significant after a finding that it is:

- (1) importantly associated with one or more historic persons or events, or with the architectural, cultural, political, economic or social history of the City of Newton, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts or the United States of America; or
- (2) historically or architecturally important by reason of period, style, method of building construction or association with a particular architect or builder, either by itself or in the context of a group of buildings or structures.

Sec. 22-63. Nomination

Nominators must meet one of the following criteria. Please check the category that applies to you:

_____ Owner of the nominated property

_____ Member of the city council, provided at least one (1) member of the NHC must co-petition the nomination; or

_____ The mayor, the director of planning and development, or the commissioner of inspectional services, provided that at least one (1) member of the commission must co-petition the nomination

Names of all nominators:

For Administrative Use Only

Upon receipt of a petition for nomination, the commission shall schedule a meeting to consider the nomination, which meeting shall be held not less than forty-five (45) days nor more than ninety (90) days from the date of the commission's receipt of the petition. The meeting has been scheduled for _____.

Within fourteen {14} days after the receipt of a petition for nomination, the commission shall send a notice to the city clerk and to each councilor for the ward in which the nominated property is located, record owner(s) of the property by certified mail, and a notice to the immediate abutters by regular mail. The notice shall include the petition for nomination and the date of the commission meeting.

Ward Councilors notified on this date: _____.

City Clerk notified on this date: _____.

Certified mail sent to owner on this date: _____.

Immediate abutters notified on this date: _____.

Massachusetts Cultural Resource Information System

Scanned Record Cover Page

Inventory No:	NWT.2450
Historic Name:	The Swedenborgian Church
Common Name:	Church of the New Jerusalem
Address:	19 Highland Ave 10A Highland Ave
City/Town:	Newton
Village/Neighborhood:	Newtonville;
Local No:	18; 24009 0025;
Year Constructed:	1893
Architectural Style(s):	Neo Gothic Revival;
Architect(s):	Connick, Charles Studios; Cram and Wentworth; Cram, Ralph Adams;
Use(s):	Church;
Significance:	Architecture; Religion;
Area(s):	NWT.G, NWT.Y
Designation(s):	Nat'l Register District (09/04/1986); Nat'l Register MRA (09/04/1986);
Building Materials:	Roof: Slate; Wall: Brick; Glass; Limestone; Roxbury Pudding Stone; Stone, Cut; Stone, Uncut; Stucco; Wood; Foundation: Roxbury Pudding Stone; Stone, Uncut;
Demolished	No



The Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC) has converted this paper record to digital format as part of ongoing projects to scan records of the Inventory of Historic Assets of the Commonwealth and National Register of Historic Places nominations for Massachusetts. Efforts are ongoing and not all inventory or National Register records related to this resource may be available in digital format at this time.

The MACRIS database and scanned files are highly dynamic; new information is added daily and both database records and related scanned files may be updated as new information is incorporated into MHC files. Users should note that there may be a considerable lag time between the receipt of new or updated records by MHC and the appearance of related information in MACRIS. Users should also note that not all source materials for the MACRIS database are made available as scanned images. Users may consult the records, files and maps available in MHC's public research area at its offices at the State Archives Building, 220 Morrissey Boulevard, Boston, open M-F, 9-5.

Users of this digital material acknowledge that they have read and understood the MACRIS Information and Disclaimer (<http://mhc-macris.net/macrisdisclaimer.htm>)

Data available via the MACRIS web interface, and associated scanned files are for information purposes only. THE ACT OF CHECKING THIS DATABASE AND ASSOCIATED SCANNED FILES DOES NOT SUBSTITUTE FOR COMPLIANCE WITH APPLICABLE LOCAL, STATE OR FEDERAL LAWS AND REGULATIONS. IF YOU ARE REPRESENTING A DEVELOPER AND/OR A PROPOSED PROJECT THAT WILL REQUIRE A PERMIT, LICENSE OR FUNDING FROM ANY STATE OR FEDERAL AGENCY YOU MUST SUBMIT A PROJECT NOTIFICATION FORM TO MHC FOR MHC'S REVIEW AND COMMENT. You can obtain a copy of a PNF through the MHC web site (www.sec.state.ma.us/mhc) under the subject heading "MHC Forms."

Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Massachusetts Historical Commission
220 Morrissey Boulevard, Boston, Massachusetts 02125
www.sec.state.ma.us/mhc

This file was accessed on: Tuesday, June 20, 2023 at 12:31 PM

FORM B – BUILDING

Assessor's Number USGS Quad Area(s) Form Number

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
MASSACHUSETTS ARCHIVES BUILDING
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

24009 0025 [] G, Y [NWT.2450]
NRDIS 9/4/1986 [NWT.G]

Town/City: Newton

Place: (*neighborhood or village*): Newtonville

Photograph



Address: 19 Highland Ave

Historic Name: Church of the New Jerusalem

Uses: Present: Worship

Original: Worship

Date of Construction: 1893

Source: Church records and Firm records

Style/Form: Gothic

Architect/Builder: Ralph Adams Cram

Exterior Material:

Foundation: Puddingstone

Wall/Trim: Puddingstone / Indiana Limestone

Roof: Virginia Black Slate

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures: Parish House

Major Alterations (*with dates*): 1916 Chancel enlarged, 3 stained glass windows added.

Condition: Fair

Moved: no yes **Date:**

Acreage: 31606 sf

Setting: Village

Locus Map



Recorded by: Sarah Mancuso

Organization: Cram and Ferguson Architects

Date (*month / year*): January 2014

RECEIVED
JAN 13 2014

MASS. HIST. COMM.

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

NEWTON

19 HIGHLAND AVE

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area(s) Form No.

G

NWT.2450

Recommended for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

If checked, you must attach a completed National Register Criteria Statement form.

Use as much space as necessary to complete the following entries, allowing text to flow onto additional continuation sheets.

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION:

Describe architectural features. Evaluate the characteristics of this building in terms of other buildings within the community.

In 1892, the architecture firm of Cram and Wentworth was commissioned to design the Swedenborgian Church in Newton, MA. The church was erected in 1893. The Parish House adjacent of unknown authorship predated the church and is estimated to date to 1888.

The entire building is masonry construction with limestone trim. The nave and adjoining chancel have a gabled slate roof. The main type of stone used, was a local puddingstone known as "Roxbury conglomerate" or "Brighton stone." The trim is Indiana limestone. The church has 3 volumes consisting of the tower, nave, and chancel. The Tower, which houses a bell deck on the upper level, a ringer's chamber and a vestibule on the main level, is located in the Southwest corner. The west facade is home to a large perpendicular gothic stained glass window with limestone tracery. The nave is composed of 6 bays plus the chancel at the east. The first bay is the location of the tower, with 5 more bays, each divided on the exterior by a buttress. The chancel projects from the east end of the church.

The main entrance to the church is through a vestibule at the base of the tower leading into the nave. The vestibule has wood paneled wainscoting and a wood ceiling. There is one other small doorway that leads to the tower stairs. Halfway up the tower itself is a small trap door leading to the ringer's chamber.

Upon entering the nave, there is a screen approximately 8 feet high separating the narthex area from the nave. The opposite side of the narthex has another door leading to the porte-cochere connecting the sanctuary with the parish house. The nave features a fine English Gothic ceiling with elaborate woodwork and spectacular hammerbeams. There is elaborate woodwork throughout the entire sanctuary.

In 1916, the church was remodeled to enlarge the chancel. At this time, they added a Hutchings Organ in the choir and 3 new stained glass windows were installed. These windows were designed by the Charles Connick Studios. Although the style and construction methods were the same, there is a limestone trim under the windows which goes around the exterior of the chancel.

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

Discuss the history of the building. Explain its associations with local (or state) history. Include uses of the building, and the role(s) the owners/occupants played within the community.

The Church of the Open Word, as it is seen today was designed by Ralph Adams Cram, prominent Gothic church architect, in 1893 with a chancel extension added in 1916 attributed to Ralph Adams Cram. This composition was designed contemporaneously with the Second Church in Exeter, NH and features a similar plan, tower, and the organ placement. It was one of three contributing buildings to the National Register Listing of the Newtonville Historic District.

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

NEWTON

19 HIGHLAND AVE

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

Area(s) Form No.

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

G	NWT.2450
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Cram and Ferguson was, and still remains a nationally recognized architecture firm specializing in church architecture, with much emphasis on the Gothic style. The recognition and national significance of Cram's work has grown exponentially in the last ten years. Two major biographical works have been published on Cram in the 2000's, work is underway on a postage stamp and Cram is now recognized along with Goodhue and Upjohn with an Episcopal Feast Day commemorating their great dedication to good church architecture. Today over 50 Cram churches are recognized with National Historic Register Listings.

The building is as designed, never altered. It is an excellent example of Cram and Wentworth design of the early period pre-Goodhue, despite similarities it has unique characteristics including elaborate interior design, including gold leaf and a large Hutchings Organ.

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

Anthony, Ethan. The Architecture of Ralph Adams Cram and His Office.
New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2007.

Carter, Timothy Harrington. A Brief Autobiographical Sketch. Boston 1888.

Shan-Tucci, Paul Douglass. Boston Bohemia, 1881-1900 Ralph Adams Cram: Life and Architecture.
Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1995.

Church of the Open Work Records

Cram and Ferguson Architects Archives

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

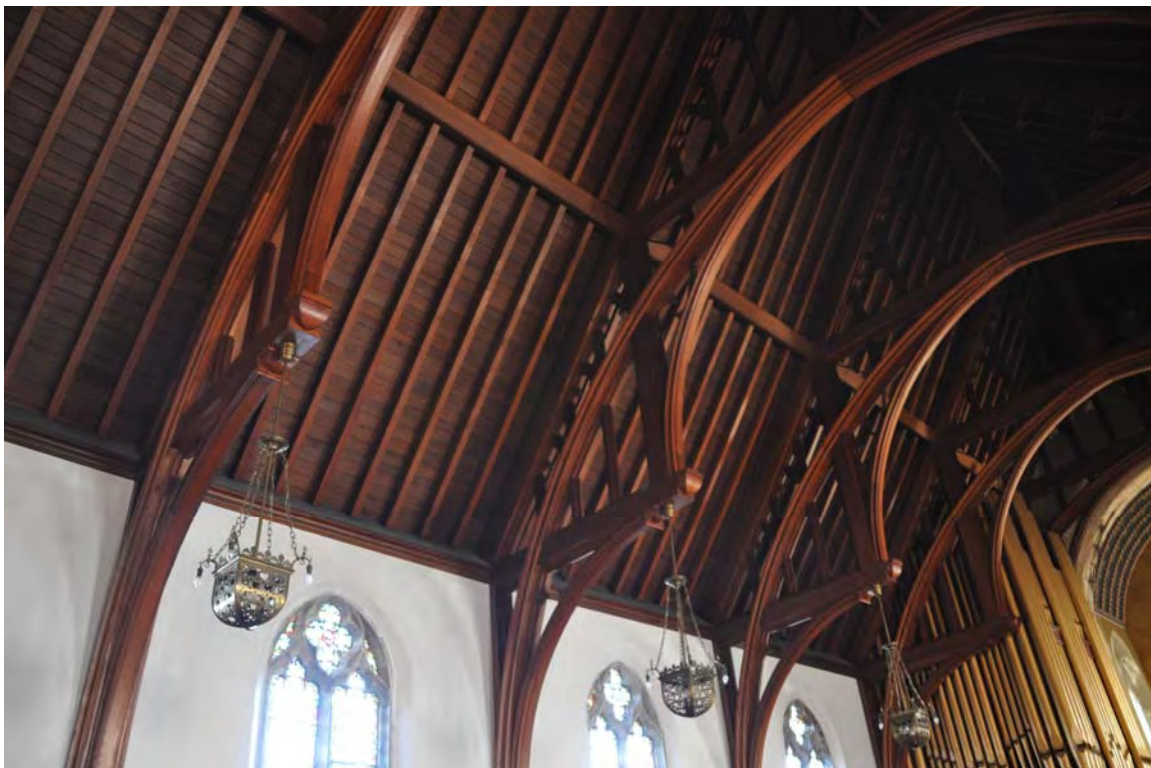
NEWTON

19 HIGHLAND AVE

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area(s) Form No.

G	NWT.2450
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INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

NEWTON

19 HIGHLAND AVE

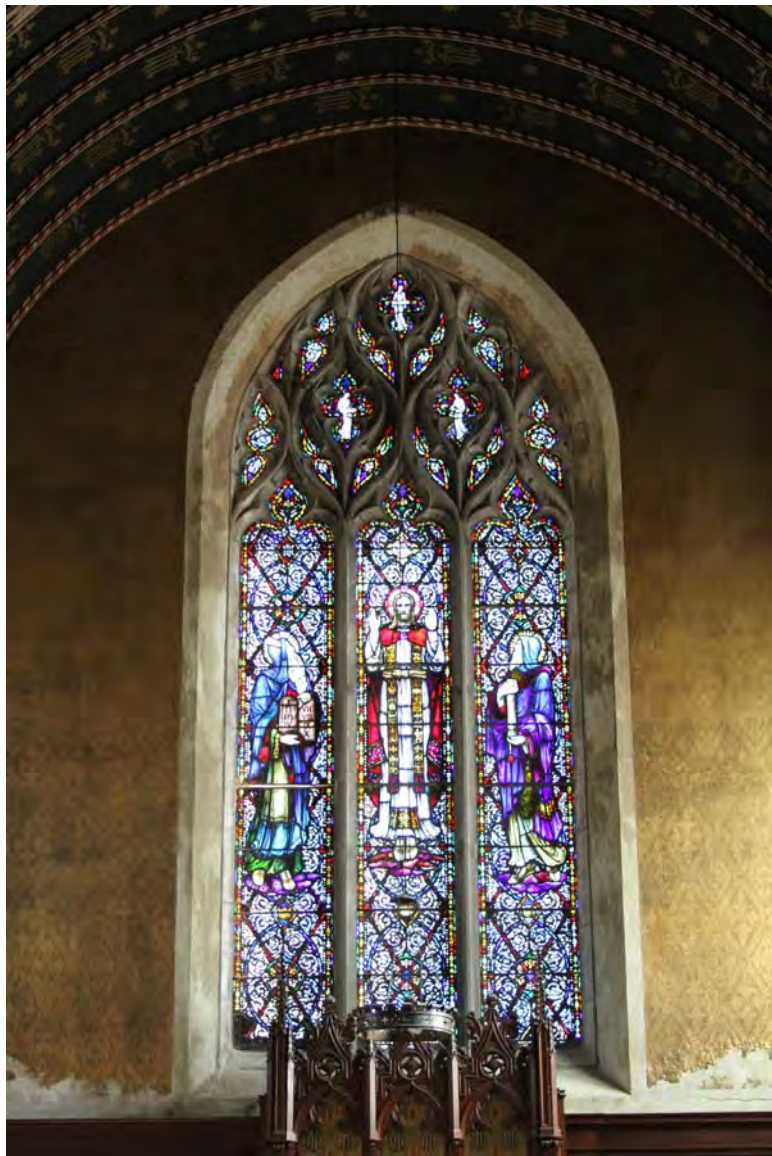
MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area(s) Form No.

G	NWT.2450
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Chancel



Chancel window

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

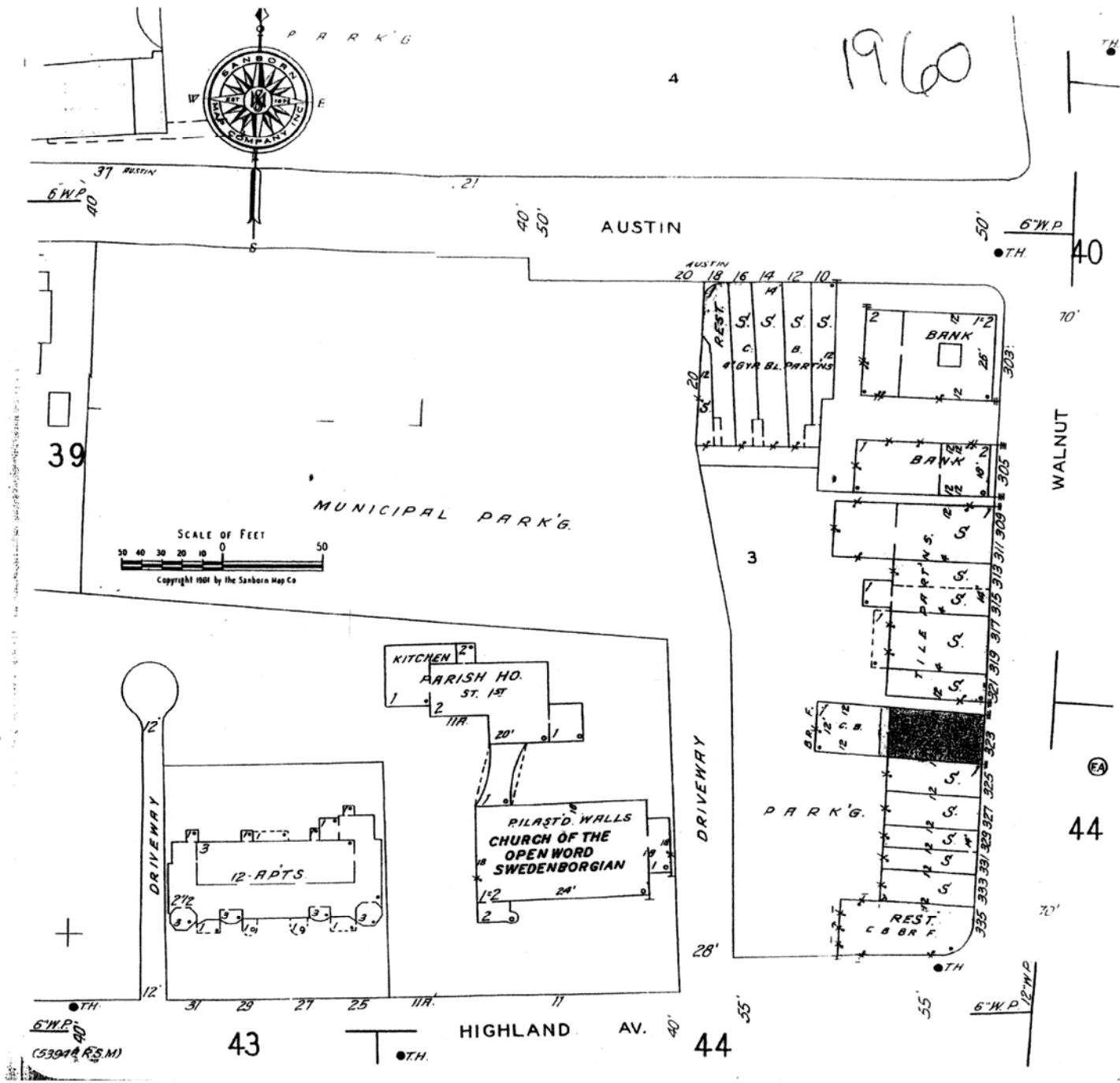
NEWTON

19 HIGHLAND AVE

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area(s) Form No.

G NWT.2450



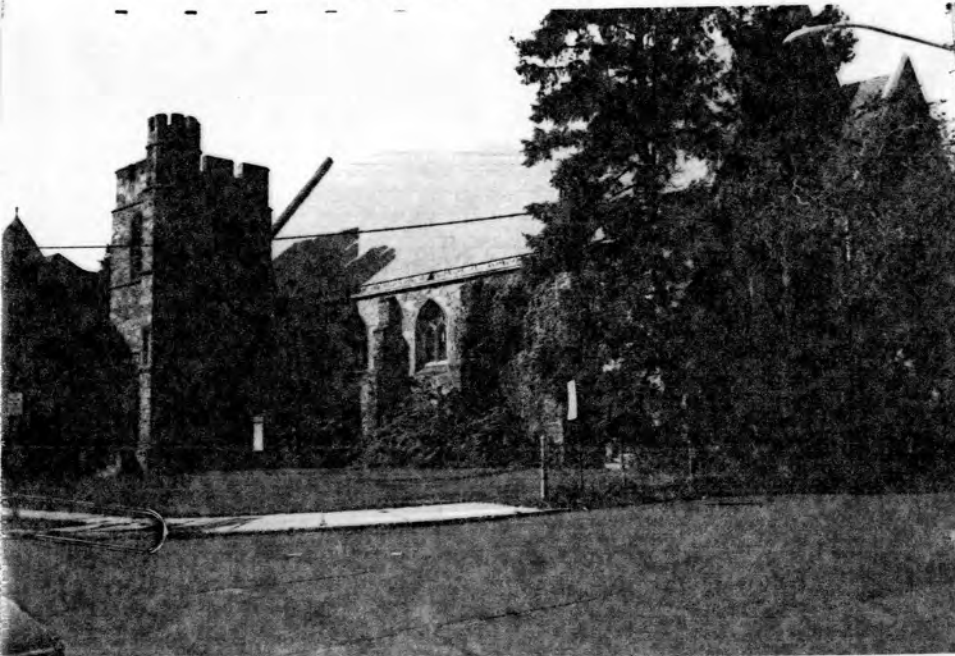
FORM B - BUILDING

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

NRDLS
NRMPA

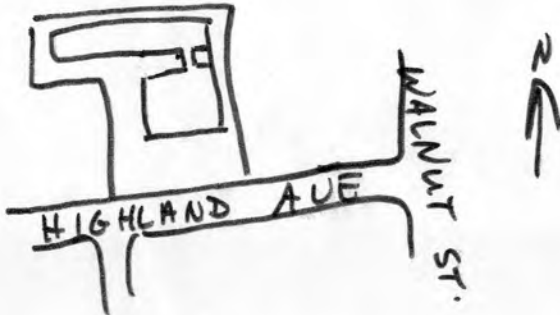
NWT. 2450

In Area no. <u>G, B, Y</u>	Form no. <u>182450</u>
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Town Newtonville #5421
Address 19TH Highland Ave.
Name Swedenborgian Church
Present use Church
Present owner _____
Description: _____
Date 1892
Source church history
Style Gothic

4. Map. Draw sketch of building location in relation to nearest cross streets and other buildings. Indicate north.



Architect _____
Exterior wall fabric Masonry
Outbuildings (describe) brick/stucco/wood
Other features school building, attached by breezeway
Altered _____ Date _____
Moved _____ Date _____

5. Lot size: 3/606
One acre or less _____ Over one acre _____
Approximate frontage _____
Approximate distance of building from street _____

6. Recorded by _____
Organization _____
Date _____

(over)

Criteria A and C important for its history and architecture
major

The Swedenborgian Society in Newtonville was founded in the 1860s simultaneously with other ecclesiastical groups and civic organizations to meet the needs of a growing suburban population. However founding members David Howard and T.H. Carter moved from Boston to Newtonville during the 1840s when the commuter train first served this small village. Keeping ties with the mother church in Boston, it was not until the 1860s when the community was more established that a small wooden chapel was built (1868-9) on land given by T.H. Carter. The Gothic stone structure constructed in 1897 marked the continued prosperity of the congregation and the community. Heavy masonry walls with a castellated entrance towers and buttresses are only broken by the recessed, arched stain glass windows.

"The Messenger", a Swedenborgian periodical included an article in December 1978 on the Newtonville Church saying that the earlier wooden chapel was moved to the rear of the plot when the new stone church was built and a stone Sunday school building was joined to the old church by a long corridor. If the chapel remains, it must be either enclosed in the stone and brick structure to the rear or be the side wing clad in stucco...

atlases

directories

Newton's 19th Century Architecture: Newtonville 1980

Jackson Homestead Historical Collection

Rowe, History of Newton 1930 pp. 130, 134, 335, 486

