

FORM A - AREA

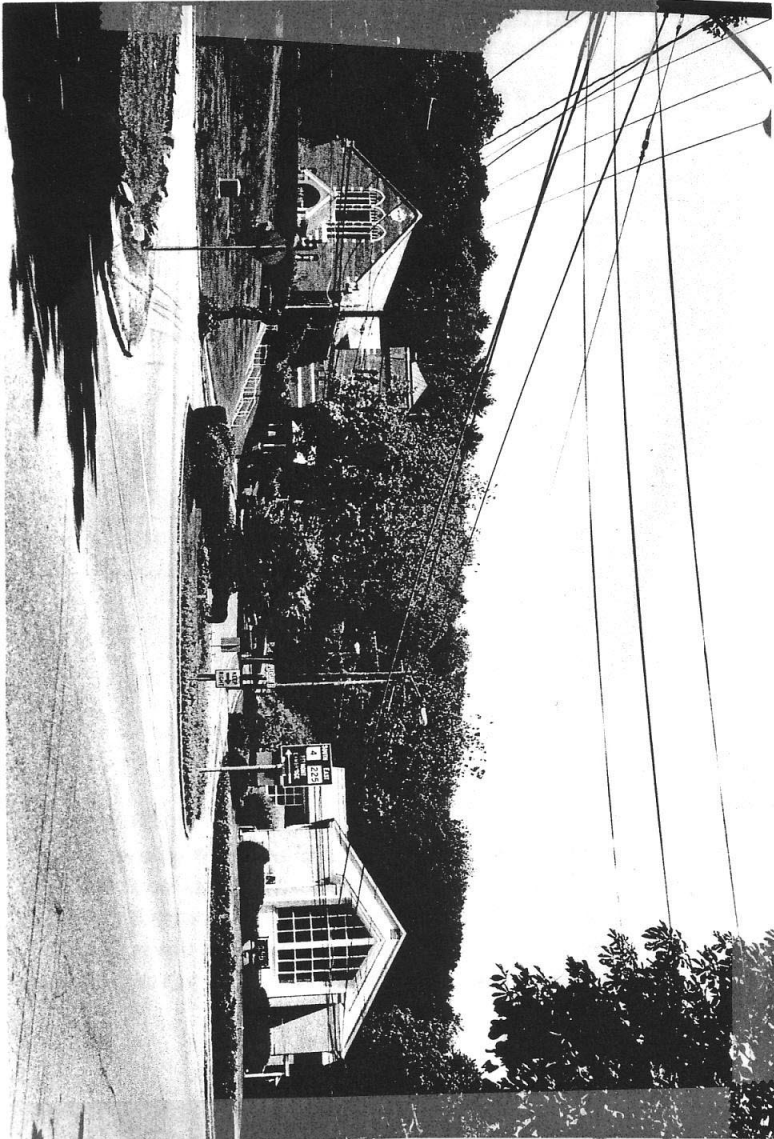
Assessor's Sheets USGS Quad Area Letter Form Numbers in Area

22

Boston
North

AR 1537-1540/
938-940

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION



Town Lexington

Place (*neighborhood or village*)
East Lexington

Name of Area Sacred Heart Parish Complex

Present Use Religious

Construction Dates or Period 1929-1957

Overall Condition Good

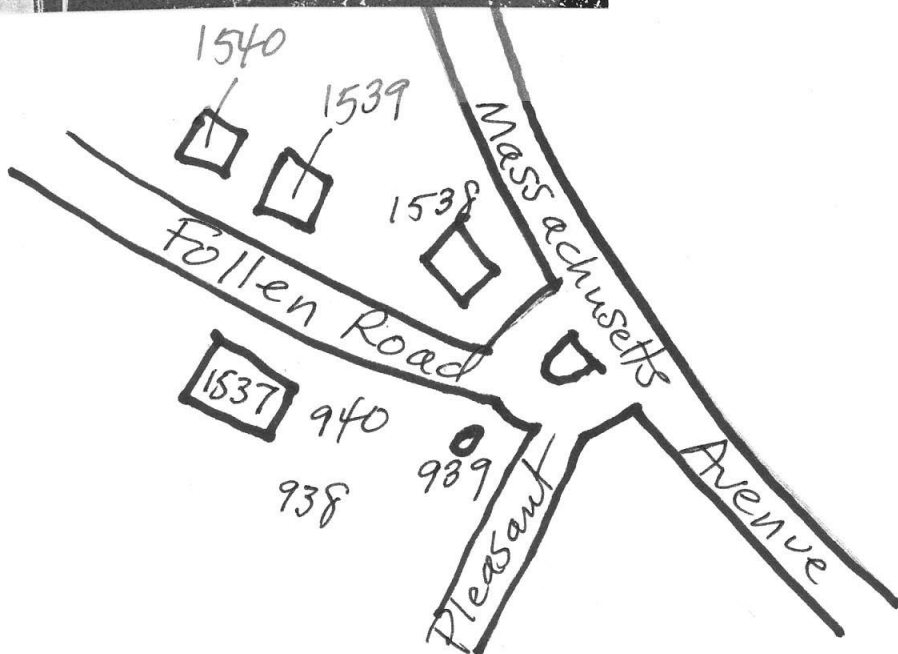
Major Intrusions and Alterations None

Acreage 2.23 acres

Recorded by Lisa Mausolf

Organization Massachusetts Historical Commission

Date (*month/year*) July-August 2005



Follow Massachusetts Historical Commission Survey Manual instructions for completing this form.

AREA FORM

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

Describe architectural, structural and landscape features and evaluate in terms of other areas within the community. .

The Sacred Heart Parish complex consists of three main buildings: the church, the parish center and the rectory. The buildings are located near Mass. Ave. and Follen Road in East Lexington.

Set atop a low hill at the corner of Follen Road and Pleasant Street, the Sacred Heart Church (16 Follen Road, 1929/1948) is a brick structure designed in the Gothic Revival style. Construction of the church began in 1929 although it was 1948 before the building was completed. The church is constructed of red brick laid in a Flemish bond with stone trim. The church is oriented with its gablefront facing Pleasant Street to the east. The main entrance porch is centered on the gablefront and displays a slate roof supported by two clusters of three posts with a pointed arch under the scalloped bargeboard. The double vertical board doors display strap hinges and a stone quoined enframing. An additional, similar entrance porch was constructed at the base of the square tower on the north (Follen Road) elevation in 1996. The church roof is covered with slate except for the tower which is topped by standing seam metal. There are gabled transepts on the north and south elevations; the west elevation terminates in a polygonal apse. Each of the gables is punctuated by a set of three pointed arch windows filled with leaded glass with tracery at the top and pivot sash at the bottom. Contrasting with the brick are stone or concrete lintels, beltcourses, quoins, statues in niches, decorative medallions at the tops of the gables and carved squares at the gable ends. There are also bands of concrete and brick headers arranged in a checkerboard design above the stained glass windows and on the tower.

In front of the church is a memorial garden dedicated to Fr. Martin Ultan McCabe. To the southeast of the church is a brick wall and niche with a marble statue of a barefoot Jesus. It is labeled as the work of Ada Prato, Boston, Mass., 1952.

Across the street from the church is the Sacred Heart Parish Center (718 Mass. Ave., 1957) designed by architects Whelan and Westman. The two-story building is constructed of a buff brick laid in a common bond alternating five courses of stretcher brick to a single course alternating stretchers and headers. Capped by an asphalt-shingled gable roof, the building is rectangular in plan with several projections. The pediment end facing Mass. Ave. is fronted by a gabled projection with an angled wall of glass on the façade and entablatured entrances on the adjacent walls. An additional entrance is located in the wide gable facing Follen Road and displays a "Colonial" pilastered entablature with a round arch. The predominant window on the building is a tri-part unit with casements flanking a central fixed pane. Other windows include double-hung 2/2 sash. Inside the building contains a chapel and assembly hall. A large parking lot is located behind the building.

To the west of the Parish Center is the Sacred Heart Rectory (21 Follen Road, ca. 1920), a 2 ½-story, 3 x 3-bay hip-roofed cottage which the parish acquired in 1961. The dwelling is sheathed in vinyl siding and rests on a cobblestone foundation. The hip roof is sheathed in asphalt shingles with hipped dormers rising from each of the roof slopes. The house is fronted by a single-story porch which also wraps around the east side and is supported by pairs of wood posts. Underneath the porch, the center entrance with sidelights is flanked by two tripart windows. Other windows on the house include individual and paired 6/1 double-hung windows. Offset to the northwest is a two-story, hip-roofed addition resting on a concrete foundation. The windows contain double-hung 6/1 sash arranged individually and in groups. Attached to the west side of the addition is a ca. 1920 cobblestone garage with an asphalt hip roof. Modern overhead doors provide access to the three-car garage.

Recommended for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. *If checked, you must attach a completed National Register Criteria Statement form.*

INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

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

Town
LEXINGTON

Property Address
FOLLEN RD. & MASS. AVE.

Area(s) Form No.

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HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

Explain historical development of the area. Discuss how this area relates to the historical development of the community.

The Sacred Heart parish began in the early 1920s as a mission church of St. Brigid's, the first Catholic parish in Lexington. Initially Mass was held in the East Village Hall (East Lexington Fire Station). The fundraising drive for a new church was spearheaded by Father William J. McCarthy who served as pastor of St. Brigid's from 1921 until 1949. Ground was broken at the corner of Follen Road and Pleasant Street in the summer of 1929. The building site was the place where, on April 19, 1775, the British laid hold of Ben Wellington, the first armed man taken captive in the American Revolution (a historic marker commemorating this is located in the front yard of the church).

Pews were installed on the bare concrete floors and the interior remained unfinished for many years. The first Mass at the Sacred Heart Church was celebrated on Christmas Eve 1929 utilizing the Senior Choir from St. Brigid's. The choir loft was then located over the Follen Road entrance. Various difficulties were encountered during construction including the bigotry of abutters and the limited funds available to complete the building during the Depression. The contractor reportedly went into bankruptcy because of the extraordinary amount of blasting required. The basement area is still limited because of the existence of ledge. On November 11, 1931 the Chancery set the parish boundaries. The parish was formally called into being by Cardinal O'Connell on November 18, 1931.

In February 1946 Rev. William Desmond wrote to the Chancellor requesting permission to spend \$2,923 to waterproof the church and to retain architect Leo Whelan to draw plans for completing the interior. By the 1940s the walls of the church had started buckling under the weight of the roof. In 1948 the church was finally completed. The firm of Whelan and Westman devised a cloister arch to take the weight off the roof. The choir loft, then inside the Follen Road entrance, was moved to the rear of the church. Donors came forward to provide pews, windows, confessionals, altars, fonts, and reredoes. The pastor, Fr. William J. Desmond, donated six apse windows and the statue of St. Joseph. Walsh Brothers Contracting completed the work in November 1948.

A new Parish Center was opened in 1957, designed by the firm of Whelan & Westman. In 1961 the Lowell-Duff House at 21 Follen Road, next to the Parish Center, was bought and made into a rectory. (Various other structures had previously served as rectories including the Rest Inn at 223 Mass. Ave., the Fay House at 827 Mass. Ave., and the McCarron House at 840 Mass. Ave.). The house was constructed about 1920 for Joseph B. Lowell and his wife, Lizzie. It was acquired by Catherine Duff in 1924 and remained in the family until Susan Duff sold it to the Archdiocese in 1961.

Over the years, various alterations were made to the interior of the church. In 1967 the high altar at the back of the church was moved forward to face the congregation. Changes in liturgy soon led to further changes in the physical layout of the sanctuary. To celebrate its 50th birthday, in 1981 the interior of the church underwent an extensive renovation. The altar was moved forward twenty feet from its 1967 site and was placed on a raised, wooden platform, surrounded on three sides by seating. The choir was placed where the old altar had stood, facing outward to the congregation. A new four foot square marble cube was installed on the parquet platform to serve as the new altar. The seats that had faced the walls on the sides of the sanctuary were removed entirely. Elsewhere the traditional pews were replaced with upholstered chairs. The renovation also included a baptismal area, a shrine and a space for private devotions. The old confessional booths were removed and replaced by reconciliation rooms. The wood beams were cleaned and decorative plasterwork was painted in red and gold with the arches highlighted in gold trim. Four new stained glass windows were also installed. The work was completed under the guidance of Rambusch Associates, a New York liturgical architectural firm (*Lexington Minute-man*, Sept. 17, 1981). Rededication ceremonies were held on October 24 & 25, 1981. A memorial garden in honor of Father Martin Ultan McCabe was installed in front of the church in 1991. A new entrance was added to the Follen Road side of the church in 1996.

As part of the current Archdiocesan Reconfiguration plan, one parish will be created in Lexington from the existing two (St. Brigid's and Sacred Heart) by appointing the current pastor of Sacred Heart to be pastor of all of Lexington. Under his direction, parishioners will have a year to prepare a proposal to the Archdiocese regarding which facilities they feel will best serve the needs of Catholics in Lexington (RCAB website).

INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

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

Town
LEXINGTON

Property Address
FOLLEN RD. & MASS. AVE.

Area(s) Form No.

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CONDITIONS ASSESSMENT

At this writing (July 2005), the Sacred Heart Parish is still operational. The three parish buildings all appear to be in good condition and well-maintained.

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

"A Brief Historical Perspective of Sacred Heart Church, Lexington", Feb. 1990 [Cary Memorial Library, vertical file].

Archdiocese of Boston, Archives, Brighton, Massachusetts.

Lord, Robert H., John E. Sexton and Edward T. Harrington. *History of the Archdiocese of Boston in the Various Stages of Its Development, 1604-1943*. New York: Sheed & Ward, 1944.

Massachusetts Department of Public Safety, Division of Inspection, Record of Plans Filed. [Mass. Archives, Boston, Mass.]

McAlear, John. "Sacred Heart Parish, Lexington, Mass.: A Brief History", Jan. 1972. [Cary Memorial Library, vertical file].

Middlesex South Registry of Deeds, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

"New Catholic Church Opened Christmas Eve", *Lexington Times-Minuteman*, January 3, 1930.

"Sacred Heart Parish, Lexington, Massachusetts: 1931-1991, 60 Years A Community Committed to Growth". [Cary Memorial Library, vertical file].

"Sacred Heart parish marks six decades of change, growth", *Lexington Minute-man*, November 14, 1991, p. 15.

Williamson, Marcia. "Sacred Heart has facelift", *Lexington Minute-man*, September 17, 1981.

INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

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

Town
LEXINGTON

Property Address
FOLLEN RD. & MASS. AVE.

Area(s) Form No.

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Data Sheet
Sacred Heart Parish
Lexington, Massachusetts

Tax Map ID	Property Name	Address	Date of Construction	Architect/Builder
22/138	Church	16 Follen Road	1929-31	<i>Edw TP Graham</i>
22/65	Parish Center	718 Mass. Ave.	1957	Whelan & Westman
22/137	Rectory	21 Follen Road	ca. 1920	

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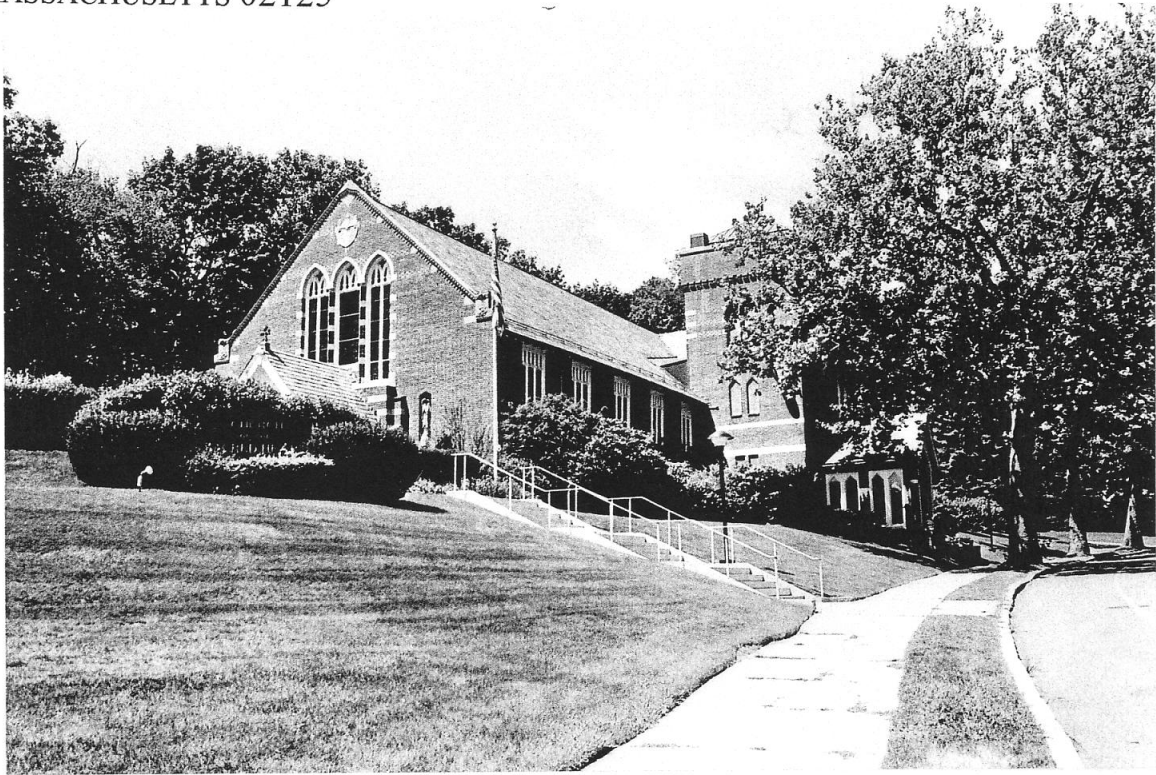
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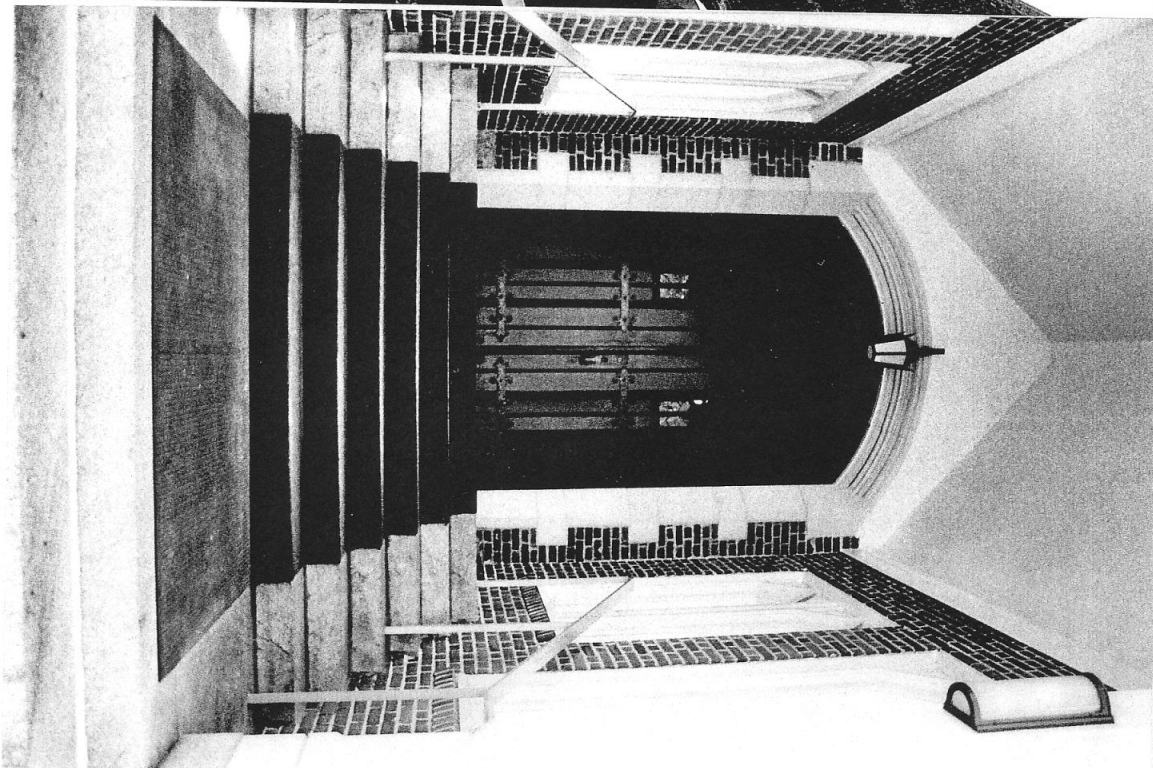
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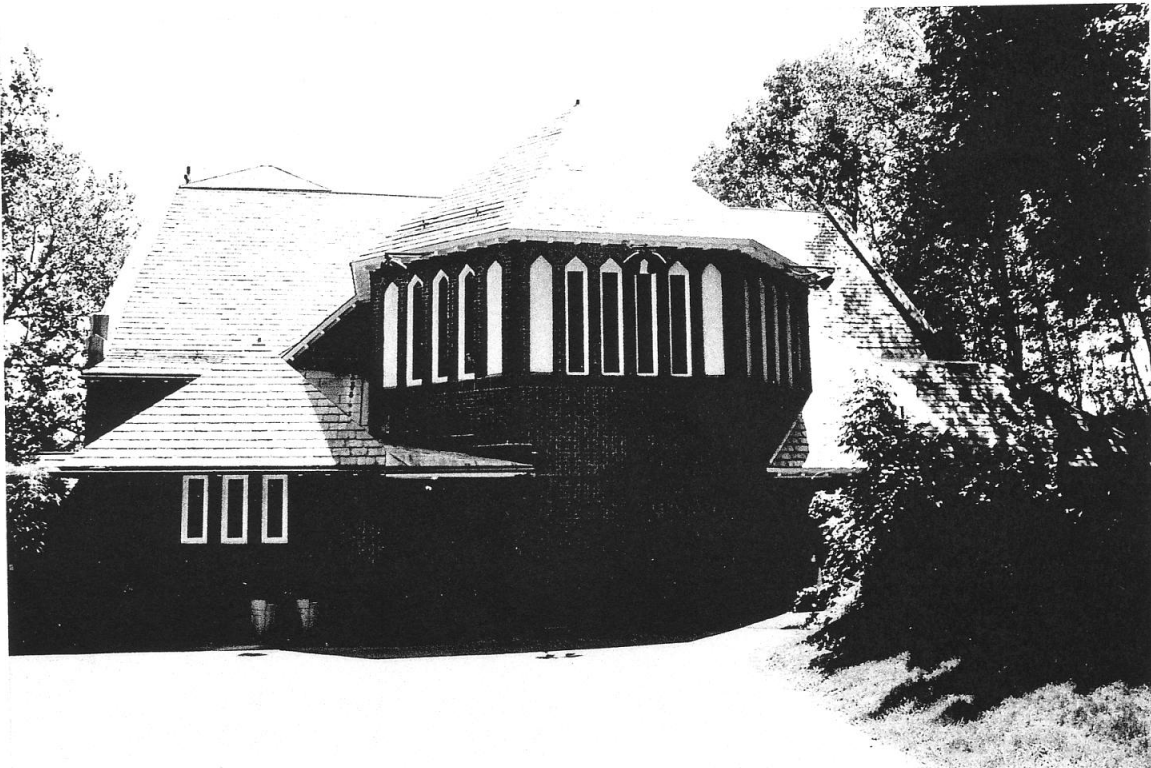
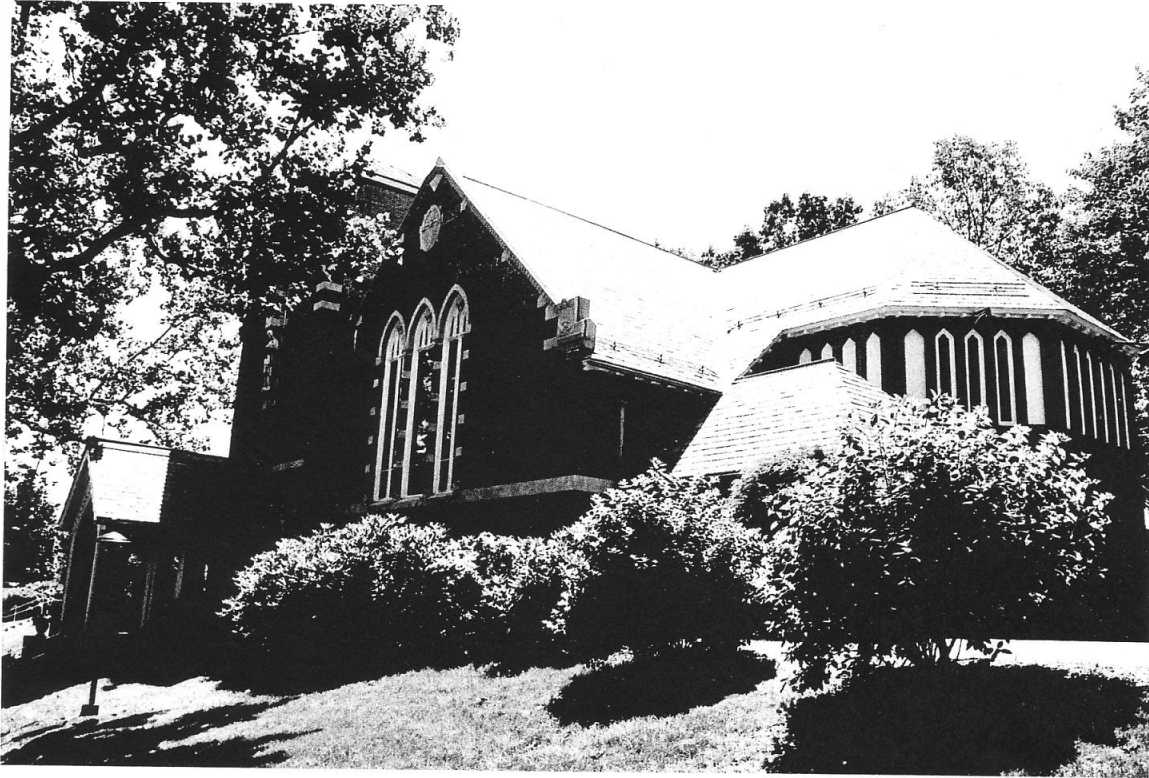
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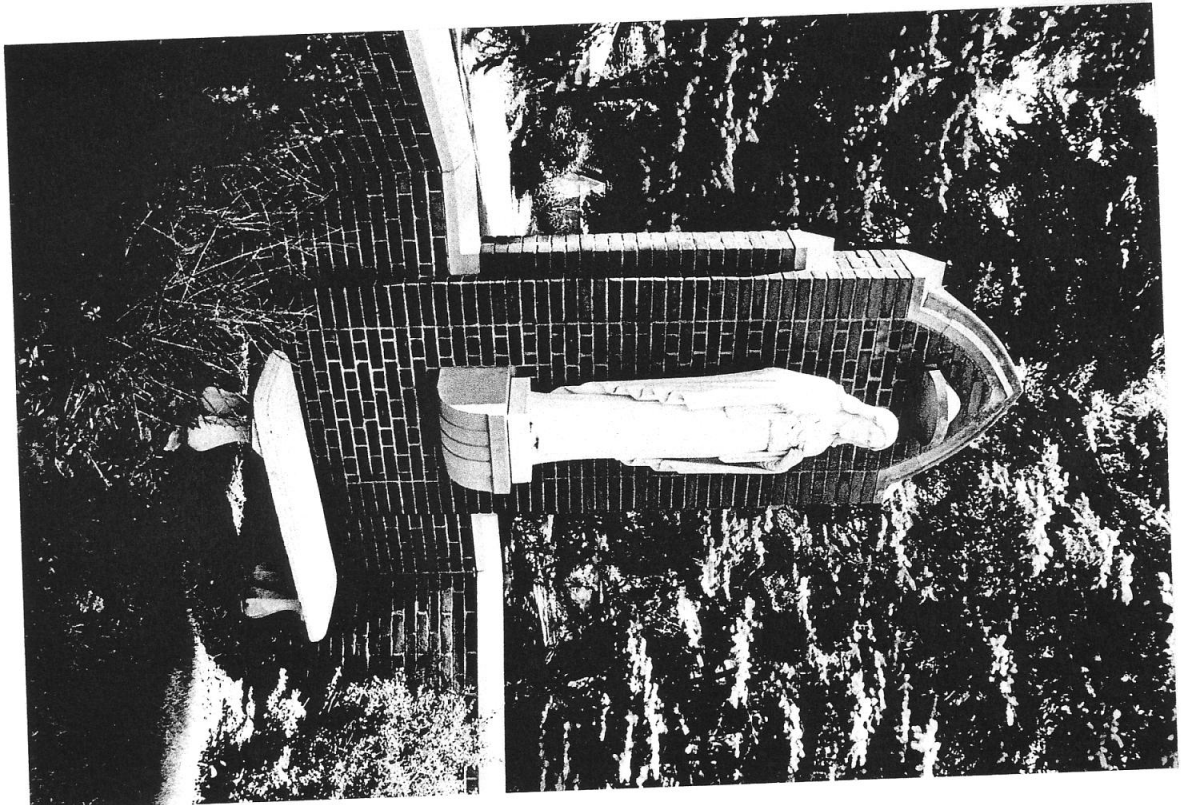
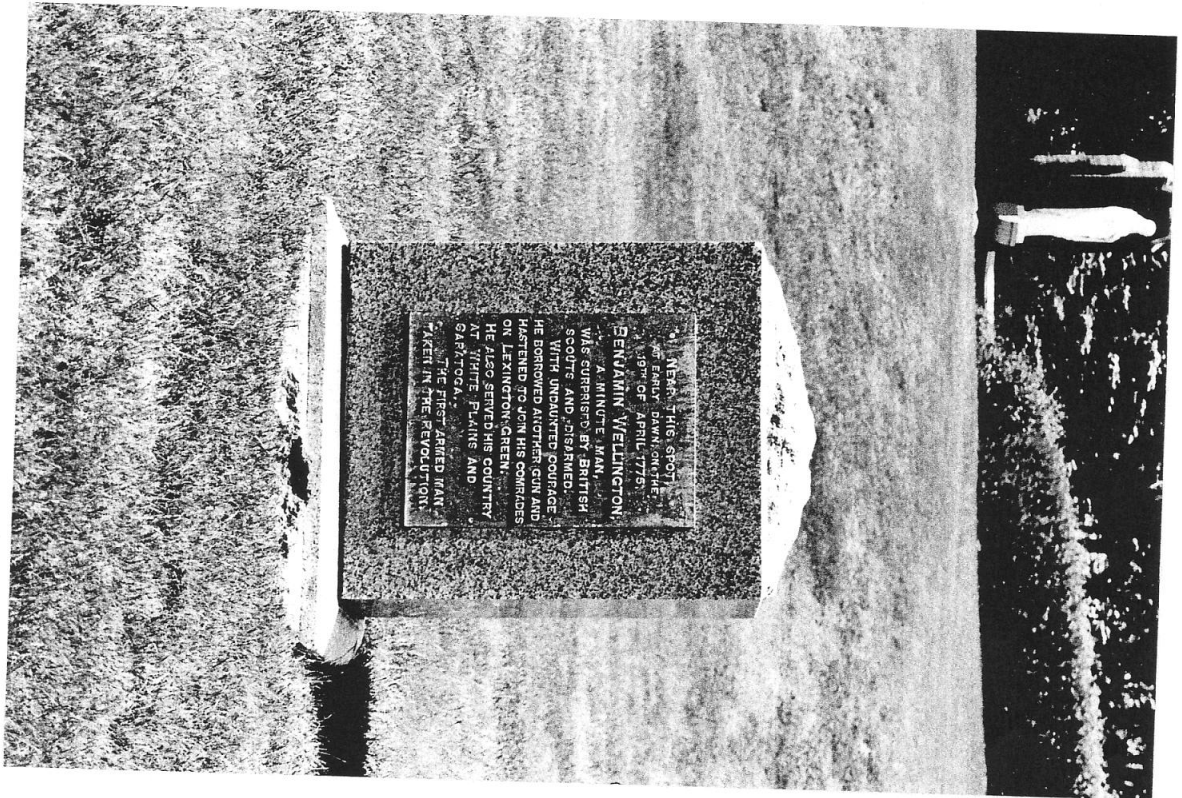
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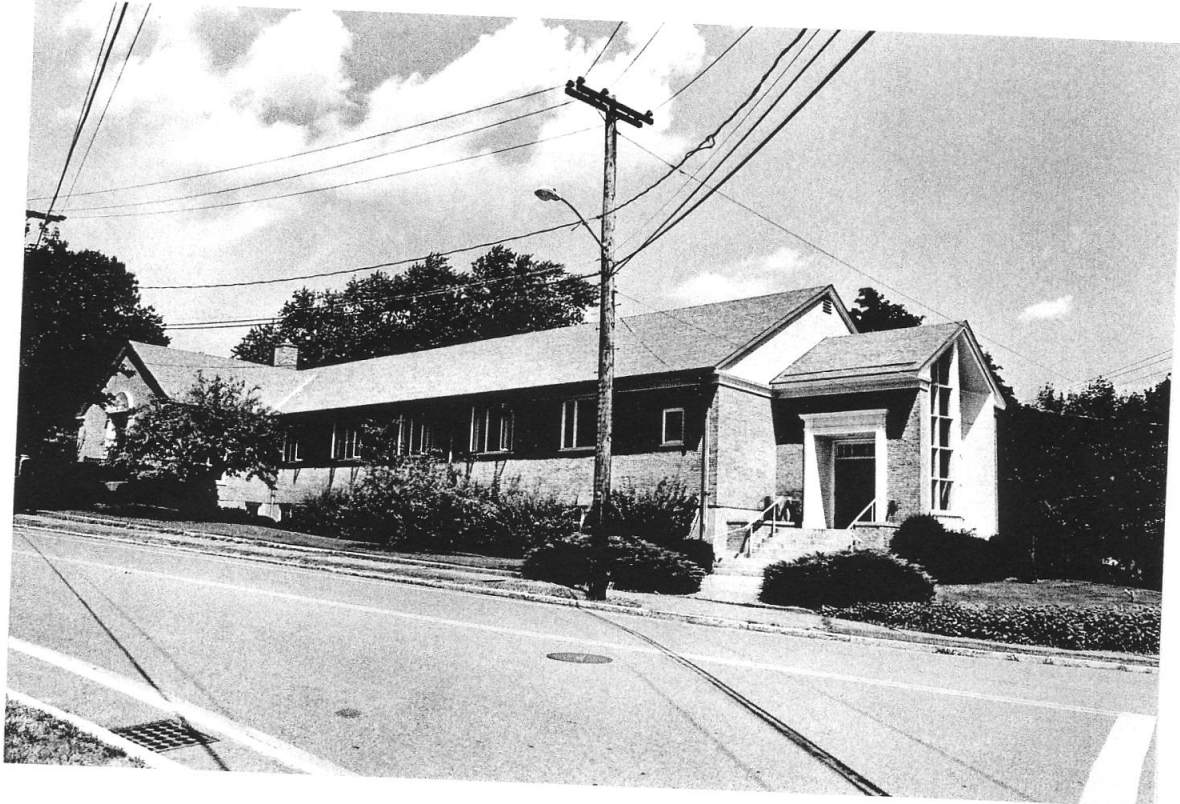
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MASSACHUSETTS ARCHIVES BUILDING
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LEXINGTON

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MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
MASSACHUSETTS ARCHIVES BUILDING
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD
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Town
LEXINGTON

Property Address
SACRED HEART CHURCH

Area(s) Form No.

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ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

The 1929 Sacred Heart Church was designed by noted Boston architect, Edward T.P. Graham (1872-1964) who maintained an office at 71 Newbury Street. Graham graduated from Harvard in 1900 and was the school's first Travelling Fellow to Rome and winner of the prestigious Ecole des Beaux Arts award as a student. He received a Masters degree from Boston College in 1915.

Graham became a high profile ecclesiastical architect with dozens of church commissions in Massachusetts and in the Midwest (he also maintained an office in Cleveland, Ohio). The MACRIS data base includes forty commissions in Massachusetts and includes buildings in Beverly, Boston, Brockton, Burlington, Cambridge, Chelsea, Duxbury, Gloucester, Newton, Quincy, Saugus, Somerville, Tyngsborough, Watertown and Winthrop. These include his own parish church – St. Paul's in Cambridge (1913), schools, rectories, and hospitals including St. Elizabeth's in Brighton (1926 & 1928). At his death in 1964 Graham was called "the Dean of Boston architects". The archives of his works and correspondence are located in Burns Library at Boston College.

BIBLIOGRAPHY:

Massachusetts Historical Commission, MACRIS data base.

O'Sullivan, Michael J. "Sacred Heart 75th Anniversary: Celebrating the Past, Present and Future", December 16, 2007.

(Indicates drawings of the 1929 Church are in the Boston Archdiocese archives.)

Supplement prepared by:
Lisa Mausolf
September 2009