

City of Cambridge

MASSACHUSETTS

ALL CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS

In City Council August 7, 1991

199

	YEA	NAY	ABSENT	PRESENT	
Mr. Ed Cyr	✓				
Mr. Francis H. Duehay	✓				
Mr. Jonathan S. Myers	✓				
Mr. Kenneth E. Reeves	✓				
Mrs. Sheila T. Russell	✓				
Mr. Walter J. Sullivan	✓				
Mr. Timothy J. Toomey, Jr.	✓				
Mr. William H. Walsh	✓				
Mayor Alice K. Wolf	✓				

9 0

CAMBRIDGE CITY HALL
795 MASSACHUSETTS AVENUE

LANDMARK DESIGNATION STUDY REPORT
PREPARED BY HARRIET WHITE
CAMBRIDGE HISTORICAL COMMISSION
APRIL 23, 1990

CONTENTS

I. Location and Economic Status.....	2
II. Description.....	3
III. History of the Property.....	7
IV. Significance of the Property.....	13
V. Relationship to Criteria.....	17
VI. Recommendations.....	18
VII. Standards for Design Review.....	19
VIII. Proposed Order.....	22

The Cambridge City Hall is significant in the city's social, architectural and political history as a prominent landmark which has served as the seat of the municipal government for over one hundred years. It is also significant as one of two surviving buildings donated to the city by Frederick H. Rindge. Architecturally, it is significant in terms of its period and style. It is one of less than a half dozen public and institutional buildings in the city designed in the Richardsonian Romanesque style.

I. Location and Economic Status

A. Address

City Hall is located at 795 Massachusetts Avenue. The parcel is identified as Number 33 on Assessor's Map 118. The lot on which City Hall stands contains 47,878 square feet of land with a frontage of 191 feet on the north side of Massachusetts Avenue. City Hall is located just west of Central Square. It is in non-profit use and thus is not taxable.

The building is located in a O-3 zone, which allows for business, professional office and multi-family residential use with an FAR of 3.0 and no height limitation. The building is a contributing structure in the Central Square National Register District (October 11, 1989).

B. Ownership and Occupancy

City Hall is owned by the City of Cambridge and houses the executive offices of the city government, the Mayor's Office and the City Council Chamber.

C. Area Description

City Hall stands on Massachusetts Avenue, the city's primary east-west thoroughfare, in an area of large, multi-story commercial, civic, institutional and apartment buildings. The lot on which City Hall stands is bounded on three sides (north, east and west) by residential neighborhoods of Mid Cambridge. These residential streets contain many Mansard style houses built during the post Civil War period; subsequent infill included residences in later nineteenth century styles, including rowhouses, three deckers and apartment buildings. To the east, at 12 Inman Street, stands a modern thirty unit apartment building (1966) and Saint Mary's Syrian Orthodox Catholic Church (1822; 1858). The church was moved from Lafayette Square to its present site in 1888. Adjacent to the church, at the corner of Inman Street and Massachusetts Avenue is the Cambridge Mutual Fire Insurance Building (1888, John A. Hasty). Designed in the Richardsonian Romanesque style, it is an important stylistic companion to City Hall. Opposite City Hall on Massachusetts Avenue stand the Y.M.C.A. (1896, Hartwell, Richardson & Driver; 1910, expansion by Newhall & Blevins) and the Central Square Post Office, (1933, Charles R. Greco). To the west of City Hall, at the corner of Massachusetts Avenue and Bigelow Street is the Lombardi Municipal Building (1950), a two-story office block. Adjacent to the Lombardi Building at 5A Bigelow Street is a small brick Cape Cod style house (1961).

D. Planning Issues

Central Square has been the focus of a major planning effort which culminated in the 1989 passage of overlay zoning designed to stabilize and upgrade retail activity and architectural development in the Square. The Central Square Action Plan, from which the overlay zone developed, was adopted in 1987 and identified eight goals for strengthening Central Square's retail viability, among them increasing the market capture of the neighborhoods, improving the physical environment, and encouraging an economically and socially diverse retail base. The economic slowdown, which began in 1989, has hampered the private sector's implementation of these goals but the city is strongly committed to seeing them adopted.

The major project relating to City Hall is its planned restoration, due to commence in 1991. As part of this effort, the main tasks will be to add a second means of egress from the upper floors, to repair masonry damage in the tower, to repair historic wooden windows and upgrade interior finishes. The work, which will be done to the Standards of the Secretary of the Interior, has been planned by Robert G. Neiley Associates in consultation with the Executive Director.

Of the other upcoming projects in the neighborhood of City Hall, the largest will be major new construction planned for the Y.W.C.A. site east of City Hall on Temple Street. The Phinney Pool (1962) and its locker rooms (1954) will be demolished for construction of a four-story, moderately-priced hotel. Other planned alterations in the immediate area include street improvements on Bishop Allen Drive (summer, 1990) and addition of handicapped access entrances to the Cambridge Post Office. It is unlikely that these projects will have any significant impacts on City Hall.

E. Maps

MASSACHUSETTS
AVE.

CLINTON

BIGELOW

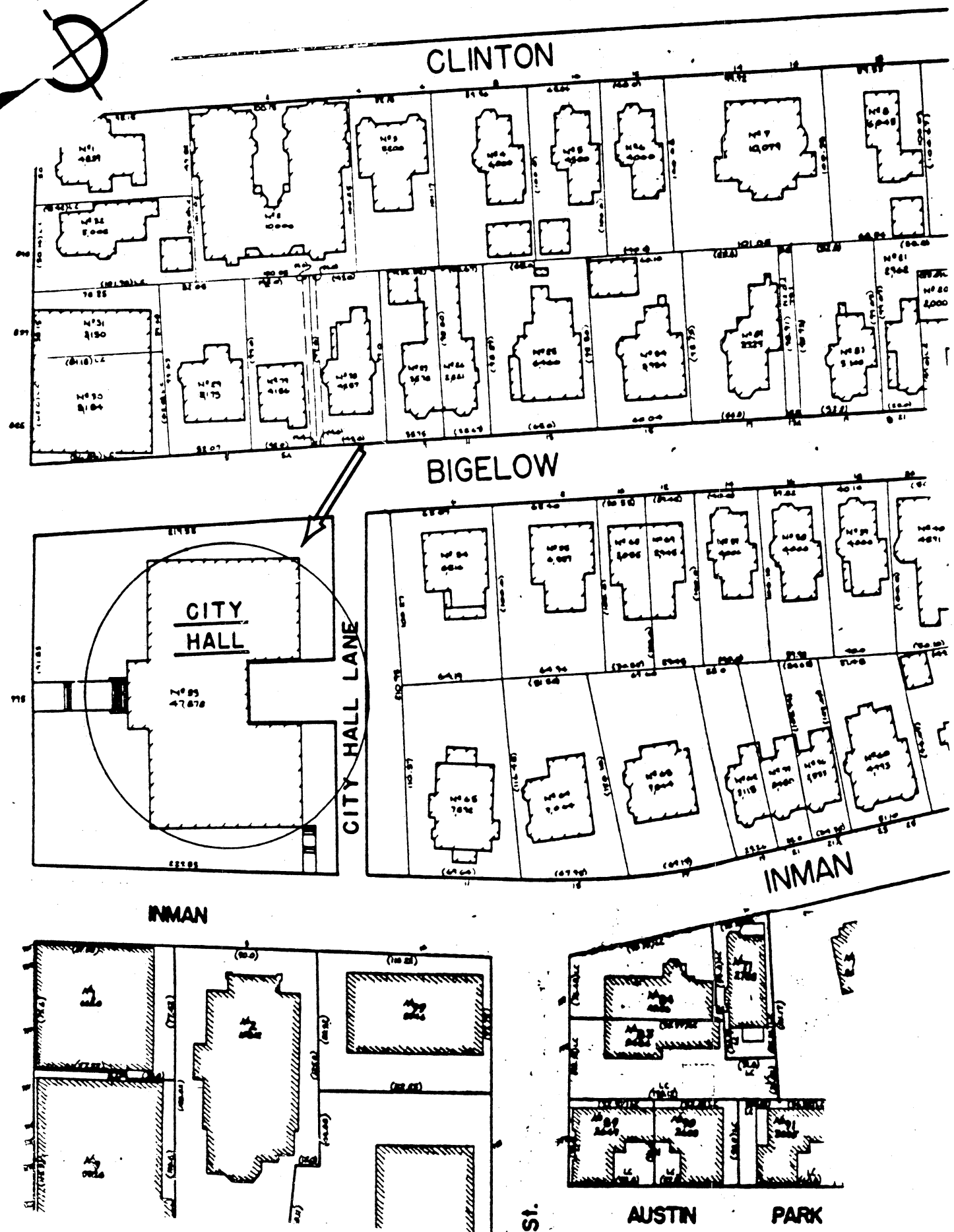
INMAN

INMAN

St.

AUSTIN

PARK



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE

SCALE: 1" = 40' JUNE - 1978

DIMENSIONS FROM DEED, LAND COURT
OR LAYOUT PLANS ARE IN BRACKETS ()
LAND COURT MARKED L.C. ALL OTHER
DIMENSIONS ARE MEASURED.

City Hall
795 Massachusetts Avenue

II. Description

A. Type and Use

City Hall is a civic building built in 1888, and has served as the seat of the Cambridge municipal government for one hundred years. The building was designed by the firm of Longfellow, Alden and Harlow, and contains offices of the various departments of the city government, as well as the City Council Chamber and the Mayor's Office.

B. Physical Description

City Hall is a monumental edifice designed in the Richardsonian Romanesque mode, the preferred style for civic buildings during the 1880s. The building is set back fifty feet from Massachusetts Avenue and stands on a terraced, hilltop site. City Hall is separated from Massachusetts Avenue by a broad expanse of lawn with granite curbing defining the perimeter of the lot.

City Hall is a three and one-half story, hip-roofed structure based on a U-plan with an open court to the north. The building is eleven bays wide and six bays deep, with a symmetrically organized facade. The foundation measures sixty feet by one hundred fifty-six feet; each wing measures thirty-two feet by sixty feet. The steeply pitched hip roof of slate has slightly flared eaves and a ridge and coping of copper. There is a brownstone chimney on the rear roof slope of each wing.

The building height to the cornice is forty-six feet. The outer walls are twenty inches thick, consisting of eight inches of granite and twelve inches of solid brick.

The focal point of the symmetrical design is the pyramidal-roofed central entrance tower which is twenty-six feet square and reaches a height of approximately one hundred sixty feet.

The central entrance is approached by a broad walk and a ceremonial flight of stairs terminating in a balustraded terrace. The oak entrance doors with elaborate wrought iron strap hinges is set within a Syrian arched opening in the base of the tower. A wrought iron grille screens the transom. The entrance is flanked by pairs of engaged colonnettes with capitals of foliated ornament, and elaborate three-armed lanterns of wrought iron. Above the entrance is a balcony of brownstone resting on consoles. A triple round-headed window opens onto the balcony. Beneath the balcony is a panel containing the following inscription:

"God has given Commandments unto Men. From these
Commandments Men have framed Laws by which to be

governed. It is honorable and praiseworthy to faithfully serve the People by helping to administer these Laws. If the Laws are not enforced, the People are not well governed."

The entrance tower has a pyramidal hip roof of extreme pitch capped with a crocket finial, a motif repeated on the four gabled wall dormers on the facade. The upper stage of the tower is an open belfry with a pair of elongated round-headed arches on each elevation. The bell suspended in the tower was made by the Meneely Company of West Troy, New York and weighs four thousand forty-seven pounds. The exact date of its manufacture is unknown. The bell contains the following inscription:

"Cheerfully I ring the hour
From my home within the tower
But I would a lesson teach
Even bells mens' hearts may reach

The Lesson:
The ballot free and pure
The rights of all secure
Wrong finds antidote
When each voter casts his vote."

A clock face eight feet in diameter with Roman numeration is located beneath each of the four belfry openings. The clock was manufactured by the E. Howard Watch and Clock Company. The tower walls are relieved by several pairs of slit windows. On the front slope of the roof there are four wall dormers faced in brownstone with crocket finials and copper ridges.

Subsidiary entrances include four on the north elevation, one on the north end of each wing, and one on the east elevation facing Bigelow Street.

Although fenestration is symmetrically placed in horizontal bands, window size and shape vary with floor level. The basement windows are 2/1 and located in masonry window wells. The windows of the first story are straight-topped, in deep reveals and divided into rectangular lights by stone mullions and transoms. Second story windows are bands of two-light round-arched openings forming an arcade. Windows at the third story level are paired rectangular openings of 1/1 vertically divided by Romanesque colonnettes.

A polychrome effect is achieved through the use of contrasting colors of masonry for the exterior wall surfaces. The wall material is pink Milford granite ashlar with rough hewn surfaces laid in regular courses. The granite is relieved by decorative trim of Longmeadow

brownstone used for the foundation, belt courses delineating the floor levels, and the window and door surrounds.

Much of the original interior, including furnishings, remains intact. Interior alterations have consisted mainly of partitioning some of the larger rooms to create additional offices. Many of the interior spaces contain handsome panelling and elaborately carved trim of oak and ash.

The vestibule has wall surfaces of face brick with marble panels and a marble mosaic tile floor. A large elaborate wrought iron lantern is suspended from the vestibule ceiling. Interior oak doors have upper panels of leaded glass, and open into the large formal entrance hall. The entrance hall measures twelve feet by one hundred feet. The staircase extends from the basement to the third story ceiling, and is composed of three runs around an open well on either side of the wide central flight. This wide stair divides at a landing and leads to the floors above in two runs. The staircase is finished and wainscoted in oak as are the halls, doors, and door and window finish of the interior. The stair railing of oak has turned balusters and carved posts. Engaged Romanesque style columns are placed in the entrance hall in four corners which mark the base of the tower.

At each end of the main entrance hall is a long corridor leading to the entrances in the rear wings of the building. These corridors have been enclosed to form additional office space. The first floor rooms contain the principal offices. Additional offices are located on the second floor of the building, along with the Mayor's Office and the City Council Chamber. The third floor also contains offices; in the basement are offices, storage areas and the heating apparatus.

Furniture for the building was manufactured by Keeler & Company, a local firm. The furnishings were designed with Romanesque motifs to complement the architectural style of the building. Many of the desks, benches and chairs were fashioned from quartered oak and are still in use.

The City Council Chamber, which underwent a major restoration in 1979-80, is a richly ornamented formal meeting room. Entrance is gained through panelled oak doors with elaborate surrounds. The chamber is forty-two feet by forty-eight feet, with a coffered ceiling twenty-five feet in height and a cove cornice. The main cornice consists of a series of modillions and dentils and a band of egg-and-dart molding. The Council Chamber is divided from the spectator areas by a curved railing with turned balusters and carved posts. A gallery measuring fourteen feet by forty-eight feet is located on the west wall at the same

level as the frieze which runs along the other three walls. A series of Corinthian columns spans the gallery openings.

Wall surfaces retain the original patterned stencilling in ochre on dark red; some walls have panelled oak wainscotting. Set into the wide frieze on the north and east walls are pairs of windows flanked by pilasters. Between the windows on the frieze of the south wall are plain panels framed by a stencilled floral guilloche in tan on a background of green. Bead-and-reel molding and a dentil course embellish the lower edge of the frieze.

III. History of the Property

A. Historic Development Patterns

1. Deed History of the Parcel

City Hall is located on land which was part of the original seventeenth century land grant to Governor Thomas Dudley. During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries a succession of owners kept it intact as a single holding. It was used for timber cutting and the grazing of livestock.

In 1756 one hundred eighty acres of land was sold by John Bannister of Newport, Rhode Island to Ralph Inman, a prosperous merchant. This land lay east of the settled part of Cambridge, on the north side of Massachusetts Avenue. Inman married Susanna Speakman in 1746. (Her twin sister Hannah was married to John Rowe of Boston, for whom Rowe's Wharf was named.) Inman was a member of King's Chapel in Boston, and a founder of Christ Church, Cambridge.

In 1756, the year he bought the land from John Bannister, Inman built a large three story mansion and landscaped the grounds of his property. The grounds contained a pond surrounded by willow trees and long carriage drives bordered by ornamental locust trees. The rooms of the house were said to be spacious, and handsomely panelled. An outer door faced Inman Lane (later Inman Street).

Because of his Tory sympathies, Inman and his family were forced to flee during the Revolution. Inman's estate was then confiscated by the Committee of Safety.

After the Battle of Bunker Hill, the need to house Revolutionary troops transformed the Inman estate and its grounds into a military barracks and encampment. During the siege of Boston, the Inman mansion was occupied by General Israel Putnam and used as his headquarters. Putnam played an important role in forcing the British evacuation of Boston in 1776.

After the evacuation, the Committee of Correspondence, a Revolutionary group with governmental powers, leased the Inman estate. It was not until 1783 that the ownership of the house and grounds were restored to the Inmans.

In the years following the Revolution, the Inman estate was one of several large Mid Cambridge landholdings to be broken up. After the death of Ralph Inman in 1788, Leonard Jarvis purchased the estate from the Inman heirs. The property, by then consisting of over two hundred forty-five acres, was soon seized by the government for non-payment of debt. The house and adjoining forty-seven acres of land

were purchased by Jonathan Loring Austin and the remainder of the land was divided into fifty-four houselots which were sold at public auction in 1801.

At the time of the government auction the land along Main Street (Massachusetts Avenue) was sparsely developed. Although the opening of the West Boston Bridge in 1793 had generated increased traffic and commercial activity in the Central Square area, development of the land along Main Street (Massachusetts Avenue) progressed slowly. Shops and stores began to appear and the area was gradually transformed from a haymarket to a bustling commercial district.

At the time of the 1801 auction of the Jarvis property, the largest parcel, consisting of forty-seven acres and the mansion house, was acquired by Jonathan Austin, who widened Inman Lane (Inman Street) which ran along the eastern edge of the present-day City Hall parcel. Austin also laid out sections of Austin and Temple Streets, and sold houselots on Main Street (Massachusetts Avenue) between those streets.

In 1818 Austin sold the mansion house to Benjamin Bigelow, who laid out Bigelow Street which runs along the western edge of the City Hall parcel. In 1840 the Inman mansion was situated on a parcel of land bounded by Massachusetts Avenue and Harvard Street and from Austin Street (now Bishop Allen Drive) to just beyond Bigelow Street. A long broad walk bordered by high box bushes led from Massachusetts Avenue to the mansion. A large circle of trees was said to have stood between the house and Inman Lane. In 1849 the Bigelow heirs sold the house and land to Samuel P. Allen, who maintained the small estate intact. Allen's widow inherited the property and after her marriage to Reverend Lewis Colby sold a portion of it to him and the remainder to Albert H. Vinal.

In 1868 Albert Vinal subdivided his portion of the old Inman estate into houselots along Inman and Bigelow Streets. These sold quickly, and by 1873 the area was almost entirely built up with residences designed in the prevailing Mansard style. The neighborhood had become a stylish place of residence for members of the emerging middle class who had prospered during the post Civil War years. Albert Vinal sold the Inman house to Mr. D.A. Buckley who moved it to the corner of Brookline and Auburn Streets, and converted it to a tenement. The house was demolished in 1961. The Inman land, with the remaining cellar hole was purchased by Edwin Dresser, who retained possession of the property until 1888, when it was taken by the City.

At that time several adjacent residential properties were also taken by eminent domain for the purpose of erecting the present City Hall. These parcels were owned by

Edward Hyde, Theodore C. Hurd, Edmund Reardon, Elizabeth B. Jewell, Oliver H. & Sophie G. Durrell, and Josiah G. and Susan E. Chase, and were acquired at a cost of \$82,000, paid for by Frederick H. Rindge, the city's benefactor, who turned over the deed to the city. The total land acquired through this acquisition amounted to 48,464 square feet. The site for the future city hall measured one hundred ninety feet along Massachusetts Avenue, two hundred thirty feet along Bigelow Street, two hundred thirty feet along Inman Street and two hundred twenty feet along the rear line.

Four elaborate houses were relocated to clear the site for the construction of the present City Hall. These included the Edward Hyde house (1870) which was moved in 1888 to 20-22 Bigelow Street where it still stands. The Fuller-Hurd house (c.1870), 15 Inman Street, formerly stood where the City Hall driveway was placed.

2. Development History of Parcel and Surroundings

The land on which City Hall stands was part of the original 17th century land grant to Governor Thomas Dudley. During the 17th and early 18th centuries the land went through a succession of owners who maintained it solely for the purpose of timber cutting and the grazing of livestock. It was not until 1756 when the land was bought by Ralph Inman that a mansion house was built and the grounds landscaped. Because of his Tory sympathies, Inman fled to England during the Revolution. The Inman mansion was used as headquarters by General Putnam, and following the Battle of Bunker Hill, several thousand troops were encamped on the grounds of the estate.

In 1788 Inman returned to Cambridge and once again took possession of his estate. In 1801 the estate was seized by the government from a subsequent owner for non-payment of debt. At that time it was divided into several smaller parcels and sold at public auction. Inman Lane was widened and became Inman Street. In 1818 Bigelow Street was laid out. Both these streets were lined with house lots upon which residences would slowly begin to appear.

With the opening of the West Boston Bridge in 1793 Main Street (later Massachusetts Avenue) was established as a major east-west thoroughfare. Nevertheless, development of the area proceeded slowly. The Walling Map of 1854 shows only seven houses on the north side of Main Street between Prospect and Lee Streets. Six of these structures were concentrated in the two-block area between Inman and Prospect Streets. By the 1860s a number of the larger properties in the area had been subdivided and sold off as house lots. By 1870 much of the neighborhood surrounding the future site of City Hall had been built up with large single family houses. These were primarily Italianate and Mansard

style residences occupied by businessmen and professionals who had prospered during the post Civil war years.

By the 1880s the city's unprecedented growth necessitated a larger city hall. The site selected was the area formerly occupied by the Inman estate. A number of Mansard style houses were cleared from the site to make way for the new city hall. Construction commenced in 1888 and the cornerstone was laid the following year.

By the 1890s there had been considerable infill and the area in the vicinity of City Hall was becoming more urban in character. Few side yards and vacant lots remained. Increased commercial activity at the close of the nineteenth century resulted in the appearance of additional stores, office buildings and apartment houses along Massachusetts Avenue in the area west of Central Square. The same year City hall was built the Cambridge Mutual Fire Insurance Company was constructed and the First Universalist Church (1822; 1858) was moved to 8 Inman Street. The Y.M.C.A. (1896, Hartwell & Richardson) was built shortly thereafter. There was continued residential infill along the blocks west, north and east of City Hall, including increasing numbers of multiple family dwellings. These neighborhoods have remained for the most part in residential use to the present.

In 1912 the rapid transit subway system to Boston was completed, with a station in Central Square. This reaffirmed Central Square's role as a commercial center and major stopping point along the Massachusetts Avenue corridor.

Land along Massachusetts Avenue opposite City Hall was taken for the building of the Central Square Post Office (1933). The Federal period Norris house, and several stores and apartment buildings were demolished to make way for the new post office. In addition to the building of the Post Office, several other changes in the character of the area have occurred during the twentieth century. To the rear of City Hall stands a single family Colonial Revival style house (c.1930) which contains the offices of the Cambridge Economic Opportunity Council.

In 1950 a two story office building was erected at 861 Massachusetts Avenue at the corner of Bigelow Street, replacing a Mansard residence. In 1961 a small brick Cape Cod style residence was constructed at 5A Bigelow Street to the rear of the office building. Other modern construction adjacent to the City Hall parcel includes a thirty-unit apartment building (1966) built on the site of a Mansard house at 12 Inman Street.

Numerous small retail operations line Massachusetts Avenue in the vicinity of City Hall. Many of the storefronts have been diminished by later alterations. Other structures in the vicinity of City Hall along Massachusetts Avenue have remained in institutional and office use, while the neighborhoods to the west, north and east of City Hall have remained primarily residential in character.

B. Bibliography

General Sources

An Historic Guide to Cambridge. Compiled by Members of the Hannah Winthrop Chapter, National Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution. Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1907, pp.171-177.

Cambridge Historical Commission. Survey of Architectural History in Cambridge, Report Two, Mid Cambridge, by Antoinette F. Downing, Elisabeth MacDougall and Elisabeth Pearson. Cambridge, 1967.

Cambridge Historical Commission. Survey of Architectural History in Cambridge, Report Four, Old Cambridge. Bainbridge Bunting and Robert Nylander. Cambridge, 1973.

The Rindge Gifts To The City of Cambridge, published by order of the City Council. University Press: John Wilson and Son, Cambridge, 1891, pp.67-76.

Whiffen, Marcus. American Architecture Since 1780. The M.I.T. Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1969, pp. 133-140.

Withey, Elsie R. and Henry F. Biographical Dictionary of American Architects. Hennessey & Ingalls, Inc., Los Angeles, 1970.

Government Records

Cambridge. Historical Commission. Survey files for 760 Massachusetts Avenue.

Cambridge. Historical Commission. Survey files for 795 Massachusetts Avenue.

Cambridge. Historical Commission. Survey files for Inman Street.

Cambridge. Historical Commission. Survey files for Bigelow Street.

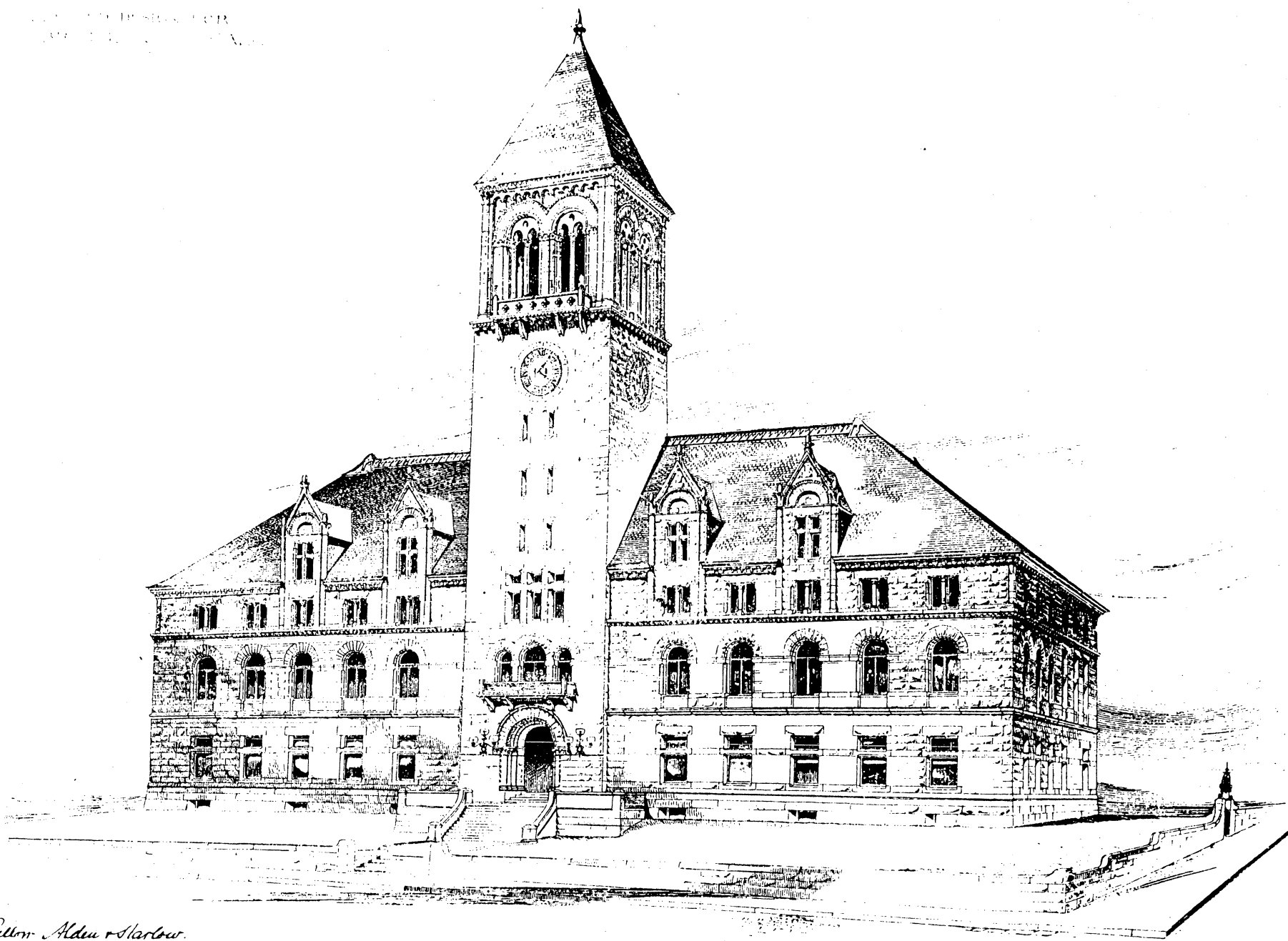
Maps and Atlases

Bromley, George W. and Walter S. Atlas of the City of Cambridge, Massachusetts. Philadelphia, 1894. 2nd ed., 1903, 3rd ed., 1916, 4th ed., 1930.

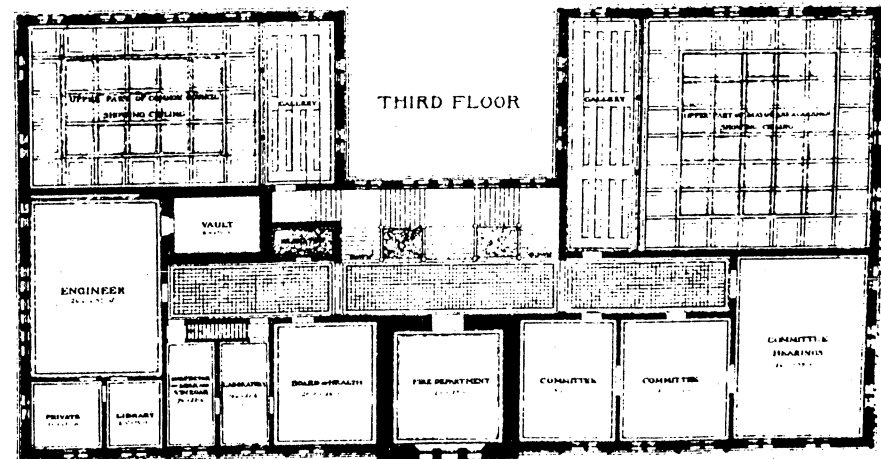
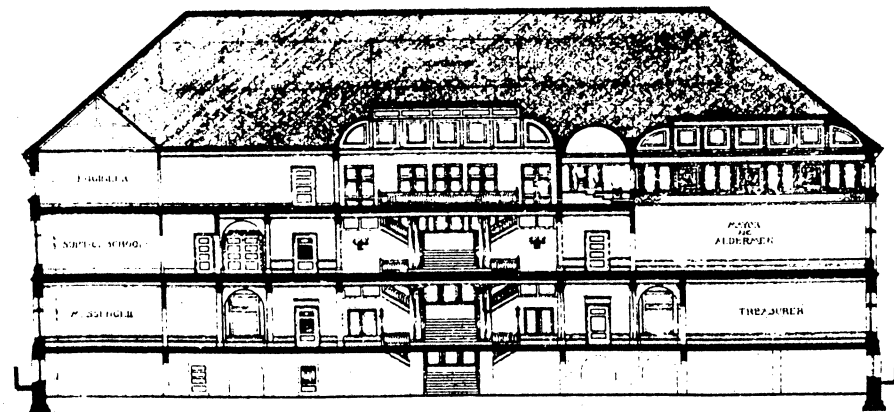
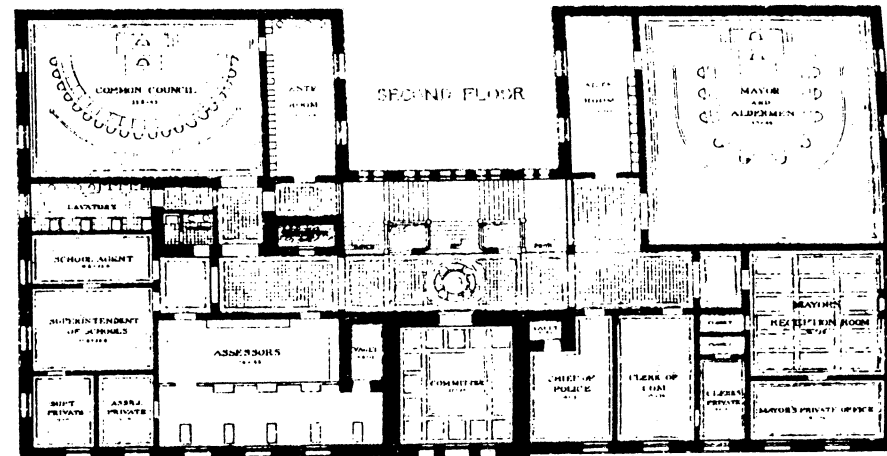
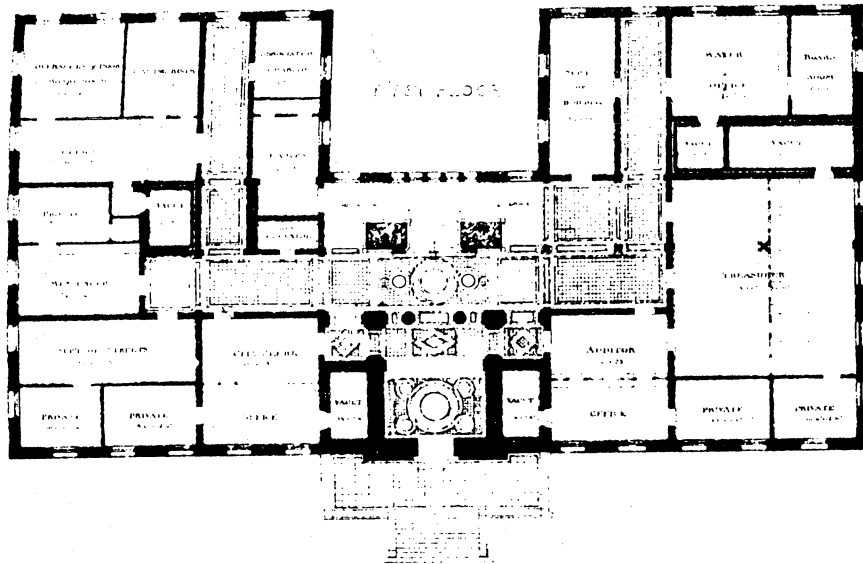
Hopkins, G.M. Atlas of the City of Cambridge, Massachusetts. Philadelphia, 1873. 2nd ed., 1886.

C. Historic Photos, Maps

UNIVERSITY OF LONDON
LIBRARY



Lingfield, Alden & Harlow.
Architects





GOD HAS GIVEN COMMANDMENTS VNTO MEN FROM THESE
COMMANDMENTS MEN HAVE FRAMED LAWS BY WHICH TO BE
GOVERNED IT IS HONORABLE AND PRAISEWORTHY TO SERVE THE
PEOPLE BY ADMINISTERING THESE LAWS FAITHFULLY IF THE LAWS
ARE NOT ENFORCED THE PEOPLE ARE NOT WELL GOVERNED.



IV. Significance of the Property

A. Historical Significance

The primary significance of City Hall lies in its political associations with the history of Cambridge, and its relationship to Frederick Rindge, the city's benefactor. Located in the heart of the city, City Hall has served as the seat of the municipal government and as a symbol of the city for over one hundred years.

The earliest town meetings in Cambridge were held in a series of four meetinghouses, all located in Harvard Square, which were used for civic as well as religious purposes. The site of the first meetinghouse (erected by 1632) was the corner of Dunster and Mount Auburn Streets. Its exact appearance is not known, and it was demolished in 1652.

The second meetinghouse was located near present day Lehman Hall. It is known only from references in the Towne Book, and is thought to have been forty feet square with a truncated hip roof.

In 1706, this structure was replaced by a third meetinghouse which stood at the south end of Harvard Square. A small, frame structure, it consisted of a courtroom on the upper story, with shops on the ground story, following the English medieval precedent. A 1743 engraving and written descriptions reveal the third meetinghouse to have followed a rectangular plan with a spired tower. It was demolished in 1758.

Beginning in 1758 meetings were held in a courthouse (1758) which occupied the site of the Harvard Coop. This courthouse was a frame structure with a hip roof crowned by a cupola. The courthouse measured thirty feet by forty feet, and had been constructed in part from timbers salvaged from the third meetinghouse demolished several years earlier. Although the court was transferred to East Cambridge in 1816, town meetings continued to be held in the Old Cambridge courthouse until the building proved inadequate.

The move of the municipal buildings away from the traditional center of Harvard Square fueled the rivalry between Old Cambridge and Cambridgeport residents. The issue was not resolved until 1846 when the city was incorporated (the fifth city to be incorporated in Massachusetts), thereby unifying the various factions.

In 1831 the decision was made to move the seat of town government away from Old Cambridge. An area just north of Central Square was acquired for the purpose of locating a series of town buildings there. The "Eight Block Place" as

the area was known, occupied the area now defined by Harvard, Norfolk, Austin (now Bishop Allen Drive) and Prospect Streets. The corner of Norfolk and Harvard Streets was chosen for the new town house, which was completed in 1832. The town house was a frame structure designed by Asher Benjamin in the Greek Revival style. It measured forty-six feet by seventy-six feet and had a Doric portico at each end. The interior consisted of a single large hall which occupied the full length and height of the building. Even after Cambridge was incorporated as a city in 1846, this building continued to be used by the Mayor, City Council and Board of Aldermen, until it was destroyed by fire in 1853.

For the next thirty-five years the city government occupied rooms in the Cambridge Athenaeum (1851, Henry Greenough), a private library which stood at the corner of Massachusetts Avenue and Pleasant Street, across from the present-day Central Square Post Office. The Athenaeum was a two-story hip-roofed building, five bays square. The main story, composed of arcaded, recessed bays, was set on a high basement story.

Initially the city rented space in the Athenaeum, but the building proved so suitable as a city hall that the decision was made to purchase it in 1858. The Athenaeum continued to house the offices of the City government until the present City Hall was completed in 1889. The Athenaeum was demolished in 1922 to make way for a store block.

With the city's unprecedented growth during the last quarter of the 19th century the need arose for a larger City Hall. Frederick H. Rindge was approached by members of a local committee seeking "wealthy, generous, and public-spirited citizens" to fund a new public library. Rindge was a Cambridge native, who had moved to California and multiplied his fortune through successful real estate investments. Rindge felt strong ties to Cambridge and wished to concentrate his philanthropic efforts here. He agreed not only to provide funds for the building of the Public Library (1888, Van Brunt and Howe), but for the Manual Training School (1888, Rotch and Tilden, demolished 1931) and City Hall as well. City Hall would be built at a cost of \$225,000, a figure which far exceeded original estimates. As a condition for his gift, Rindge stipulated that several inscriptions related to the themes of patriotism, education and industry be placed throughout the new building.

The land on which City Hall stands consists of five parcels taken by eminent domain and paid for by Rindge. The deed was turned over to the City. As part of the "City Beautiful" movement at the turn of the century, this area was envisioned as a civic center. It eventually included

numerous civic, institutional and commercial buildings. Among those which came to be located there were the Cambridge Mutual Fire Insurance Company (1888), the Cambridgeport Savings Bank (1904), the Cambridge Gas Company (1912), the Y.M.C.A. (1896) and the Post Office (1933). City Hall remains an imposing presence in this ensemble of significant structures.

B. Architectural Significance

City Hall is the handsomest of the public buildings made possible by the generosity of Frederick H. Rindge, and an outstanding example of the Richardsonian Romanesque style, the preferred style for public buildings during the 1880s. It illustrates how adept the followers of Henry Hobson Richardson had become at designing in the Romanesque mode he popularized. Although many of Richardson's followers had a tendency for decorative excess, the architects of City Hall produced a restrained and simple composition. The building reflects a high degree of quality in design, workmanship and materials.

In a limited competition, sketches were solicited from several architectural firms, including Peabody & Stearns, Van Brunt & Howe, Chamberlain & Whidden, John Lyman Faxon, and Longfellow, Alden & Harlow.

The design of Longfellow, Alden and Harlow was selected by a committee and given final approval by Frederick H. Rindge, the city's benefactor. In submitting their plan, the architects aimed for simplicity. The quest for beauty was subordinated to the need for a convenient arrangement of rooms. For this reason, the principal rooms, which would have given more interest to the facade, were located in the rear of the building. The working offices were placed on the sunny and presumably more healthful front of the building.

Alexander W. Longfellow (1854-1934) began his career as a draftsman in the office of Henry Hobson Richardson. In 1887 he organized his own firm, Longfellow, Alden & Harlow, a partnership which lasted for ten years. Alfred B. Harlow, (1859-1927), who worked during his early career for the office of McKim, Mead & White in New York, and Frank E. Alden (1859-1908), a local architect, later provided the city of Pittsburgh with much of its share of the Richardsonian Romanesque. He had been sent to that city by Henry Hobson Richardson himself to supervise the construction of the Allegheny County Courthouse in 1885.

In addition to Cambridge City Hall, Longfellow, Alden & Harlow designed Oakview Terrace in Jamaica Plain. Later the firm won the competition for the design of the Carnegie Library in Pittsburgh. This marked the dissolution of the

partnership, with Alden & Harlow remaining in Pittsburgh, and Longfellow continuing to work out of Boston. His later works include the Arnold Arboretum Building in Jamaica Plain, stations of the Boston Elevated Railroad, several buildings on the Harvard and Radcliffe campuses, and a number of public schools in Boston and residences in Boston and Cambridge.

City Hall is significant as one of few buildings in the city designed in the Richardsonian Romanesque style. Other local Richardsonian Romanesque buildings of note are Harvard's Sever Hall (1878) and Austin Hall (1881), the Cambridge Public Library (1888), the Cambridge Mutual Fire Insurance Building (1888), the Harvard-Epworth Methodist Church (1891), and Saint James Episcopal Church (1888). Of these, the Public Library and the Harvard-Epworth Methodist Church were also financed by Frederick Rindge.

With its rock-faced masonry, round arched entrance and windows, and square tower crowned with a pyramidal roof, Cambridge City Hall is a typical example of the Richardsonian Romanesque style. It conveys an overall sense of weight and massiveness, which is emphasized by its broad roof planes and deep window reveals. City Hall is notable for its simplicity of form and the straightforwardness of its design as well as its adept utilization of the Richardsonian Romanesque style. The Victorian decorative scheme of the City Council Chamber was typical for the period, but is unique in its survival to modern use. It is one of few remaining late 19th century decorative schemes in a civic building in the Boston area. The portrait collection of past Cambridge dignitaries which hangs in the Council Chamber is an important part of the artistic and historical heritage of the city.

City Hall is the city's most prominent landmark. It is imposingly sited, handsomely built, and still serving its original purpose. Because of its height, hilltop site and generous setback, City Hall dominates this section of Massachusetts Avenue.

Impetus for the construction of new municipal buildings was given by the gifts of Frederick Hastings Rindge, a wealthy Cambridge landowner and industrialist. In addition to providing funds for the construction of City Hall, Rindge also donated the land and funds for the English High School (1892, Chamberlin & Austin, demolished), the Public Library (1888, Van Brunt & Howe) and the Manual Training School (1888, Rotch & Tilden, demolished). Rindge also gave the land and funding for the Epworth Methodist Episcopal Church (1891, A.P. Cutting)

V. Relationship to Criteria

A. Section 4, Ordinance 1002

Section 4 states the criteria for landmark designation. It says that the Commission:

. . . may recommend for designation as a landmark any . . . structure . . . either (a) importantly associated with one or more historic persons or events, or with the broad architectural, aesthetic, cultural, political, economic or social history of the city . . . or (b) historically or architecturally significant (in terms of period, style, method of construction, or association with a famous architect or builder) either by itself or in the context of a group of structures.

B. Relationship of Property to Criteria

In reference to criterion (a), City Hall is significant in the overall architectural, social and political history of the City as a prominent landmark which has served as the seat of the municipal government for over one hundred years. During that time it has been a setting for political and social reforms. City Hall represents the unprecedented growth and development experienced by the city beginning at the close of the 19th century.

Under criterion (b), City Hall is architecturally significant in terms of its period and style. It is one of three surviving late 19th century buildings in the city paid for by the philanthropist Frederick H. Rindge. City Hall is also distinguished as one of a group less than half dozen public and institutional buildings in the city designed in the Richardsonian Romanesque style. One hundred years after its construction it remains unaltered and physically intact.

Architecturally, it is a very fine example of the Richardsonian Romanesque public architecture with all its original major features intact. The only alterations have been to the interior where several large offices and long corridors have been partitioned to form new rooms, and the original wood floors have been covered with vinyl tiles. Distinguishing features of City Hall's Richardsonian Romanesque style are its rock-faced polychrome masonry, Syrian arched window and door openings, steep gabled wall dormers and pyramidal tower. The Victorian interior decorative scheme of the recently restored City Council Chamber is one of few remaining civic interiors in the Boston area.

The staff finds City Hall eligible for landmark designation under Ordinance 1002, section 4, criteria (a) and (b).

VI. Recommendations

A. Section 1, Ordinance 1002

The purpose of landmark designation is stated in Section 1 of Ordinance 1002:

. . . to preserve, conserve, and protect the beauty of the City . . . and to improve the quality of its environment through identification, conservation, and maintenance of...structures which constitute or reflect distinctive features of the architectural, cultural, political, economic or social history of the City; to resist and restrain environmental influences adverse to this purpose . . .

B. Preservation Options

City Hall has been identified for landmark designation. The building is located on Massachusetts Avenue, the city's primary commercial east-west thoroughfare. Within the context of Cambridge public buildings, City Hall is the city's most prominent landmark, and a symbol of local government.

National Register status protects the building from the adverse effects of federally licensed, permitted or funded projects and listing on the parallel State Register of Historic Places, from the adverse effects of state funded projects. The National and State Registers provide limited protection from public projects through review by the Massachusetts Historical Commission. However, the Massachusetts Historical Commission's power does not allow for review of privately funded projects.

Another option for the preservation of City Hall is the designation as a Landmark under Ordinance 1002.

C. Staff Recommendation

The Cambridge Historical Commission is mandated to identify, protect and preserve landmark buildings. Having found the building eligible under landmark criteria, the staff recommendation is that City Hall be forwarded to the City Council for designation as a Protected Landmark.

VII. Statement of Standards for Design Review

A. Introduction

The Commission's primary charge under Ordinance 1002 is to review "all construction, demolition, or alteration that affects the exterior architectural features, other than color, of any landmark." This landmark study report describes exterior architectural features that are among the characteristics which led to consideration of the property as a landmark. Except as the order designating or amending the landmark may otherwise provide, those features should be preserved and/or enhanced in any construction, demolition, or alteration of a landmark.

Section 8 of the ordinance sets general guidelines to be considered by the Historical Commission in reviewing changes to landmarks. Among other things, the Commission is directed to consider:

the historic and architectural value and significance of the site or structure, the general design, arrangement, texture and material of the features involved, and the relation of such features to similar features or structures in the surrounding area

In all cases, a Certificate of Appropriateness, Hardship, or Non-Applicability must be issued by the Historical Commission prior to making any changes to a landmark. The Commission does not have authority to regulate the interiors of landmarks nor can it control changes to exterior architectural features not subject to public view. Nonetheless, Certificates of Non-Applicability must generally be issued for those changes. Applications for most certificates are reviewed by the Commission at a public hearing, in accordance with Ordinance 1002.

B. General Standards

1. Historic and architectural features of the landmark shall be preserved.
2. Changes and additions to the landmark which have taken place over time are evidence of the history of the property and the neighborhood. These changes to the property may have acquired significance in their own right and that significance should be recognized and respected.
3. Deteriorated architectural features should be repaired rather than replaced.
4. When replacement of architectural features is necessary, it should be based on physical or documentary evidence.

5. New materials should, whenever possible, match the material being replaced in physical properties, design, color, texture, and appearance. The use of imitation replacement materials is discouraged.
6. The surface cleaning of a landmark shall be done by the gentlest possible means. Sandblasting and other methods that damage exterior architectural features shall not be used.
7. New additions must not destroy significant exterior architectural features and shall not be incongruous to the historic aspects, architectural significance, or distinctive character of the landmark, neighborhood and environment.
8. New additions should be done in such a way that if they were to be removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the landmark would be unimpaired.

C. Statement of Standards

1. General

- a. Preserve and protect insofar as possible the setting and streetscape views of City Hall, in particular the front setback and landscape elements.

2. Exterior Walls

- a. Repointing of granite and brownstone masonry should be done with mortar that matches the existing mortar in color, texture and strength.
- b. Cleaning of all exterior masonry surfaces using a mild detergent under low pressure.

3. Windows

- a. Replacement sash shall match the original in size, placement and configuration.

4. Roof

- a. Repairs shall use slate that matches the original in color.
- b. Alterations to the roof planes should be made on the north slope only. New rooftop additions or cuts should be set back from the existing eave as far as possible.

5. Tower

- a. Repairs to the tower shall be made with mortar and masonry matching the original in color and texture and

shall be consistent with the original design.

b. The original size, shape and configuration of the belfry openings shall be maintained.

6. Other Elements

a. Fire escapes installed to the north elevation should be installed in such a way that if they were to be removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of City Hall would be unimpaired. Fire escapes should be set within existing openings to the greatest possible extent.

b. Maintain original landscape elements, including the lawn and granite curbing at the perimeter of the lot.

VIII. Proposed Order

ORDERED:

That City Hall, 795 Massachusetts Avenue, be designated as a protected landmark pursuant to Chapter Two, Article XVI, Section 2-147 (k) of the code of the City of Cambridge, as recommended by vote of the Cambridge Historical Commission on June 7, 1990. The premises so designated are defined as Parcel 33 of Assessors' Map 118.

This designation is justified by the important associations of the building with the political and architectural history of the City of Cambridge, specifically as the seat of the municipal government for the past one hundred years. Along with the Public Library, City Hall is one of the two remaining public buildings given to the city by the philanthropist Frederick H. Rindge.

Architecturally, the building is significant as an excellent example of the Richardsonian Romanesque style, the preferred mode for public buildings during the 1880s. City Hall is one of a small, distinguished group of local public and institutional buildings designed in this style. Well-preserved and in original exterior condition, City Hall is one of a several prominent civic and institutional buildings in the Central Square area.

The effect of this designation shall be that no construction activity can take place within the designated landmark area, and no action can be taken affecting the appearance of City Hall, that would in either case be visible from a public way without review by the Cambridge Historical Commission and the issuance of a Certificate of Appropriateness, Hardship, or Non-Applicability, as the case may be. In making determinations, the Commission shall permit the owners to rehabilitate City Hall as provided in Section VII, Standards for Design Review, and subject to overall determination by the Commission that final plans for City Hall's rehabilitation are not incongruous to the historic aspects, architectural significance and distinctive character of the landmark.

Respectfully submitted,

Charles M. Sullivan / *mb*

Charles M. Sullivan
Executive Director

**CAMBRIDGE MUTUAL FIRE INSURANCE COMPANY BUILDING
759-763 MASSACHUSETTS AVENUE**

LANDMARK DESIGNATION STUDY REPORT
PREPARED BY HARRIET WHITE
CAMBRIDGE HISTORICAL COMMISSION
OCTOBER 21, 1989

CONTENTS

I. Location and Economic Status.....	2
II. Description.....	5
III. History of the Property.....	7
IV. Significance of the Property.....	12
V. Relationship to Criteria.....	15
VI. Recommendations.....	16
VII. Standards for Design Review.....	17
VIII. Proposed Order.....	20

The Cambridge Mutual Fire Insurance Company Building is significant in the architectural, social and economic history of the city. It reflects the unprecedented commercial growth that occurred in Central Square at the end of the 19th century and is associated with a prominent Cambridge business. Architecturally, the Mutual Fire Insurance Company building is an excellent example of Richardsonian Romanesque commercial architecture.

I. Location and Economic Status

A. Address

The Cambridge Mutual Fire Insurance Company Building is located at 757 (759-763-765) Massachusetts Avenue at the corner of Inman Street. The parcel is identified as Number 1 on Assessors' Map 107. The lot occupies 6,620 square feet with seventy-five feet of frontage on Massachusetts Avenue. The building is currently valued at \$705,600 and the land at \$397,200 for a total valuation of \$1,102,800.

The building stands in a O-3 zone, which allows for business and professional office use and multi family dwellings, at an FAR of 3.0 with a height limitation of 55 feet. The building is a contributing structure in the Central Square National Register District (1989) and therefore subject to the provisions of the Central Square Overlay Zone. Projects requiring a special permit or variance must be approved by the Central Square Advisory Committee, which may impose additional use, height, parking and setback limitations beyond those enumerated in the zoning code.

B. Ownership and Occupancy

The Cambridge Mutual Fire Insurance Company building is owned by Tucker Reed Miller, John Kurt Miller and Nicholas Sommerfeld, Trustees. Businesses located in the ground floor storefronts entered from Massachusetts Avenue include the Terra Cotta Jewelry and Crafts Store, Commonwealth Gas/Commonwealth Electric, and Galgay the Florist. Professional offices on the second floor are occupied by David S. Gordon, D.M.D.; Richard A. Gordon, Attorney; Larry W. Beeferman, Attorney; Michelle Harrison, M.D.; the Boston Advertising and Associates; Joseph S. Schneider Associates; Centurion International, Inc.; Daniel Canstroam, Attorney and Eliza C. Kline, Attorney. Fourteen residential apartments are located on the third and fourth floors and are reached by stairs leading from the Inman Street entrance.

C. Area Description

The Cambridge Mutual Fire Insurance Company Building stands on Massachusetts Avenue, the city's primary east-west thoroughfare. The building is located in an area of large, multi-story commercial, civic, institutional and apartment buildings at the western edge of the Central Square business district. The lot on which the Fire Insurance building stands is on a block bounded by Massachusetts Avenue and Inman, Austin and Temple Streets. Across Inman Street stands City Hall (1888, Longfellow, Alden and Harlow), the city's most celebrated civic building and an important

stylistic companion to the Fire Insurance Building. Adjacent to the Fire Insurance Building is Saint Mary's Syrian Orthodox Church, formerly the First Universalist Church (1822; 1858), which was moved to the site from Lafayette Square in 1888, the same year the Fire Insurance Building and City Hall were built. Adjacent to the church, stands a modern, six story, thirty-unit apartment building (1966, Timothy Anderson). Beyond the apartment building the neighborhood is primarily residential and consists of numerous large houses which have been converted to multi family use, apartment buildings, rooming houses, and the Y.W.C.A. buildings (1910, 1953, 1961, 1964) at the corner of Austin and Temple Streets.

On Massachusetts Avenue east of and adjacent to the Fire Insurance Company building, stands a one story commercial block (circa 1900) considerably diminished by later alterations. Nearby on Massachusetts Avenue is the Renaissance Revival style Cambridge Gas Light Company building (1912) designed by the firm of Shepley, Rutan and Coolidge.

The Central Square Post Office (1933, Charles R. Greco) and a one story commercial block (circa 1910) stand opposite the Fire Insurance Building, on the south side of Massachusetts Avenue.

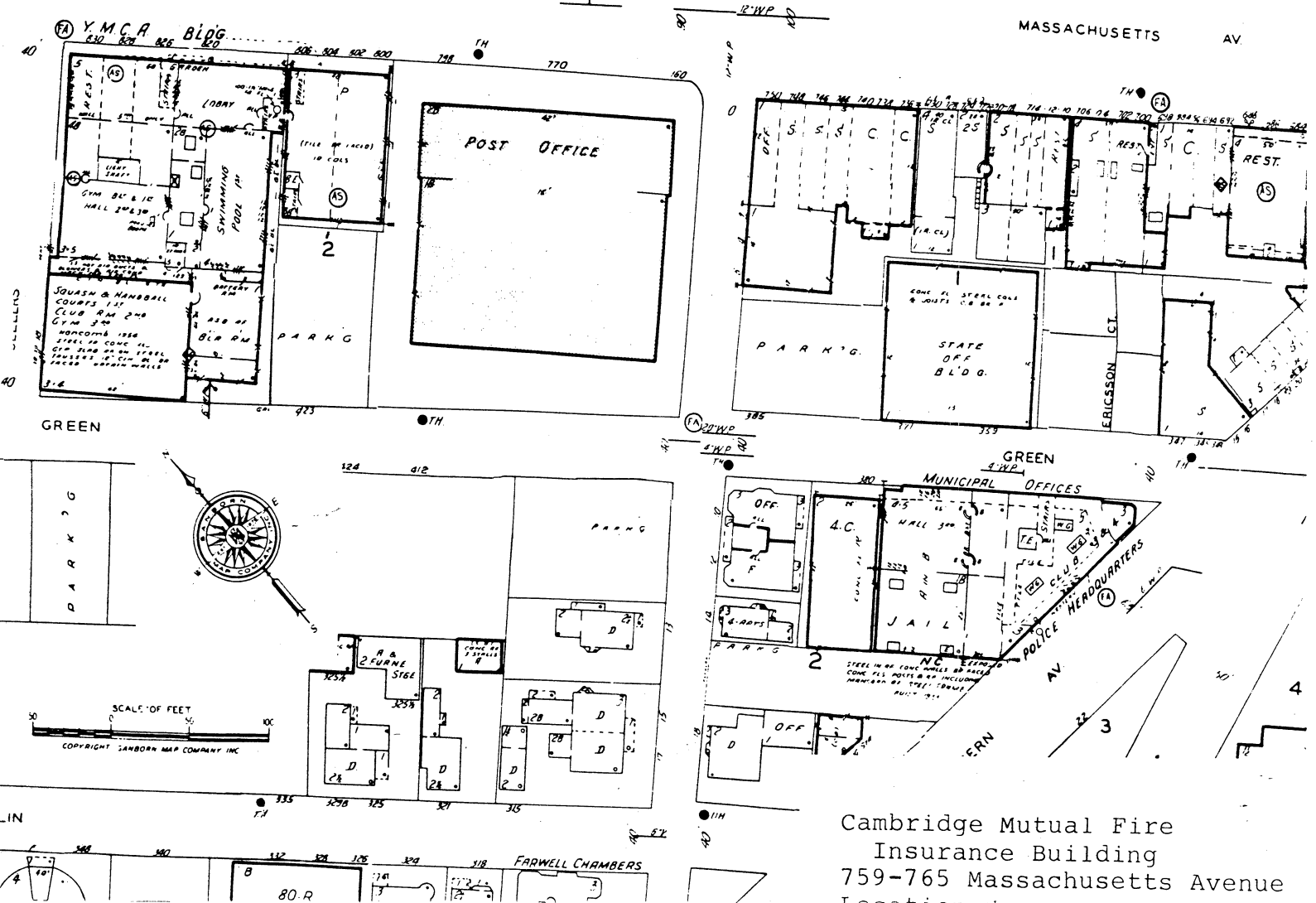
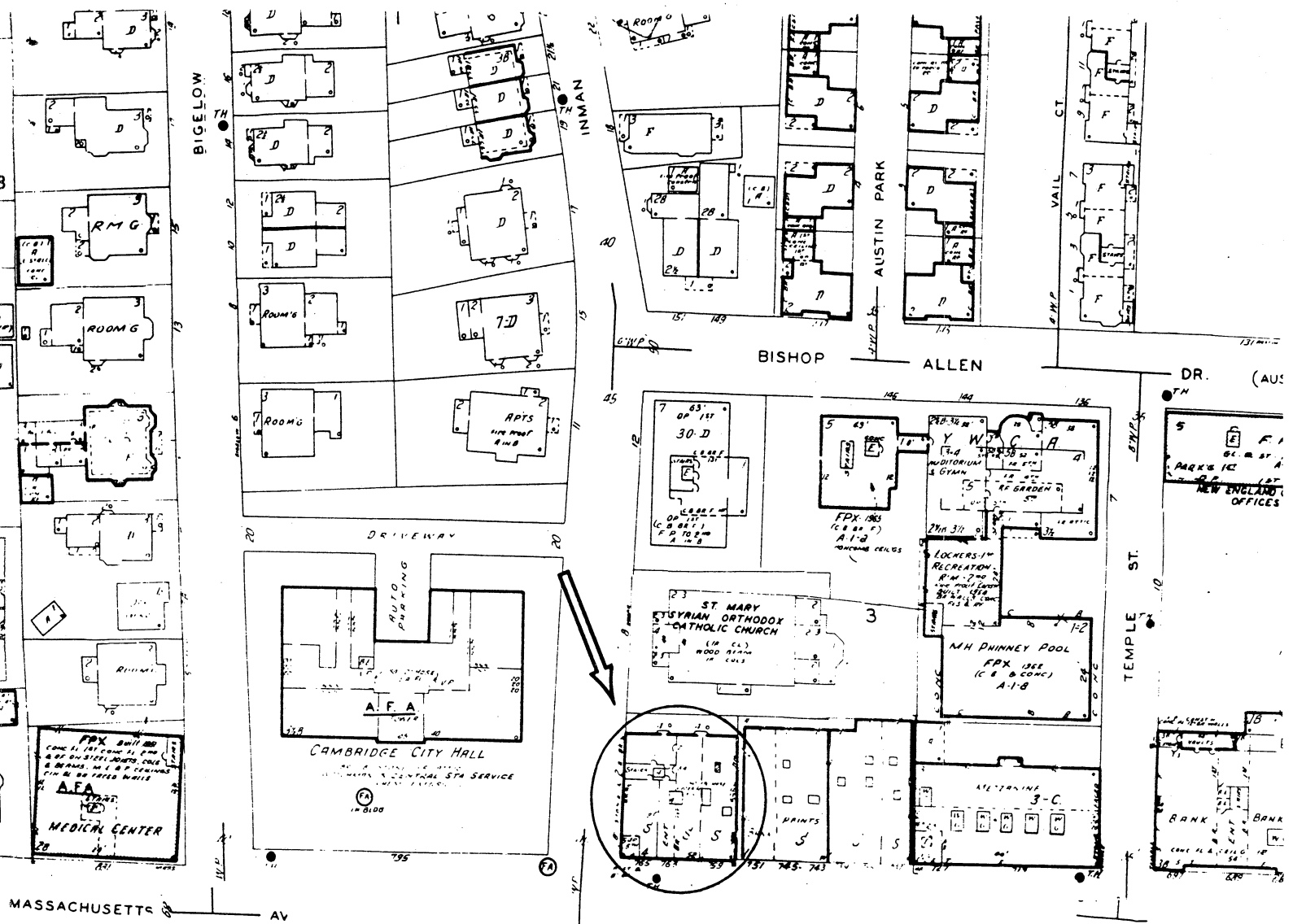
D. Planning Issues

Central Square has been the focus of a major planning effort which culminated in the 1989 passage of overlay zoning designed to stabilize and upgrade retail activity and architectural development in the Square. The Central Square Action Plan, from which the overlay zone developed, was adopted in 1987 and identified eight goals for strengthening Central Square's retail viability, among them increasing the market capture of the neighborhoods, improving the physical environment, and encouraging an economically and socially diverse retail base. The economic slowdown, which began in 1989, has hampered the private sector's implementation of these goals but the city is strongly committed to seeing them adopted.

The major project affecting the block on which the Fire Insurance Company building stands is new construction planned for the Y.W.C.A. site northeast of the Insurance building. The Phinney Pool (1962) and its locker rooms (1954) will be demolished for construction of a four-story, moderately-priced hotel. Other planned alterations in the immediate area include street improvements on Bishop Allen Drive (summer, 1990), alterations for handicapped access at the Cambridge Post Office, storefront improvements at the Gas Light Building, and restoration work at City Hall. The Cambridgeport Savings Bank has also recently completed

exterior and interior renovations to their headquarters at 685-689 Massachusetts Avenue. Depending on the success of the Y.W.C.A. hotel, reinvestment in the western section of Central Square is likely to strengthen the economic viability of businesses in that areas, despite current difficulties in achieving similar goals elsewhere in the Square.

E. Maps

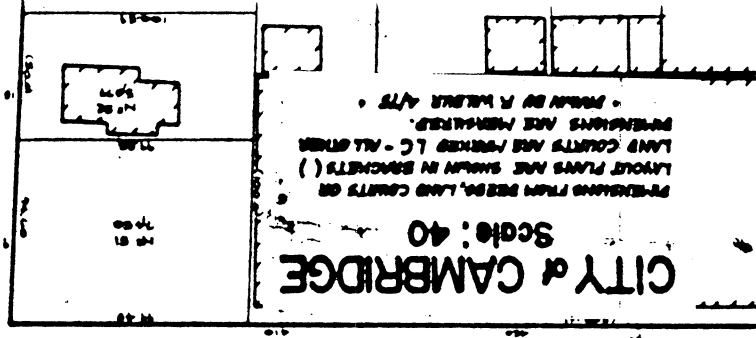


Cambridge Mutual Fire Insurance Building
759-765 Massachusetts Avenue

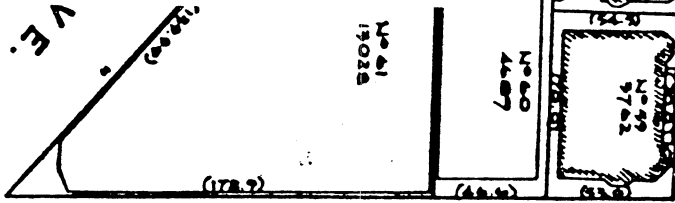
CITY of CAMBRIDGE

Scale: 40

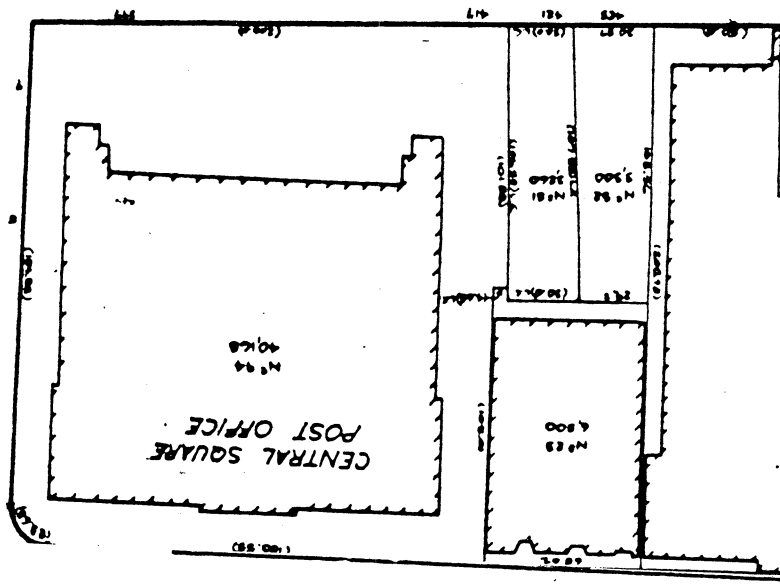
PREVIOUSLY FROM DEEDS, LAND COURTS OR
LAWYERS ARE MARKED L.C. - ALL OTHER
DIMENSIONS ARE UNMARKED.
- DRAWN BY J. W. HALL, A.T.S.



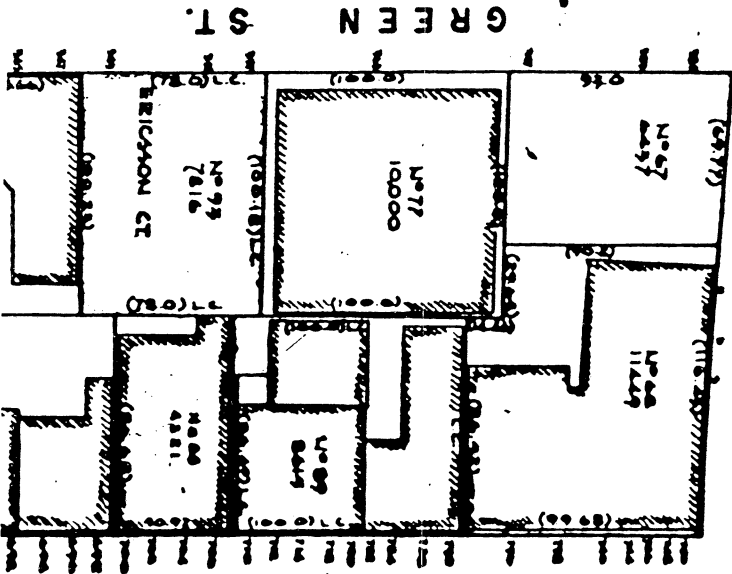
EASANT



ST.



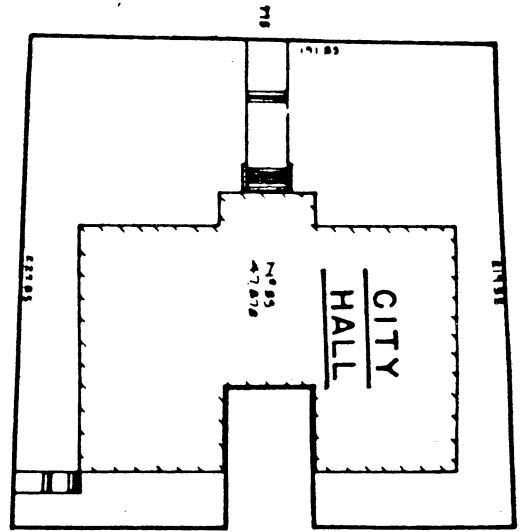
ST.



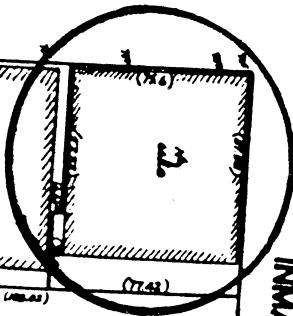
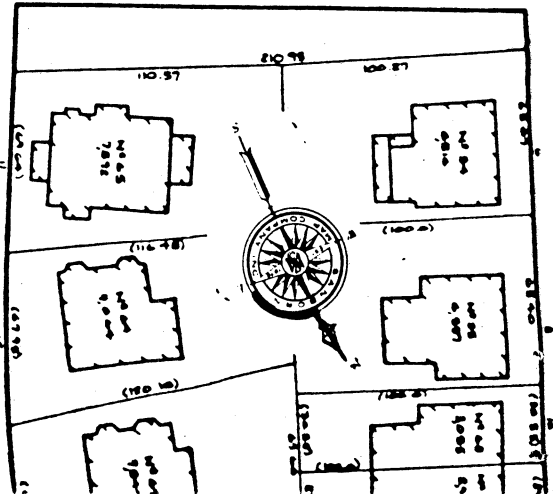
MASSACHUSETTS

AVE.

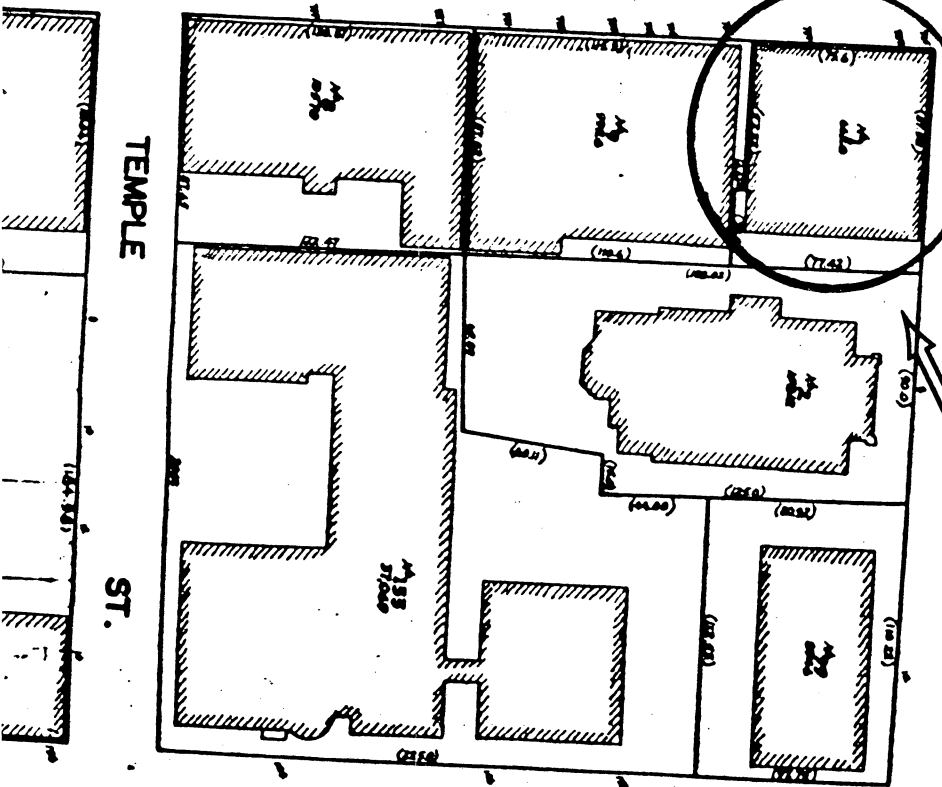
MASSACHUSETTS



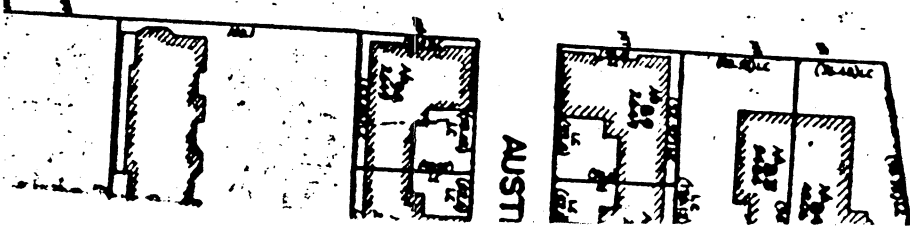
CITY HALL LANE



INMAN



ALLEN DRIVE formerly Austin St.



AUSTIN

Cambridge Mutual Fire Insurance Building
759-765 Massachusetts Ave.

II. Description

A. Type and Use

The Cambridge Mutual Fire Insurance Company building is a combination business block and apartment hotel with ground floor storefronts. Built in 1888, and designed by the Boston architect John A. Hasty, it has continuously served its original purpose. The ground floor contains three storefronts, with professional offices on the second floor, and fourteen residential apartments on the third and fourth floors.

B. Physical Description

The Cambridge Mutual Fire Insurance Company Building is a handsome four story edifice designed in the Richardsonian Romanesque style, popular during the 1880s. The building is sited approximately eight feet from the street and occupies a corner lot.

Although the building plan is approximately square, its composition is asymmetrical. An open tourelle on the corner is the focal point of the design. The building contains several polygonal three story bays. An open masonry balustrade encircles the flat roof along the Massachusetts Avenue and Inman Street elevations with an open metal balustrade marking the roof edge along the rear elevation..

The Cambridge Mutual Fire Insurance Company building is constructed of freestone, Nova Scotia sandstone and Longmeadow brownstone, creating the polychromy typical of the Richardsonian Romanesque style. The wall surfaces consist of rough hewn ashlar masonry laid in random courses, with belt courses of polychrome masonry delineating the floor divisions. The tower openings and window surrounds are articulated with alternating voussoirs. A band of masonry laid in a checkerboard pattern encircles the building. This feature was employed by H.H. Richardson on a number of his buildings and became a favorite device of his followers. The less prominent rear elevation of the building is a brick wall with a pair of polygonal copper bays and a simple brick cornice.

The corner tourelle rises from the second story. It has contoured corners with half round openings on the upper stage and a copper pyramidal roof with rounded corners. On each face of the tourelle roof is a gablet containing a sunburst motif. A ball finial stands atop the tourelle roof. A three story oriel window on the facade has a similar roof, smaller in scale with contoured corners. An open masonry balustrade defines the roof perimeter. The bases of the tower and the bays and the brackets above the main entrance

are embellished with masonry carvings consisting of foliated ornament and fanciful faces.

The rectilinear main entrance is set beneath a transom which originally held a large panel of brown freestone inscribed with name of the company. The entrance doors have been replaced with modern steel and glass doors which are flanked by engaged colonnettes with foliated capitals and carved figure heads. The groundfloor storefronts are set within an arcade of Syrian arches. Two of these arched openings have been replaced with modern entrances.

The second floor is reached by a wide marble interior stair leading up from Massachusetts Avenue. The stair hall originally contained a plaque of Tennessee and Sienna marble engraved with the seal of the Cambridge Mutual Fire Insurance Company, the names of the officers, and the architect and building committee.

The insurance company's offices were located on the second floor of the building in a series of handsomely appointed rooms, including a secretary's room, a general business room and the president's office. The hallway and business rooms were finished in quartered oak and the director's office in mahogany. The general business room was enclosed with a carved oak counter with upper panels of glass. Beyond the president's office, was a president's parlor, finished in mahogany with a carved mantel and library cases. The directors' room contained imported Brussels carpets and mahogany furnishings, including a large table and twelve chairs, roll top desks, and bookcases. Shortly after the building was ready for occupancy, The Union Club and the Mayor of Somerville moved into second floor offices. The apartment hotel portion of the building, originally named "The Inman," is reached from Inman Street by a marble stairway. It originally contained six suites of rooms.

III. History of the Property

A. Historic Development Patterns

1. Deed History of the Parcel

The Cambridge Mutual Fire Insurance Building is located on land which was part of a seventeenth century land grant to Deputy Governor Thomas Dudley and his son, Samuel. This land lay beyond the eastern slope of Dana Hill. When Dudley left Cambridge his land was part of the group of properties assembled and purchased by Roger Harlakenden. Harlakenden died in 1638, and in 1642 his widow married Herbert Pelham and transferred to him two tracts of land, measuring sixty-three and twenty-two acres respectively, which had originally belonged to Dudley. Pelham's holdings consisted of approximately one hundred eighteen acres, extending roughly from Massachusetts Avenue to the Somerville line. It remained an intact parcel for almost one hundred years, and was primarily used for timber cutting and the grazing of livestock. This land included the parcel on which the Fire Insurance Company building now stands.

It has not been ascertained whether there were interim owners, but in 1756 the land was sold by John Bannister of Newport, Rhode Island to Ralph Inman, a prosperous merchant. That same year Inman began creating a suburban estate by erecting a mansion with landscaped grounds on the property (just to the rear of the present day City Hall). As a Tory sympathizer, Inman fled during the Revolution and his estate was confiscated by the Committee of Safety. After the Battle of Bunker Hill the Inman estate and its grounds were converted into a military encampment. When the British troops departed, the Inman estate was seized for public use and leased by the Committee of Correspondence, a Revolutionary group with governmental powers. In 1783 the house and grounds were restored to the Inman family.

In 1792 the executor of the Inman estate conveyed it to Leonard Jarvis. By purchasing additional parcels, Jarvis came to own much of the land north of Massachusetts Avenue from Hancock Street to Moore Street, and fifty acres south of Massachusetts Avenue.

In 1801 the Jarvis property was seized by the government for non-payment of debt, divided into several smaller parcels and sold at a public auction. The largest parcel was purchased by Jonathan Loring Austin, and consisted of forty-seven acres including the mansion house and the land immediately surrounding it, as well as a small lot across Inman Lane where the Fire Insurance Company building now stands.

Austin laid out a number of nearby streets including Austin Street (now Bishop Allen Drive) and Temple Street. He also subdivided parts of the land into building lots which were quickly sold. At this time the lot on which the Fire Insurance Company stands, became a separate entity. In 1818 Austin sold the piece of the estate grounds across Inman Lane to Robert Murdock of Newton, who resold it to Robert Murdock, Jr. in 1824. The Murdocks built two residences and a large complex of stable buildings on the site. The land and buildings remained under the ownership of the Murdock family heirs until 1888, when it was sold to the Cambridge Mutual Fire Insurance Company.

During the early twentieth centuries the land and building was owned by the Guaranty Realty and Guaranty Trust Companies. The land and building were purchased by the Andover Mutual Fire Insurance Company in 1933, and resold the same year to the Dunvegan Corporation. In 1971 Clifford Miller assumed ownership of the property, which passed on to his sons in 1982, at the time of his death. The building is presently owned by the Miller sons in a trust under their father's name.

2. Development History of the Parcel

The land on which the Fire Insurance Building stands was part of a large grant of land to Thomas Dudley, a colonial governor. It changed ownership a number of times during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, remaining an intact parcel primarily used for timber cutting and the grazing of livestock. During the middle of the eighteenth century the land was developed as a suburban estate by Ralph Inman, who landscaped the grounds and built a mansion there.

After the Battle of Bunker Hill, the need to house Revolutionary troops transformed the Inman estate into a military encampment. In 1783 the house and grounds were restored to the Inman family, and the land did not develop further until after the disposition of Ralph Inman's estate by subsequent owners.

Before the opening of the West Boston Bridge in 1793 the Inman mansion was one of only four buildings in all of Cambridgeport east of Dana Street. Cambridgeport land along Massachusetts Avenue would remain sparsely developed well into the nineteenth century. A plan of 1824 by Peter Tufts, shows the block bounded by Massachusetts Avenue and Inman, Temple and Austin Streets divided into house lots although no houses had yet been built. Even by 1830, the Hales Map of Cambridge shows few buildings standing on Massachusetts Avenue between Inman and Prospect Streets.

Through the middle of the nineteenth century the character of the area remained openly spaced. Temple Street

first appears on the 1854 Walling Map, with only a single house on it. There are just two houses on Austin Street, and the site of the Fire Insurance Building is still vacant. The Walling Map also indicates two adjacent structures facing Massachusetts Avenue. One of these was probably the house of Robert Murdock. A nineteenth century photograph of the Murdock house reveals a five bay Federal period dwelling, with a hip roof, projecting entrance pavilion and twin rear wall chimneys. A Greek Revival sidehall dwelling had been grafted to the western elevation of the Federal house.

The 1868 Sanborn Map indicates a large complex of stable buildings just east of the Murdock houses, at the corner of Massachusetts Avenue and Inman Street. The complex included a large boarding and livery stable, a carriage house and a grain shed, all owned by the Murdock family. The Fire Insurance Building would eventually replace the stable buildings on this site. A wide expanse of land at the interior of the block is shown on the map as open space labelled orchard and garden.

The 1873 Atlas shows a single large stable building on the site. This was probably the Dana Hill Club stable listed in the 1873 City Directory at this location. The stable was still part of a larger parcel which also contained the Murdock residence. In 1880 the Dana Hill Club Stable is again listed in the City Directory at this location, and described as a boarding, sale, livery, and hack stable. The stable stood on the site until it was demolished to make way for the Cambridge Mutual Fire Insurance Company building in 1888. Newspaper accounts of that time mention the demolition of the "unsightly club stable," suggesting that it had fallen into neglect.

Beginning in the third quarter of the nineteenth century Massachusetts Avenue began to be developed with large multi-story commercial and office blocks. This reflected the commercial prosperity of Central Square, brought about in large part by improvements in transportation. From the 1870s through the early twentieth century Massachusetts Avenue would continue to take on an increasingly urban character.

The 1903 Atlas shows that considerable development activity had occurred on the block. In 1888 the Cambridge Mutual Fire Insurance building had replaced the stable complex at the corner of Massachusetts Avenue and Inman Street. In that same year the First Universalist Church was moved from Lafayette Square to its present site behind the Fire Insurance building. Also by 1903 the Y.M.C.A. had acquired the ownership of the three dwelling houses on the eastern corner of the block. These would be removed in 1910 to make way for the new Y.M.C.A. building. A one-story

commercial block (circa 1900) replaced the old Murdock houses on Massachusetts Avenue, next to the Fire Insurance building. In 1912 the Gas Light Company's new headquarters replaced the frame dwellings at the corner of Massachusetts Avenue and Temple Street.

The next change to the block would not occur for some fifty years. In 1966 a six story, thirty unit apartment building replaced the Phillips estate on the northeast corner of the block. All the late nineteenth and twentieth century changes increased the scale and density of the block transforming it from a quiet residential neighborhood to an area of bustling commercial activity.

B. Bibliography

General Sources

Cambridge City Directories dating from 1847-1900.

Cambridge Historical Commission. Survey of Architectural History in Cambridge, Report Two: Mid Cambridge, by Antoinette F. Downing, Elisabeth MacDougall and Elisabeth Pearson. Cambridge, 1967.

Cambridge Historical Commission. Survey of Architectural History in Cambridge, Report Three: Cambridgeport, by Bainbridge Bunting and Robert B. Rettig. Cambridge, 1971.

Hurd, D. Hamilton, History of Middlesex County, Massachusetts. J.W.Lewis and Company, Philadelphia, 1890.

Gilman, Arthur, Cambridge of Eighteen Hundred Ninety-Six, Riverside Press, Cambridge, 1896.

Government Records

Cambridge. Historical Commission. Survey files for 665-765 Massachusetts Avenue.

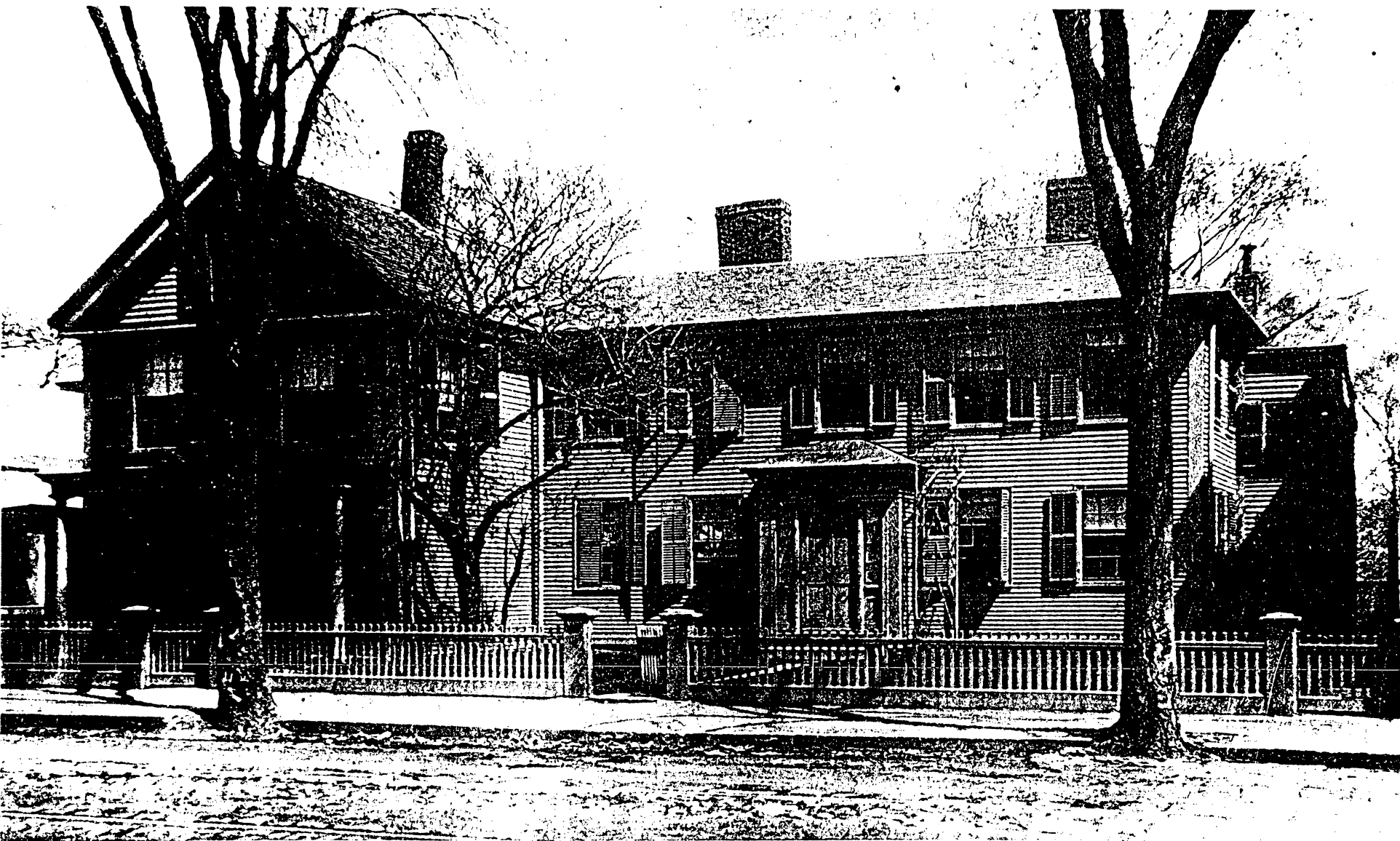
Cambridge. Historical Commission. Survey files of Views of Massachusetts Avenue.

City of Cambridge. Engineering Department. House Book 22. Field notes and sketch dated July 2, 1889.

Maps and Atlases

Bromley, George W. and Walter S. Atlas of the City of Cambridge, Massachusetts. Philadelphia, 1894. 2nd ed., 1903, 3rd ed., 1916, 4th ed., 1930.

Hopkins, G.M. Atlas of the City of Cambridge, Massachusetts. Philadelphia, 1873. 2nd ed., 1886.



IV. Significance of the Property

A. Historical Significance

The Cambridge Mutual Fire Insurance Company was organized in 1833 and began conducting business the following year. Among the company's incorporators were some of Cambridge's most prominent businessmen of the time, including Phineas B. Hovey, Samuel Pond, Charles Pond, Nathan Childs, William Fisk, Walter R. Mason, Aaron Rice, Jabez Fisher, Joseph Abbott, Charles Valentine, William H. Odiorne, Robert Fuller, Josiah Mason, Joseph Burrridge, Newell Bent, and I.A.Coolidge.

William Odiorne was the first president of the Company; subsequent presidents included Levi Farwell, Robert Fuller, Isaac Fay, Rufus Lamson and Josiah W. Cook.

In 1842-43 the company experienced a major setback when claims exceeding \$35,000 for "destruction of meetinghouses" nearly bankrupted it. The directors were only able to pay the losses by borrowing money and using their personal funds to cover these large losses.

During the early years the company operated on an assessment plan whereby each policy holder was assessed for his portion of the losses. Eventually this system was replaced as the company became a full premium insurer. Under the new system, the directors collected larger premiums and returned dividends to the policy holders in amounts which would not jeopardize the company. This method was used by most standard mutual companies in Massachusetts at that time.

In 1870 the company's coverage amounted to over \$4 million, although its assets were worth less than \$60,000. As a result of the Great Boston Fire of 1872, the company lost approximately \$25,000, reducing its assets to \$50,000, but this did not create serious consequences.

During the final years of the nineteenth century the company had approximately \$4 million dollars at risk, nearly three quarters of which was for coverage of property located in Cambridge. This was considered too great an underwriting risk, and the company began to expand its business throughout Massachusetts. This resulted in an increase of dividends from 40 to 70 percent, and the amount of risk rose to \$10 million, with assets totalling \$225,000. The Cambridge Mutual Fire Insurance Company insured all classes of property including churches, schools, town houses, livery stables, mercantile buildings, slaughter houses, barns, and private residences.

Having achieved considerable financial success the Cambridge Mutual Fire Insurance Company was able to move to new, architect-designed quarters not far from their old offices in Central Square. The company's previous offices were listed in the 1847 Cambridge Almanac and Business Directory at a location on Main Street (then Massachusetts Avenue), near the Cambridge Bank. By 1866 the company had moved to Melledge's Block at the corner of Norfolk and Main Streets. In 1888 the directors of the company desired a home office and they selected the site of the present building. The land, with an old stable on it, was part of the Asa Murdock estate. The decision to remain in Central Square must have been influenced by the prospering local economy during the 1880s and 1890s.

In 1888 the directors of the company desired a home office, choosing the site of the present building. The land, with an old stable on it was part of the Asa Murdock estate. During this period Central Square rose to the pinnacle of its commercial success, making it an ideal location for the insurance company's new offices.

The Cambridge Mutual Fire Insurance Company remained in business until the early twentieth century. Around 1916 the company was purchased by the Guaranty Realty and Guaranty Trust Company. In 1933 the company was purchased by the Andover Mutual Fire Insurance Company, which resold it the same year to the Dunvegan Corporation.

B. Architectural Significance

After a competition involving several Boston architects, John A. Hasty was granted the commission for the design of a new building for the Cambridge Mutual Fire Insurance Company.

Hasty was born on August 31, 1857 in Waterborough, Maine and had early training as a carpenter and builder. He opened his Boston office at 13 Tremont Row in 1885 or 1886. By 1894 he had moved his office to 68 Devonshire Street in Boston, and by 1909 he had moved again, to 46 Cornhill Street. A commercially successful architect, Hasty is known to have collaborated with a Boston developer, David R. McKay, on a number of projects in Dorchester, South Boston, East Boston, and Brookline. In 1891 he formed the "Investors' Alliance, a real estate trust, with Henry A. Root of Boston. Together they had purchased a small lots of land in Boston and Revere where they presumably erected houses.

Beginning in 1889 Hasty resided in Cambridge at 32 Essex Street, in a Queen Anne style triple decker of his own design. The 1889 City Directory lists his residence as 80 Windsor Street. In 1892 Hasty and his wife purchased a

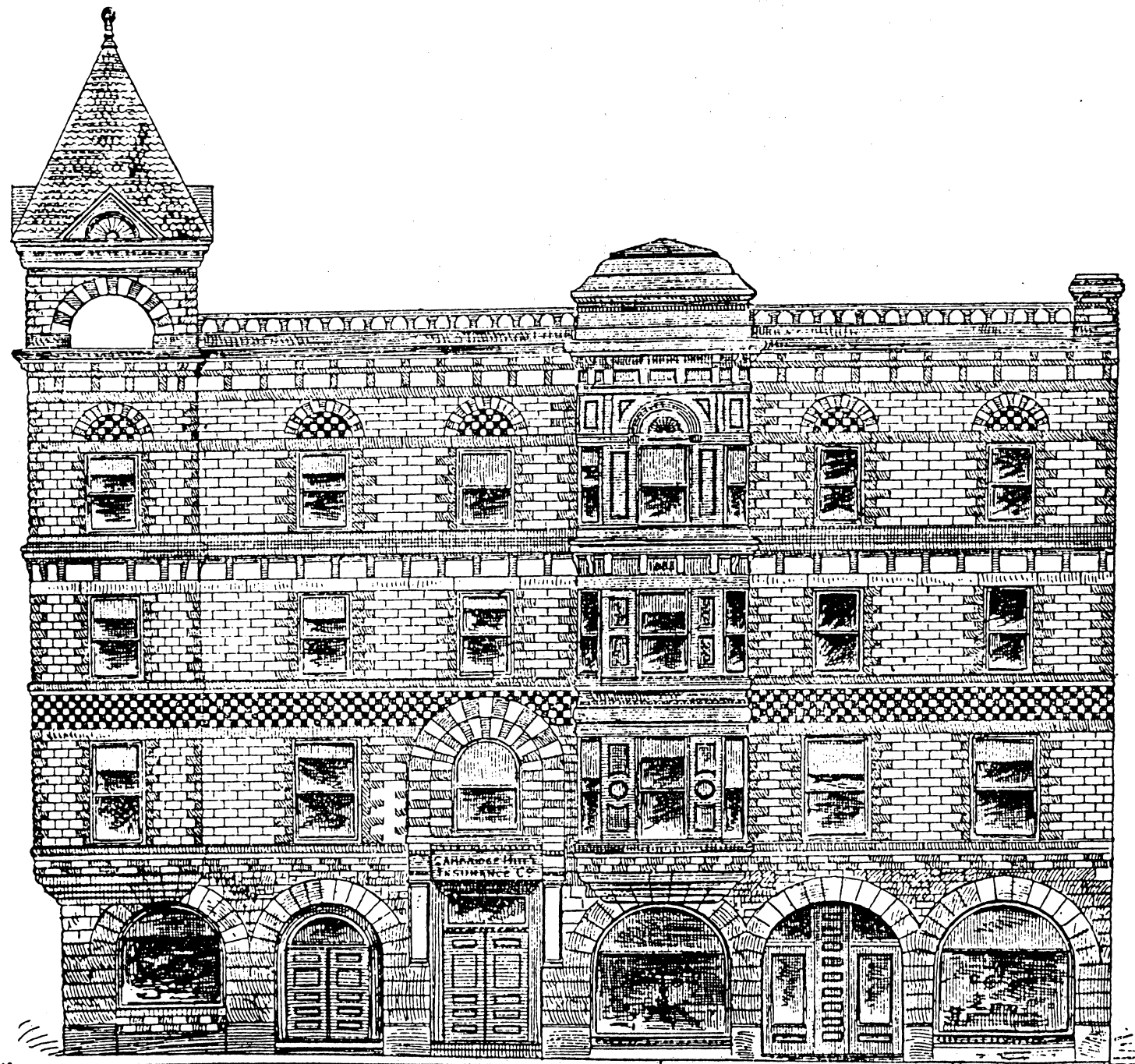
house at 46 Trowbridge Street, where they resided until 1914. In that year the Hastys moved to 71 Hillside Avenue in the Arlington Heights section of Arlington, into a house designed by the architect. The Arlington house was sold in 1918 and it is thought that the Hastys then moved to Gorham, Maine near the ancestral home of the Hasty clan in New England. It is believed that Hasty died between 1918 and 1921.

A prolific architect, Hasty was responsible for the design of numerous Cambridge Queen Anne and Colonial Revival style residences, triple deckers and apartment buildings. The the Cambridge Mutual Fire Insurance Company is the only non-residential building attributed to him. Hasty's work outside of Cambridge was in a similar vein, and included numerous wood frame residences, triple deckers and apartment buildings in the Queen Anne and Colonial Revival styles. Buildings have been attributed to Hasty in Brookline, Dorchester, South Boston and East Boston. A Boston apartment hotel known as the Hotel Cleves at 5 Chestnut Street is also known to have been designed by Hasty.

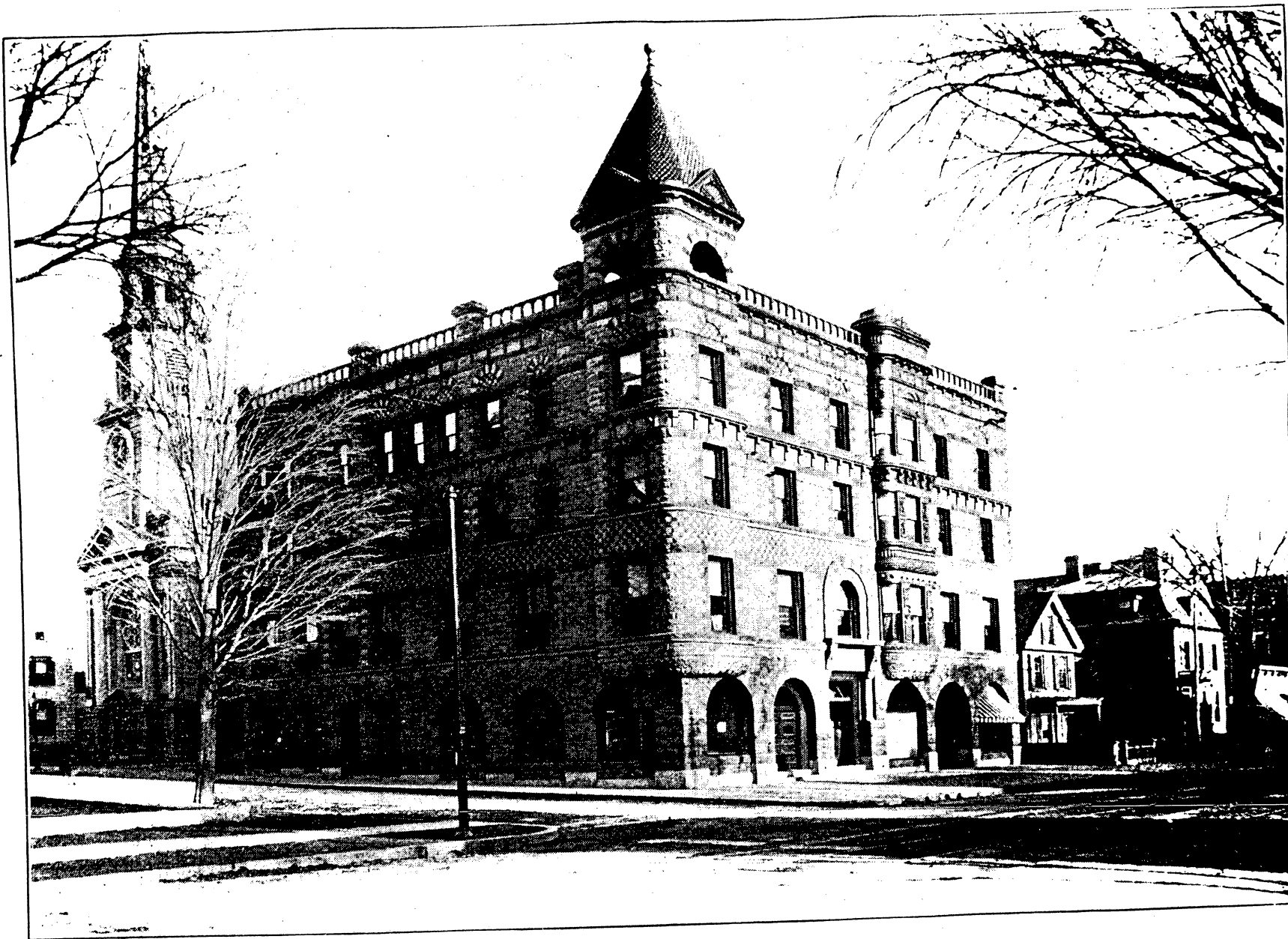
Hasty's popularity reached its peak during the late 1880s and the 1890s. He continued working until 1916, with over seventy local buildings to his credit.

Among his numerous Cambridge works were the William Wood house (1888) at 298 Harvard Street, one of the most highly articulated Queen Anne residences in Mid Cambridge. The owner of the house, William H. Wood, was a prosperous lumber merchant who owned lumber mills in Tennessee and North Carolina.

The Cambridge Mutual Fire Insurance Company building is significant as the work of this important local architect, and is particularly notable as the only commercial structure known to have been designed by him. The building is an important example of the Richardsonian Romanesque style as it was employed for commercial buildings. As well, it is an important stylistic companion to City Hall, which stands across Inman Street. Other related structures in Cambridge include the Commonwealth Lock Building(1892), a brick Queen Anne commercial building in Porter Square, and the Kennedy Building (1890), a five-story brick commercial and apartment building.



BOSTON ENG CO



CAMBRIDGE MUTUAL FIRE INSURANCE COMPANY.

Cambridge

Bara W. Hyde

DOES NOT

Alfred L. Sargent
SECRETARY

763 MASS ST

200 W. 1st St
London E.C. 4



Mutual Fire Insurance Company.

PRESIDENTS
OFFICE.

COMPANY'S NEW BUILDING

Incorporated 1833.



1381/21 100 21

Cambridgeport, Sept 19, 95

Mr Eli M. Mudgett

Dear Sir

Yours of 18th

relating to Stearns lot on Tremont St.
received. If I were to buy the lot it
would be with the intention of sometime
building an apartment house similar to
the one I now own adjoining. It might
be a little different in style of architecture,
but would be a three story, six flat
apartment - and about the dimensions of
the other. If Mr S. is disposed to sell
without restrictions as to what shall go on
the lot I will consider it.

Very Yours
Dana W. Hyde

JOSEPH A. HOLMES & CO.,
WEST INDIA GOODS

— AND —

GROCERIES,
 Cor. of Main and Magazine Streets,
CAMBRIDGEPORT.

SUPERIOR FLOUR.
 Choice Oolong, English Breakfast, & Green Teas.
PURE GROUND COFFEE.
 PRIME DAIRY BUTTER, Etc., Etc.
 J. A. HOLMES, I. C. HOLMES.

V. S. HOLT & CO.,

— DEALERS IN —

West India Goods

— AND —

FAMILY GROCERIES.
 Also, the best New England
BUTTER AND CHEESE,
POTATOES, APPLES, BEANS, Etc., Etc.,
 Cor. of Main and Norfolk Sts.
 Goods sent promptly to any part of the city free from
 expense.



**Cambridge Mutual
 Fire Insurance Co.,**

MAIN STREET,
 (Opposite the Irving House,)
CAMBRIDGEPORT.

Established in 1833.

The Company continues to insure on first-class Real and
 Personal property.

All losses promptly adjusted.

No charge will be made for Policies, Transfers, and Al-
 terations, as heretofore.

No extra hazardous risks will be taken.

JOSIAH W. COOK, President.

HENRY THAYER, Sec'y and Treas.

Directors:

Josiah W. Cook,
 Stephen Foster,
 James Wyeto, 2d,
 J. D. Pearson,

Rufus Lamson,
 Jacob Eaton,
 J. H. Thayer,
 Josiah Burrage,
 Joseph A. Holmes.

*City Directory
 1869*

GEORGE HEWS,

MANUFACTURER OF THE CELEBRATED

Patent American Action Piano-Forte.

REMARKABLE for its *great strength, exceeding elasticity, and certainty of touch*, qualities so indispensable to the acquisition of skill in the use of the instrument, and so highly appreciated by the finished player.

Numerous Medals and Diplomas have been awarded for the superiority of this instrument the last fall.

365 Washington street, Melodeon Building, Boston.

The American Action Piano at the Great London Fair.
Boston, August 14, 1852.

The undersigned, who were officially associated with the *Great Exhibition* in London, are happy to bear testimony to the commendations bestowed on the instrument manufactured by our townsman, Mr. George Hews, by gentlemen capable of appreciating both the tone of a piano, as well as its external finish and elegance of workmanship. The unrivalled pianist, THALBERG, who was on the musical jury, pronounced it one of the *sweetest* as well as *most perfect* toned instruments in the Exhibition.

EDWARD RIDDLE, U. S. Com. to Lon. Ex. of 1851.
J. V. C. SMITH, M. D.

T. WORK, T E W S M A N

AND

PERIODICAL DEALER,

348 Main Street, Cambridgeport,

Will continue to deliver all of the BOSTON DAILY PAPERS, morning and evening, in any part of Wards 1 and 2.

ALSO, SUBSCRIPTIONS TAKEN FOR

All kinds of Weekly Papers and Magazines.

INSURANCE AGAINST FIRE.

Cambridge Mutual Fire Insurance Co.

Cambridgeport, Jan. 1, 1853.

THIS Company has been in successful operation twenty years, and continues to insure against loss or damage by Fire, on

BUILDINGS, FURNITURE, &c.,

In any part of Massachusetts.

This Company do not take extra hazardous risks, such as Carpenters' and other wood-work Shops, Blacksmiths', Book-binders', Apothecaries, and other similar shops; Rope Walks, Soap Factories, or buildings which contain Steam Engines. Neither do they insure stocks of Dry or Fancy Goods.

The office is conducted upon strictly mutual principles. Since the last assessment in December 1849, the cost of insurance on first class risks has been less than **two dollars on a thousand per year.**

Office on Main Street, Cambridgeport,

Next adjoining the Cambridge Bank Building,

Where application for insurance or renewal of policies may be made; and where evidence of the soundness and advantages of the institution will be exhibited, and all information in the premises cheerfully given.

DIRECTORS:

THOMAS WHITTEMORE,	LUCIUS R. PAIGE.
ROBERT DOUGLASS,	ISAAC FAY,
RUFUS LAMSON,	J. W. COOK,
JOSEPH A. HOLMES,	SAMUEL SLOCOMB,
A. H. RAMSAY.	

ABRAHAM LANSING, Sec'y. J. W. COOK, Pres't.

V. Relationship to Criteria

A. Section 4, Ordinance 1002

Section 4 states the criteria for landmark designation. It states that the Commission:

...may recommend for designation as a landmark any ...structure...either (a) importantly associated with one or more historic persons or events, or with the broad architectural, aesthetic, cultural, political, economic or social history of the city ...or (b) historically or architecturally significant (in terms of period, style, method of construction, or association with a famous architect or builder) either by itself or in the context of a group of structures.

B. Relationship of Property to Criteria

In reference to criterion (a), the Cambridge Mutual Fire Insurance Company building is significant in the overall architectural, social and economic history of the City. The Fire Insurance Company building represents the unprecedented commercial growth and development which occurred in Cambridge as a whole, but particularly in Central Square, at the end of the 19th century.

Under criterion (b), The Cambridge Mutual Fire Insurance Company building is architecturally significant in terms of its period, building type and style. It is distinguished as one of only several local buildings designed in the Richardsonian Romanesque style. Over one hundred years after its construction, it remains in a good state of preservation, still utilized for its original purpose.

Architecturally, the Cambridge Mutual Fire Insurance Company building is an excellent example of the Richardsonian Romanesque style as it was used for commercial architecture. Alterations to the exterior consist of the replacement of two of the Syrian arched storefront windows. The upper floors were not accessible for inspection.

Distinguishing features of the Fire Insurance Company's Richardsonian Romanesque style are its rock-faced polychrome masonry, Syrian arched storefront windows, and pyramidal corner tourelle.

The staff finds the Cambridge Mutual Fire Insurance Company building eligible for landmark designation under Ordinance 1002, section 4, criteria (a) and (b).

VI. Recommendations

A. Section 1, Ordinance 1002

The purpose of landmark designation is stated in Section 1 of Ordinance 1002:

...to preserve, conserve, and protect the beauty of the City...and to improve the quality of its environment through identification, conservation, and maintenance of...structures which constitute or reflect distinctive features of the architectural, cultural, political, economic or social history of the City; to resist and restrain environmental influences adverse to this purpose...

B. Preservation Options

The Cambridge Mutual Fire Insurance Company building has been identified for landmark designation. The building is located on Massachusetts Avenue, the city's primary commercial east-west thoroughfare. Within the context of Cambridge commercial buildings, the Cambridge Mutual Fire Insurance Company Building is an outstanding example of its type and style, a well-preserved combination business block and apartment hotel. Rich in detail and human in scale, its uniqueness provides interest and variety to the streetscape and contributes substantially to the historic architectural quality of Central Square. The Cambridge Mutual Fire Insurance Company Building serves as a prominent reminder of the former commercial success of Central Square.

National Register status protects the building from the adverse effects of federally licensed, permitted or funded projects, and listing on the parallel State Register of Historic Places, from the adverse effects of state funded projects. The National and State Registers provide limited protection from public projects through review by the Massachusetts Historical Commission. However, the Massachusetts Historical Commission's power does not allow for review of privately funded projects. Another option for the preservation of the Cambridge Mutual Fire Insurance Company Building is designation as a Landmark under Ordinance 1002.

C. Staff Recommendation

The Cambridge Historical Commission is mandated to identify, protect and preserve landmark buildings. Having found the building eligible under landmark criteria, the staff recommendation is that the Cambridge Mutual Fire Insurance Company Building be forwarded to the City Council for designation as a Protected Landmark.

VII. Statement of Standards for Design Review

A. Introduction

The Commission's primary charge under Ordinance 1002 is to review "all construction, demolition, or alteration that affects the exterior architectural features, other than color, of any landmark." This landmark study report describes exterior architectural features that are among the characteristics which led to consideration of the property as a landmark. Except as the order designating or amending the landmark may otherwise provide, those features should be preserved and/or enhanced in any construction, demolition or alteration of a landmark.

Section 8 of the ordinance sets general guidelines to be considered by the Historical Commission in reviewing changes to landmarks. Among other things, the Commission is directed to consider:

the historic and architectural value and significance of the site or structure, the general design, arrangement, texture and material of the features involved, and the relation of such features to similar features or structures in the surrounding area.

In all cases, a Certificate of Appropriateness, Hardship, or Non-Applicability must be issued by the Historical Commission prior to making any changes to a landmark. The Commission does not have authority to regulate the interiors of landmarks nor can it control changes to exterior architectural features not subject to public view. Nonetheless, Certificates of Non-Applicability must be issued for those changes. All applications are carefully reviewed by the Commission at a public hearing, in accordance with Ordinance 1002.

B. General Standards

1. Historic and architectural features of the landmark shall be preserved.
2. Changes and additions to the landmark which have taken place over time are evidence of the history of the property and the neighborhood. These changes to the property may have acquired significance in their own right and that significance should be recognized and respected.
3. Deteriorated architectural features should be repaired rather than replaced.
4. When replacement of architectural features is necessary, it should be based on physical or documentary evidence.

5. New materials should, whenever possible, match the material being replaced in physical properties, design, color, texture and appearance. The use of imitation replacement materials is discouraged.
6. The surface cleaning of a landmark shall be done by the gentlest possible means. Sandblasting and other cleaning methods that damage exterior architectural features shall not be used.
7. New additions must not destroy significant exterior architectural features and shall not be incongruous with the historic aspects, architectural significance, or distinctive character of the landmark, neighborhood and environment.
8. New additions should be done in such a way that if they were to be removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the landmark would be unimpaired.

C. Statement of Standards

1. General

- a. Preserve and protect, insofar as possible, the setting and streetscape views of the Cambridge Mutual Fire Insurance Company Building.
- b. Provide for possibility of additional construction on the site, including at the rear of the building and with appropriate setbacks, on the roof.
- c. In the event of substantial destruction of the building, or of a substantial part thereof, by fire or other casualty not intentionally caused by the owner, which damage causes restoration to be financially impractical in the reasonable judgment of the owner, the Historical Commission would not require reconstruction or reproduction of the original building or facades, but the property would continue to be subject to Commission review so that any replacement construction will not, in the reasonable opinion of the Commission, be incongruous with any remaining features of the original building or site or with the streetscape of which the original building was a part.

2. Exterior Walls

- a. Repointing of masonry should be done with mortar that matches the existing mortar in color, texture and strength.
- b. All masonry surfaces should be cleaned using the

mildest form of chemical wash under low pressure.

3. Tower

- a. Roof of the tower (tourelle) should be stripped of paint and returned to original natural copper finish.
- b. The original size, shape and configuration of the openings in the upper stage of the tower shall be maintained.

4. Windows

- a. Replacement sash shall match the original in size and configuration.
- b. Groundfloor storefront windows shall be restored to their original size and shape.
- c. Allow for renovation of storefronts in sympathetic materials and design if storefronts are not restored.

5. Other Elements

- a. Repairs to the roof balustrade shall be made with masonry matching the original in color, texture and design. The original size and shape of the balusters shall be maintained.
- b. Wall surfaces of the polygonal bays shall be stripped of paint and returned to their original natural copper finish.

VIII. Proposed Order

ORDERED:

That the Cambridge Mutual Fire Insurance Company Building, 759-765 Massachusetts Avenue, be designated as a protected landmark pursuant to Chapter Two, Article XVI, Section 2-147 (k) of the Code of the City of Cambridge, as recommended by vote of the Cambridge Historical Commission on June 7, 1990. The premises so designated are defined as Parcel 1 of Assessors' Map 107.

This designation is justified by the important associations of the building with the architectural and economic history of the City of Cambridge, specifically as a rare local example of a commercial building designed in the Richardsonian Romanesque style and as a notable work of the local architect John A. Hasty. The Cambridge Mutual Fire Insurance Company building is also a reminder of the pinnacle of commercial success reached by Central Square during the late nineteenth century.

Architecturally, the building is significant as an excellent example of the Richardsonian Romanesque style as it was used for commercial buildings during the 1880s. The Cambridge Mutual Fire Insurance Company is one of a small, distinguished group of local buildings designed in this style, and the only commercial example. The building is in an excellent state of preservation and one of several prominent civic, institutional and commercial landmarks in the Central Square area.

The effect of this designation shall be that no construction activity can take place within the designated landmark area, and no action can be taken affecting the appearance of the Cambridge Mutual Fire Insurance Company building, that would in either case be visible from a public way without review by the Cambridge Historical Commission and the issuance of a Certificate of Appropriateness, Hardship, or Non-Applicability, as the case may be. In making determinations, the Commission shall permit the owners to rehabilitate the Cambridge Mutual Fire Insurance Company building as provided in Section VII, Standards for Design Review, and subject to overall determination by the Commission that final plans for the Cambridge Mutual Fire Insurance Company building's rehabilitation are not incongruous to the historic aspects, architectural significance and distinctive character of the landmark.

Respectfully submitted,

Charles M Sullivan

Charles M. Sullivan
Executive Director

ODD FELLOWS' HALL
534-538 MASSACHUSETTS AVENUE

LANDMARK DESIGNATION STUDY REPORT
PREPARED BY HARRIET WHITE
CAMBRIDGE HISTORICAL COMMISSION
APRIL 23, 1990

CONTENTS

I. Location and Economic Status.....	2
II. Description.....	4
III. History of the Property.....	6
IV. Significance of the Property.....	12
V. Relationship to Criteria.....	16
VI. Recommendations.....	17
VII. Standards for Design Review.....	19
VIII. Proposed Order.....	22

Odd Fellows' Hall is importantly associated with the broad economic and social history of Cambridge. Constructed during a period of great growth in the city, the Odd Fellows' Hall reflects the commercial importance of late 19th-century Central Square. In addition it reflects the strength of the Odd Fellows' organization in Cambridge which was able to hire a prominent architecture firm to design its building in an area where real estate values were high. Architecturally, Odd Fellows' Hall is the most distinguished commercial block in Central Square. It is an outstanding example of Romanesque commercial architecture and an important work by the firm of Hartwell and Richardson, distinguished Boston architects who established a strong reputation with their designs for local businessmen, merchants and manufacturers.

I. Location and Economic Status

A. Address

Odd Fellows' Hall is located at 534-538 Massachusetts Avenue. The parcel is identified as Number 75 on Assessor's Map 93. The lot contains 6,058 square feet of land with a frontage of fifty feet on the south side of Massachusetts Avenue. The building is currently valued at \$240,000 and the land at \$257,000 for a total valuation of \$497,000. The total real estate tax assessment is \$9,973.83.

The building stands in a B-B zone, which allows for general business, business and professional offices, and multi-family dwellings at an FAR of 3.0 with a height limitation of fifty-five feet. The building is a contributing structure in the Central Square National Register District (October 11, 1989).

B. Ownership and Occupancy

Odd Fellows' Hall is owned by Kenneth W. Estridge. It houses the Joy of Movement Center on the upper floors, and the Sleep-a-Rama bedding store and Hair Logic beauty salon in the ground floor storefronts.

C. Area Description

Odd Fellows' Hall stands in the heart of the Central Square business district, which runs in linear fashion along Massachusetts Avenue between City Hall and Lafayette Square. The area contains a mixture of commercial, institutional, industrial and residential buildings dating from 1807 to 1987, and ranging in height from one to five stories. Modern signage and new construction have given the area an uneven appearance. The continuous building wall out to the sidewalk is the single unifying influence.

Adjacent to Odd Fellows' Hall at 546-550 Massachusetts Avenue are the Clark-Lamb Building, a three story brick commercial block (1873; remodelled 1902, 1928), and a nondescript one story commercial block (1924) at 520-526 Massachusetts Avenue, the original appearance of which has been obliterated by later alterations. Nearby, at the corner of Massachusetts Avenue and Pearl Street, is a two story Classical Revival commercial building (1925). At the opposite corner Massachusetts Avenue and Brookline Streets is the "Longfellow," a five story brick apartment house with street level storefronts (1894, C. Herbert McClare). On Green Street, to the rear of Odd Fellows' Hall, stand several multi story apartment buildings, including a Mansard style brick rowhouse (c. 1875), a corrugated metal warehouse and a parking lot.

Across Massachusetts Avenue from Odd Fellows' Hall are several large multi-story commercial buildings including the five story Central Trust Company Building (1927) at 515-527 Massachusetts Avenue and the four-story brick Kane's Furniture building (1916) at 493 Massachusetts Avenue.

D. Planning Issues

The Cambridge Community Development Office has prepared a comprehensive economic development and zoning study of Central Square, known as the Central Square Action Plan (February, 1988). The plan was designed to encourage responsible development and commercial revitalization in Central Square. One goal of the Action Plan was the creation an Overlay District in Central Square. The Central Square Overlay District (March, 1989) is an amendment to Central Square's existing base zoning and contains incentives for the preservation of contributing National Register buildings.

The major project active in the vicinity of the Odd Fellows' building is the rehabilitation of three buildings opposite the Odd Fellows' at 593-597, 599-601, 603-605 Massachusetts Avenue. The three buildings, known collectively as the Morse Buildings, have been vacant for several years and will be renovated with ground floor retail and offices above. The completion of the project will alleviate the perception of disuse engendered by the vacant buildings. It is hoped that the reuse of the Morse Buildings, in conjunction with the incentives provided by the Overlay Zone will strengthen the economic base of this section of Central Square and encourage reinvestment in other vacant buildings east of Norfolk Street.

The Odd Fellows' building currently has an F.A.R. of 4.1, which is above the maximum F.A.R. of 3.0. Thus, it is unlikely that it would be advantageous to develop a new building, which would have to conform to the lower F.A.R., on the site.

The ownership of the building is now in transition, the current owner (Kenneth Estridge) having filed for bankruptcy. It is likely that the building will be sold and new uses found for it. The Historical Commission will need to work with the new owners to ensure that the historic character of the building is respected.

E. Maps

II. Description

A. Type and Use

Odd Fellows' Hall was designed in 1883 and built the following year. A five story structure, it originally contained stores on the ground floor (typical of nineteenth century hall buildings), a two-story galleried meeting hall behind the space of the main arches, and lodge and banquet halls and offices on the upper floors. The ground floor storefronts are presently occupied by the Sleep-A-Rama bedding store and the Hair Logic beauty salon. The upper stories are operated as a dance and exercise facility by the Joy of Movement Center.

B. Physical Description

Odd Fellows' Hall is a five story commercial building of red brick with both Romanesque and Sullivanesque decorative detail of pressed brick and terra cotta. The building is a simple rectangular form with a flat roof. The foundation measures approximately fifty feet by ninety feet, occupying a deep lot with frontage on Massachusetts Avenue. The building is separated from the street by an eight foot sidewalk. The center entrance is recessed and enframed by clusters of slender engaged colonnettes. The floor of the entrance vestibule is laid with mosaic tile containing the emblem of the International Order of Odd Fellows. From the vestibule rises an eight foot wide marble staircase, the principal passage to the upper floors. Flanking the entrance are two storefronts which have been compromised by modern alterations and signage.

Relief ornament of pressed and molded brick and terra cotta are confined to the facade. This includes brick laid in alternating squares in checkerboard fashion, similar to the stone marquetry above the entrance arches of Henry Hobson Richardson's Austin Hall (1881-1883), and J.A. Hasty's nearby Cambridge Mutual Fire Insurance Building (1888). A terra cotta string course of stylized foliage in an interlaced pattern divides the first and second stories; a string course with a palmette motif divides the third and fourth stories.

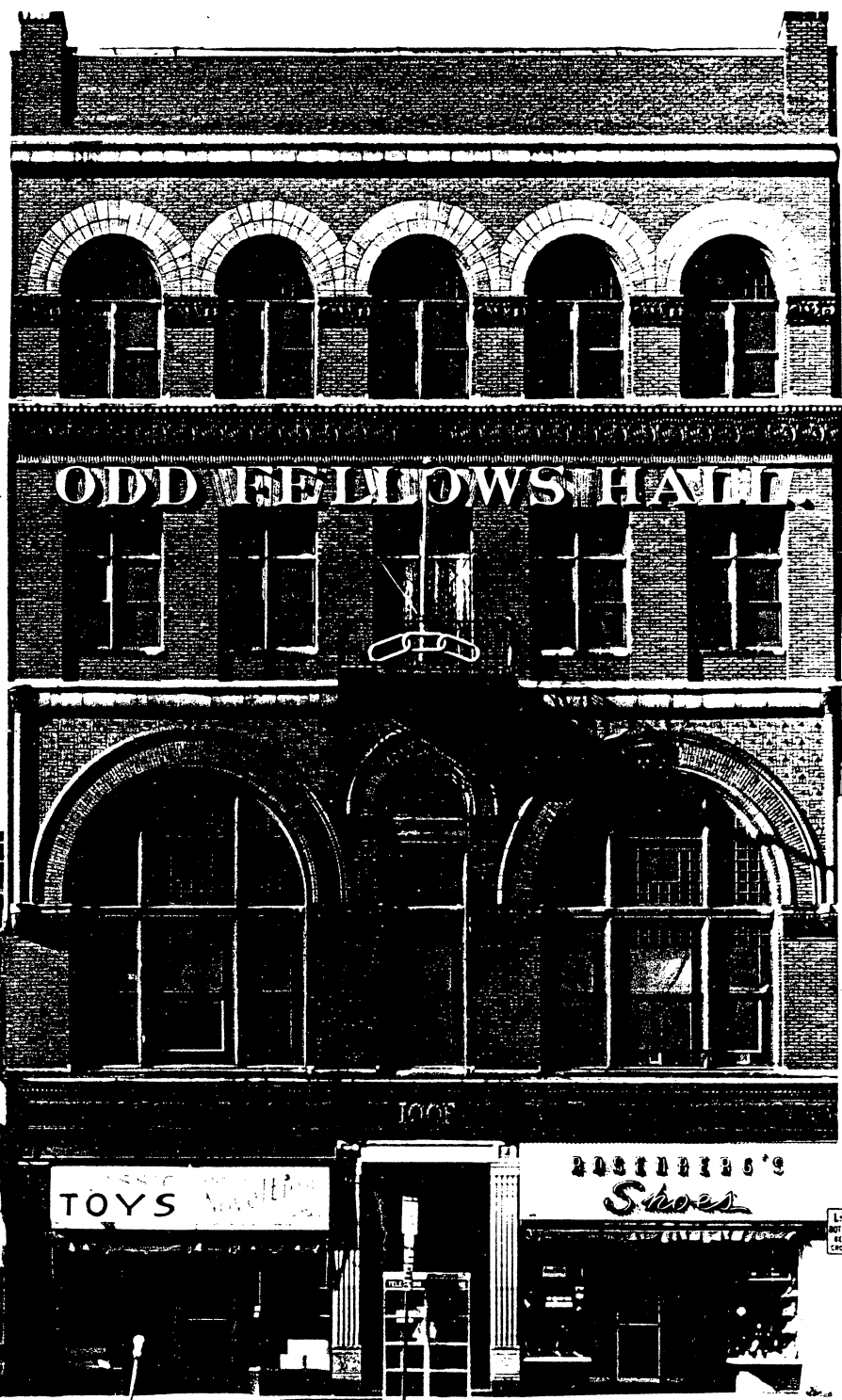
The most prominent feature of the facade is a pair of broad Syrian arched windows, each fifteen feet wide. These arches reach the full twenty-five foot height of the second story, and contain small lights of cathedral glass which illuminate the large second story meeting room. The arches rest on spandrels embellished with foliated terra cotta ornament. Fenestration of the third story consists of rectangular openings set within deep reveals. The fourth story windows form an arcade of round arches, smaller in scale than those of the second story.

A parapet rises above the cornice of molded terra cotta. The parapet is flanked by plain brick piers. The architects' drawings show the parapet with a checkerboard pattern of brick and each pier topped by a pyramidal mound of foliated ornament. These decorative elements are not part of the present design, and it is not certain whether they were included at the time of construction.

The principal meeting room measures forty feet by fifty feet with a ceiling height of twenty-five feet occupying the second and third stories. This major room, together with its galleries provided seating for 500 persons. Private lodge rooms and other facilities for the exclusive use of the Odd Fellows were on the upper floors of the building.

C. Current Photographs





TOYS

ROBINSON'S
Shoes

Hayes
Bickford

SENWALD
VILLY
RECORDS
MONEY-CLEAN



III. History of the Property

A. Historic Development Patterns

1. Deed History of the Parcel

By the mid 18th century Cambridgeport land ownership had been reorganized into three large farms, the Soden farm, the Bordman farm and the Inman estate, with several smaller holdings. The land on which the Odd Fellows' Hall stands was originally part of the Soden farm. In 1777 Thomas Soden sold much of his land including his farmhouse to Chief Justice Francis Dana, who had amassed extensive Cambridgeport landholdings both north and south of Massachusetts Avenue.

In 1793 Samuel Whittemore, of Gloucester, sold a twenty-one acre tract of land in Cambridgeport to his grandson, William Watson (b.1755), a Cambridge glazier. The land was described in the deed as being "...situated in a part of the Town called 'The Neck,' and consisting of mowing, plowing, pasturing and orcharding." It was bounded on the northeast by the Town Road (now Massachusetts Avenue), and on three sides by land of Francis Dana.

Watson's house stood at the southeast corner of Mount Auburn and Brighton Streets (now JFK Street). It had belonged to his maternal grandfather, Samuel Whittemore, a deacon of the church for over forty years. In addition to the house, Watson owned a large tract of land in Cambridgeport which he used for various purposes including the keeping an elderly slave named Venus Whittemore. This is probably the land referred to in the deed of 1793, as well as the site of the present Odd Fellows' Hall.

It is uncertain when the land was transferred from William Watson to his eldest son Samuel Watson (b.1796), but it is known that at the time of Samuel Watson's death the property was divided among his brother and sisters, Abraham Andros Watson, a Boston physician; Susan Wyeth Moore; and Elizabeth W. Allen. Susan Wyeth Moore (d.1802) was the daughter of William Watson and his first wife Susanna Wyeth Watson. Dr. Abraham Watson (c.1799-1868) and Elizabeth Watson Allen (b.1794) were the son and daughter of William Watson and his second wife, Catherine Lopez Watson. These three siblings retained ownership until 1855. At that time Susan Wyeth Moore and Mary Moore sold a portion of the land with a grain store and other buildings on it to Hervey Davis and Erastus Bates, Cambridge grain dealers.

In 1863 and 1864 Davis and Bates acquired two additional parcels from the Watson heirs. The first of these was bought from Elizabeth W. Allen, Susan Wyeth Moore and Mary Moore, and was described as their two-thirds of the

land they inherited from their brother Samuel Watson. The other parcel purchased by Davis and Bates was obtained from Dr. Abraham Watson of Boston, and was described as his one-third of the land inherited from his brother Samuel Watson.

Davis and Bates retained ownership of the properties which they had assembled and operated a large grain and feed store on the premises until 1872 when they sold it as an intact parcel to Daniel U. Chamberlin, Caleb C. Allen and Henry Endicott. Six years later, in 1878, the property was again sold, this time to the Friendship Hall Association, a precursor of the Odd Fellows' organization. Finally in 1884, the Odd Fellows Hall Association took possession of the property, which consisted of two adjacent parcels and included a right of way leading from Massachusetts Avenue through the block to Green Street. The land was cleared of the grain store buildings to make way for the new headquarters built by the Odd Fellows in 1884. The Odd Fellows retained ownership of the land and buildings until 1977 when they were purchased by Kenneth W. Estridge and the Joy of Movement Center.

2. Development History of the Property

From the time of the first settlement in 1630 until 1793, the land surrounding Odd Fellows' Hall consisted of salt marshes and woodland. It was used for pasturage, mowing, orchards and plowing, reflecting the agrarian economy of the period. The primary settlement in Cambridge continued to be in the vicinity of Harvard Square, with Massachusetts Avenue serving as a causeway linking Harvard Square with the undeveloped land to the east. Many Cambridge residents of the period lived in houses near Harvard Square and retained tracts of open land in the Cambridgeport area for grazing their livestock, gathering salt marsh hay and other agricultural purposes. Samuel Whittemore (1693-1794) was one such early resident.

Samuel Whittemore lived at the southeast corner of Mount Auburn and JFK Streets. In keeping with the practice of the time, he also kept large tracts of land in Cambridgeport, including the parcel he sold in 1793 to William Watson. Whittemore was William Watson's maternal grandfather, and served as a Deacon of Christ Church for over forty years. He is said to have kept a shop in part of his house. Watson lived in his grandfather's house, and eventually assumed ownership of his grandfather's Cambridgeport lands.

William Watson is known to have sold off some of these Cambridgeport lands, including a lot at the corner of Main and Brookline Streets in 1799, and several additional lots soon thereafter. These land sales occurred soon after the opening of the West Boston Bridge in 1793.

The West Boston Bridge provided more direct access to Boston and triggered a flurry of real estate speculation in the Central Square area. Up until this time only four houses had been built in Cambridgeport east of Dana Street. After the opening of the bridge, increased transportation along the causeway leading to the bridge (Massachusetts Avenue) created a need for travel-related businesses such as hotels, inns, taverns and livery stables. Among these were Hovey's Tavern near Lafayette Square, and Watson's Hotel built in 1801 at the corner of Main and Brookline Streets. The latter was built by William Watson on land which he had acquired from his grandfather Samuel Whittemore.

A plan of the area drawn by Peter Tufts and dated 1824 shows the block bounded by Massachusetts Avenue and Brookline, Pearl and Franklin Streets divided into three parcels, two of which were owned by Watson and the other by Phineas B. Hovey. Watson also owned all the land between Pearl and Brookline Streets south to Decatur Street. A number of the streets in the area bear the names of Watson family members, including Watson Street and Lopez Street, named for William Watson's second wife, Catharine Lopez.

The Walling Map indicates that by 1854 only five structures facing Massachusetts Avenue had been built on the block. The 1868 Sanborn Map shows that a number of the gaps along Massachusetts Avenue had been filled. The confectionery and cigar factory of Benjamin P. Clark was located east of Watson's Hotel. Next to the confectionery stood the large grain and hay store of Hervey Davis and Erastus Bates. This parcel, which stands opposite Norfolk Street, would later become the site of the Odd Fellows' Hall. East of the grain store there appears to be a row of shops, including a tailor shop. At the corner of Massachusetts Avenue and Brookline Street stood the estate and large grocery store of Phineas B. Hovey. Hovey was the father of Charles Mason Hovey (1810-1887), the noted horticulturist. The 1868 Sanborn Map also shows three structures facing Brookline Street and two on Franklin Street. The interior of the block is largely vacant and Green Street had not yet been laid out.

The 1873 Atlas indicates the block to be almost entirely built up. The numerous gaps for side yards and open space had been filled.

The 1873 Atlas of the City of Cambridge shows the grain and feed store to be under the ownership of Allen and Chamberlain. A photograph of the block taken before 1883 depicts a two and one-half story frame building with its gable end to the street. This was probably the Davis grain store, demolished in 1883 to make way for Odd Fellows Hall.

An article in the Cambridge Chronicle, dated March 10, 1883 mentions plans to construct Odd Fellows' Hall, on land acquired from Davis' grain store.

The 1886 the Atlas of the City of Cambridge indicates a brick structure labelled "Friendship Hall" on the site. This is a reference to Odd Fellows' Hall, which had been constructed in 1883-1884 to house the "Friendship Lodge" of the Independent Order of Odd Fellows.

In 1888 a five story brick block was built by Asa P. Morse on the adjacent lot east of Odd Fellows Hall. The building, designed by J. H. Webber, was occupied by the Cambridge Chronicle on the lower floors with tenements and offices on the upper floors. The Chronicle Building was demolished during the 1920s and replaced by a one story concrete store block.

The 1894 Atlas of the City of Cambridge indicates that the nearby Hovey estate had been subdivided and built upon. In 1892, land at Brookline Street and Massachusetts Avenue in the northeastern corner of the Hovey estate was purchased by Dr. George Southwick, who built a five story brick apartment house with ground floor storefronts on the site. The building, known as the "Longfellow" was designed by C. Herbert McClare, and was pictured in American Architect and Building News in 1893.

In 1912 the rapid transit subway system to Boston was completed. The subway route followed Massachusetts Avenue with a station in Central Square. This began a new phase in the development of Central Square. For many years Cambridge residents bought their goods and services from local merchants, businessmen and professionals. But with the opening of the subway downtown Boston goods came within easy reach. Local commerce in Central Square suffered from competition with downtown Boston for business. This caused a shift away from the 19th century mix of professional offices and retail operations in Central Square, toward a more purely retail trade. Fewer professionals kept office in Central Square, while the number of small businesses increased.

As the century progressed, Central Square's economy became increasingly dependent on neighborhood trade. Though still a major commercial center, Central Square began to lose its diversity and middle class population. Residents abandoned the old urban neighborhoods for new housing in the suburbs, and were replaced by successive groups of immigrants.

After 1920 the most common form of construction came to be the one story concrete storefront housing small scale retail stores.

B. Bibliography

General Sources

Brooks, Charles H. An Official History and Manual of the Grand United Order of Odd Fellows in America, published by Charles H. Brooks, Philadelphia, 1893, pp.5-10.

The Cambridge Chronicle, Volume IX, Number 52, December 30, 1854, page 2, column 4. Article describing expansion of and alterations to Watson's Hotel.

Cambridge Historical Commission. Survey of Architectural History in Cambridge, Report Three, Cambridgeport, by Bainbridge Bunting and Robert Rettig. Cambridge, 1971.

Gilman, Arthur. Cambridge of Eighteen Hundred Ninety-Six Riverside Press, Cambridge, 1896. pp. 285-286.

Hurd, D. Hamilton. History of Middlesex County Massachusetts J.W.Lewis & Co., Philadelphia, 1890, p.214.

Paige, Lucius R. History of Cambridge, Massachusetts 1630-1877. The Riverside Press, Cambridge, 1877, pp.177, 227.

Schmidt, Alvin J. Fraternal Organizations. Greenwood Press, Westport, Connecticut, 1980, pp.243-245.

Whiffen, Marcus. American Architecture Since 1780. M.I.T. Press. Cambridge, 1969, pp.191-200.

Withey, Henry F. and Elsie R. Biographical Dictionary of American Architects. Hennessey and Ingalls, Inc., Los Angeles, 1970, pp. 268, 510-511.

Government Records

Cambridge. Historical Commission. Architect files for Hartwell and Richardson.

Cambridge. Historical Commission. National Register Nomination for Central Square Historic District, 1989.

Cambridge. Historical Commission. Files for Green Street.

Cambridge. Historical Commission. Files for Massachusetts Avenue.

Cambridge. Historical Commission. Files for Odd Fellows' Hall.

Cambridge. Historical Commission. Files of Subway
Construction photographs, dated 1910.

Maps and Atlases

Bromley, George W. and Walter S. Atlas of the City of
Cambridge, Massachusetts. Philadelphia, 1894. 2nd ed.,
1903, 3rd ed., 1916, 4th ed., 1930.

Franklin View Company, City of Cambridge, Massachusetts.
Boston, 1877.

Hopkins, G.M. Atlas of the City of Cambridge
Massachusetts. Philadelphia, 1873. 2nd ed., 1886.

IV. Significance of the Property

A. Historical Significance

The primary significance of Odd Fellows' Hall lies in its associations with the social and economic growth of Cambridge during the last quarter of the 19th century. During this period the population of Cambridge increased dramatically. Industry flourished in Cambridgeport, bringing many new factories and jobs for Cambridgeport's growing immigrant population. This period saw the proliferation of fraternal organizations and benevolent societies in many American cities. Among these were the Free Masons, the Loyal Order of Moose and the Scottish Rite, an elite branch of the Free Masons. They provided social opportunities and a vehicle for charitable and community work to meet the needs of the city's expanding population. Some of these groups constructed substantial buildings to house their organizations. Such halls accommodated group activities such as meetings, concerts, dances and receptions, and played an important role in the community life of the 19th century.

There is evidence that the Odd Fellowship existed in England as early as 1745, but the precise origins of the organization are unknown. During the early 1800s several schisms occurred among the Odd Fellows, most notably in 1813 when a group in Manchester, England seceded from the parent organization in protest of the widespread drinking and merrymaking typical of Odd Fellowship during that era.

In 1817 an Odd Fellow named Thomas Wildey immigrated to the United States, and in 1819 he organized an Odd Fellows lodge in the Seven Stars Tavern in Baltimore, Maryland. This lodge was granted its charter by the Manchester group. However, records show that an unchartered lodge had appeared in Baltimore as early as 1802, and one in New York in 1806.

By 1825 the Grand Lodge of Odd Fellows in the United States was organized, with Thomas Wildey becoming the Grand Sire. In 1826 Wildey visited England where he was honored for having introduced Odd Fellowship to the United States. Wildey was an effective leader, and by the time he died in 1861, there were over forty lodges and 200,000 members in the United States.

In 1843 the Odd Fellows severed ties with the parent organization in England. This is thought to have occurred when the Manchester, England Odd Fellows granted a charter to a group of black Odd Fellows in the United States, who had been denied membership in the all-white American lodges. Since 1843 the black Odd Fellows have had a separate organization known as the Grand United Order of Odd Fellows

(G.U.O.O.F.), and the white Odd Fellows have been known as the Independent Order of Odd Fellows (I.O.O.F.).

The I.O.O.F. was the first American fraternal organization to offer its members financial assistance for care of the sick, needy, orphans, and burial of deceased members. It is difficult to ascertain whether the benevolent features or social qualities had greater appeal to the membership. Whatever the reason, the I.O.O.F. flourished, and from 1830 to 1895 the group initiated over two million new members.

Odd Fellowship has been referred to as "the poor man's Masonry" and in many ways is similar to Free Masonry. It teaches its members secret passwords, signs and handshakes; candidates are blindfolded (hoodwinked) during initiation; and votes are conducted by secret ballot when admitting a candidate for membership. Membership requires belief in a supreme being, and certain moral lessons are emphasized in the group's rituals. Until 1971 its constitution restricted membership to white males; membership is currently limited to adult males.

The candidate for membership, in addition to being blindfolded, is put in chains, intended to symbolize darkness and helplessness, as the members form a funeral like procession and then march around the lodge room. After the procession the candidate's blindfold is removed and he must meditate on death as he views a human skeleton illuminated by torches.

The candidate also proclaims an oath and promises ". . . never to communicate to anyone, . . . the signs, token, or grips, the term or other traveling or other password . . . or lend any of the books or papers relating to the records or secret work of the Order . . ."

The Odd Fellows confer three degrees in addition to that bestowed upon initiation. These are known as Friendship, Love and Truth, symbolized by three chain links joined together. These three links are also the official emblem of the I.O.O.F. Members may attain three "higher" degrees by joining an Encampment Lodge.

The I.O.O.F. has a female division, the Rebekah Assemblies, which was organized in 1851. Men from the I.O.O.F. may join the Rebekah Assemblies, but the reverse is not permitted. In 1978 the entire membership numbered approximately 243,000, a striking decline from the 1915 membership of 3,400,000.

Local units are called "Lodges." Regional groups are called "Grand Lodges," and the parent organization, which includes Canada, is referred to as the "Sovereign Grand

Lodge." National headquarters are currently maintained in Baltimore, Maryland.

The History of Middlesex County, published in 1890, lists fourteen chapters of the Independent Order of Odd Fellows in Cambridge. The earliest of these were the New England Lodge Number 4, instituted in 1827; the Friendship Lodge Number 20, organized in 1843; and the Charles River Encampment Number 22, of 1846.

In 1896 states that in addition to the main chapter, there were six subordinate lodges, two Encampments, and two chapters for women in Cambridge, with a combined membership of over two thousand persons. The strength of the Odd Fellows movement in Cambridge during the late 19th century is evidenced by the group's ability to engage a prominent architectural firm such as Hartwell and Richardson to design a substantial new building for them.

In addition to the organization's headquarters in Central Square, a second substantial Odd Fellows' Hall was constructed in North Cambridge in 1892. Designed by architect G.L. Nicholson, the North Cambridge Odd Fellows' Block stood at 2072-2078 Massachusetts Avenue and was the largest business block in Porter Square at the time it was built. It was destroyed by fire in 1968.

B. Architectural Significance

Odd Fellows' Hall is a building of critical architectural importance. It is an outstanding example of late 19th century commercial design, and the most architecturally distinguished commercial block in Central Square. The Odd Fellows' Hall is also significant as a work of the firm of Hartwell and Richardson, and is characteristic of their public buildings of the early 1880s.

Built of pressed brick with molded brick and terra cotta ornament, this five story building is a typical nineteenth century hall building with stores on the ground floor and meeting and banquet rooms on the upper floors. Its verticality reflects the rising real estate values in Central Square during the 1880s. In order to maximize the revenue potential of property with street frontage on Massachusetts Avenue, multi story buildings were constructed in increasing numbers.

A sketch of Odd Fellow's Hall was published in the American Architect and Building News in May, 1885. Despite the elaborate, square-patterned parapet shown in the drawing, the present building, the existing parapet is plain. The use of a checkerboard pattern in the masonry was seen on H.H. Richardson's Cheney Building; this feature was often imitated by practitioners of the Romanesque Revival.

The elaborately carved terra cotta string courses resemble the interlaced Celtic decorative motifs favored by Louis Sullivan.

Odd Fellows Hall was designed in 1883 by the firm of Hartwell and Richardson. Henry W. Hartwell began his architectural practice in Boston in 1856, although his partnership with William C. Richardson was not formed until 1881. Their practice lasted for almost forty years, with the peak of their success reached during the 1880s and 1890s.

Henry W. Hartwell (1833-1920) was involved in a number of brief professional alliances early in his career. Along with Albert E. Swasey, Jr. he designed several public buildings in the Fall River area. In 1877 Hartwell formed a brief partnership with George Tilden, resulting in the design for the Milton (Mass.) Town Hall (1878). On his own Hartwell produced the designs of the Ware Town Hall (1885) and the Belmont Town Hall (1881).

Soon after receiving the commission for the Belmont Town Hall, Hartwell formed a partnership with William Richardson (1854-1935). Within the firm Hartwell seems to have been responsible for construction, and Richardson for design. Their local works include the First Baptist Church (1881) in Central Square, the Henry Yerxa House (1887-1888), the Stillman Kelley House (1887-1888), the Ritchie House (1889-1890), and the James Mellen House (1888). Also among their commissions were a number of suburban houses in the Boston area and the remodelling of the 1793 Lyman House in Waltham.

Among Hartwell and Richardson's commissions for public and institutional buildings were the First Spiritual Temple, later known as the Exeter Street Theater (1884), the Normal Art School (1886) in Boston, Christ Church (1886-1887) in Andover, the Eliot Church (1888) in Newton, and the Acton Public Library (1889).

Although both Hartwell and Richardson practiced well into the twentieth century, their best work dates from the 1880s and early 1890s. Although not particularly innovative, Hartwell and Richardson had nonetheless achieved a great measure of success, and their work, including Odd Fellows' Hall, reflects the popular architectural taste of the period in the Boston area.

C. Historic Photographs

VPD SHEET PROTECTOR

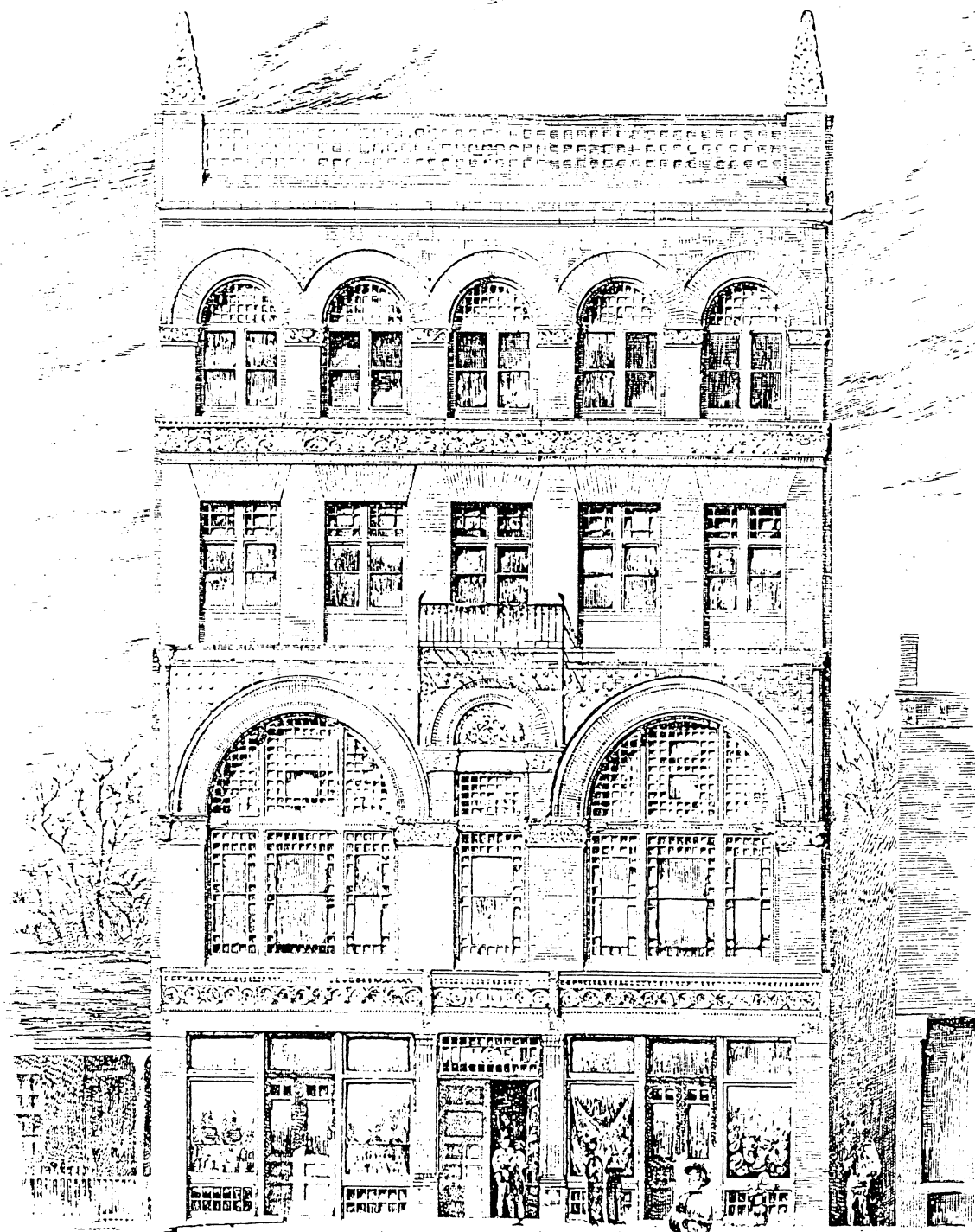
No. 490

AMERICAN ARCHITECT AND BUILDING NEWS, MAY 16 1885

CONSTRUCTION AND ARCHITECTURE

VPD SHEET PROTECTOR

OR PS-6



Old Fellows Hall

Dungeness, Mass.

Designed by H.W. Hartwell & W.C. Richardson

Builders, Boston, Mass.

V. Relationship to Criteria

A. Section 4, Ordinance 1002

Section 4 states the criteria for landmark designation. It states that the Commission:

. . . may recommend for designation as a landmark any . . . structure . . . either (a) importantly associated with one or more historic persons or events, or with the broad architectural, aesthetic, cultural, political, economic or social history of the city . . . or (b) historically or architecturally significant (in terms of period, style, method of construction, or association with a famous architect or builder) either by itself or in the context of a group of structures.

B. Relationship of Property to Criteria

Odd Fellows Hall is importantly associated with the broad pattern of economic and social history of Cambridge. It was constructed during the 1880s, a period of economic prosperity and growth in the city, when Central Square was a thriving commercial center. During this period the city's population expanded rapidly, in part due to the increasing numbers of European immigrants. Widening industrialization increased employment opportunities, attracting many people to the city. Benevolent societies such as the Odd Fellows proliferated to meet the social and financial needs of the population. By 1900, the Odd Fellows had over two thousand members in Cambridge. The strength of the Odd Fellows movement is evidenced by the groups' ability to engage a prominent architectural firm to design a substantial new building at a location where real estate values were quite high. Odd Fellows Hall is a reminder of the unprecedented growth of the city of Cambridge during the later years of the 19th century.

Architecturally, Odd Fellows Hall is the most distinguished commercial block in Central Square. It is an outstanding example of late 19th century commercial design. It is one of few surviving nineteenth buildings in the city which combine commercial and meeting hall functions, and is in an excellent state of preservation. Odd Fellows Hall is also significant as a work of the architectural firm of Hartwell and Richardson, and is characteristic of their public buildings of the early 1880s. The building is one of the few surviving nineteenth century commercial structures in Central Square and makes a critical contribution to the streetscape.

The staff finds the Odd Fellows' Hall eligible for landmark designation under criteria (a) and (b) of Section 4, Ordinance 1002.

VI. Recommendations

A. Section 1, Ordinance 1002

The purpose of landmark designation is stated in Section 1 of Ordinance 1002:

. . . to preserve, conserve, and protect the beauty and heritage of the city. . . and to improve the quality of its environment through identification, conservation, and maintenance of. . . structures which constitute or reflect distinctive features of the architectural, cultural, political, economic or social history of the City; (and) to resist and restrain environmental influences adverse to this purpose.

B. Preservation Options

Odd Fellows Hall is listed on the National Register of Historic Places as a contributing building in the Central Square National Register District (October, 1989). It is protected from the adverse effects of federally licensed, permitted, or funded projects and, through listing on the parallel State Register of Historic Places, from the adverse effects of state funded projects. At the local level, it is covered by the provisions of the Central Square Overlay District, in addition to the general zoning regulations of the city.

The National and State Registers provide limited protection from public projects through review by the Massachusetts Historical Commission. The Overlay District establishes zoning incentives for the preservation of contributing National Register properties and also calls for review of certain projects by the Central Square Advisory Committee. However, neither the Massachusetts Historical Commission's nor the Advisory Committee's powers allow for detailed, binding review of architectural designs. The Advisory Committee also cannot mandate the retention of a particular property.

Other options for the preservation of Odd Fellows Hall include designation as a Landmark under Ordinance 1002, or placement of a Preservation Easement on the property under the provisions of MGL Chapter 184.

The other major protective designation, a Local Historic District in Central Square, is possible. It is, however, unlikely that the Historical Commission would act to designate the area as a district in the absence of strong support from the property owners.

C. Staff Recommendation

The Cambridge Historical Commission is mandated to identify, protect and preserve landmark buildings. Having found the building eligible under the landmark criteria, the staff recommendation is that the Odd Fellows' Hall be forwarded to the City Council for designation as a Protected Landmark.

VII. Standards for Design Review

A. Introduction

The Commission's primary charge under Ordinance 1002 is to review "all construction, demolition, or alteration that affects the exterior architectural features, other than color, of any landmark." This landmark study report describes exterior architectural features that are among the characteristics which led to consideration of the property as a landmark. Except as the order designating or amending the landmark may otherwise provide, those features should be preserved and/or enhanced in any constructions, demolition, or alteration of a landmark.

Section 8 of the ordinance sets general guidelines to be considered by the Historical Commission in reviewing changes to landmarks. Among other things, the Commission is directed to consider:

the historic and architectural value and significance of the site or structure, the general design, arrangement, texture and material of the features involved, and the relation of such features to similar features or structures in the surrounding area.

In all cases, a Certificate of Appropriateness, Hardship, or Non-Applicability must be issued by the Historical Commission prior to making any changes to a landmark. The Commission does not have authority to regulate interiors of landmarks nor can they control changes to exterior architectural features not subject to public view. Nonetheless, Certificates of Non-Applicability must be issued for those changes. All applications are carefully reviewed by the Commission at a public hearing, in accordance with Ordinance 1002.

B. General Standards

1. Historic and architectural features of the landmark shall be preserved.
2. Changes and additions to the landmark which have taken place over time are evidence of the history of the property and the neighborhood. These changes to the property may have acquired significance in their own right and that significance should be recognized and respected.
3. Deteriorated architectural features should be repaired rather than replaced.
4. When replacement of architectural features is necessary, it should be based on physical or documentary evidence.

5. New materials should, whenever possible, match the material being replaced in physical properties, design, color, texture, and appearance. The use of imitation replacement materials is discouraged.
6. The surface cleaning of a landmark shall be done by the gentlest possible means. Sandblasting and other cleaning methods that damage exterior architectural features shall not be used.
7. New additions must not destroy significant exterior architectural features and shall not be incongruous with the historic aspects, architectural significance, or distinctive character of the landmark, neighborhood and environment.
8. New additions should be done in such a way that if they were to be removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the landmark would be unimpaired

C. Statement of Standards

1. General

- a. Preserve and protect insofar as possible the streetscape views of Odd Fellows Hall.
- b. If replacement of the surrounding buildings located on Massachusetts Avenue between Pearl and Brookline Streets is ever contemplated, care should be taken that the fabric of Odd Fellows Hall is protected and enhanced.

2. Exterior Walls

- a. Retain brick exterior.
- b. Repointing of brick masonry should be done using mortar that matches the existing mortar in color, texture, consistency and strength.
- c. Cleaning of all brick surfaces should employ a mild form of wash under low pressure. Sandblasting of brick walls is to be avoided at all costs.
- d. Sealers are to be avoided.

3. Windows

- a. Replacement sash shall match the original in size, function and configuration.

4. Storefronts

- a. Alterations to the storefronts should involve a return to the original design and configuration.

VIII. Proposed Order

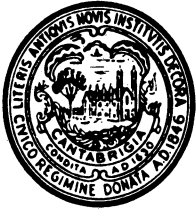
ORDERED:

That the Odd Fellows Hall, 536 Massachusetts Avenue, be designated as a protected landmark pursuant to Chapter Two, Article XVI, Section 2-147(k) of the Code of the City of Cambridge, as recommended by vote of the Cambridge Historical Commission on June 7, 1990. The premises so designated are defined as Parcel 75 on Assessors' Map 93.

The designation is justified by the important associations of the building with the broad social and economic history of the City of Cambridge. Specifically, it is associated with the rise to commercial prominence of Central Square during the last quarter of the 19th century. In addition, Odd Fellows Hall is associated with the Independent Order of Odd Fellows, a social and civic organization typical of those which proliferated in American cities during the period. Architecturally, Odd Fellows Hall is an outstanding and well-preserved example of 19th century commercial architecture and is an important reminder of the commercial hegemony of Central Square. Odd Fellows Hall makes a critical contribution to the diversity of the streetscape in Central Square.

The effect of this designation shall be that no construction activity can take place within the designated landmark area, and no action can be taken affecting the appearance of Odd Fellows Hall, that would in either case be visible from a public way without review by the Cambridge Historical Commission and the issuance of a Certificate of Appropriateness, Hardship or Non-Applicability, as the case may be. In making determinations, the Commission shall be guided by the terms of the landmark designation report, and applicable sections of Ordinance 1002.

Charles M. Sullivan / nes
Charles M. Sullivan
Executive Director
Cambridge Historical Commission.



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE
CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS 02139

TEL. 349-4300
FAX. 349-4307

EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT
ROBERT W. HEALY
City Manager

RICHARD C. ROSSI
Deputy City Manager

August 7, 1991
~~JULY 29, 1991~~

To The Honorable, The City Council:

I am hereby transmitting three Landmark Designation Reports for City Council acceptance
for the following locations:

- a. Cambridge City Hall, 795 Massachusetts Avenue;
- b. Cambridge Mutual Fire Insurance Company Building
763-765 Massachusetts Avenue; and
- c. Odd Fellows' Hall, 536 Massachusetts Avenue.

Very truly yours,

Robert W. Healy
City Manager

RWH/mev
attachments

CONSENT AGENDA ITEM # 12 5-898

Acceptance of the Landmark designation
Reports for the following locations:

12A - Cambridge City Hall
795 Mass. Ave.

12B - Cambridge Mutual Fire
Insurance Company Building
759-763 Mass. Ave.

12C - Odd Fellows' Hall
534-538 Mass. Ave.

In City Council,

August 7, 1991

Order adapted
9-0-0,