

FORM B – BUILDING

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

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

		ZN	13994-13996
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Town: Boston

Place: Dorchester

Photograph



Address: 73 Columbia Road

Historic Name: St. Mark's Episcopal Church

Uses: Religious/Institutional

Dates of Construction: chapel - 1904 (with 1916 addition),
rectory and parish hall - 1909

Source: Cornerstone, building permits, newspaper articles

Style/Form: Craftsman with English Gothic Revival
elements

Architect/Builder: Edmund O. Sylvester

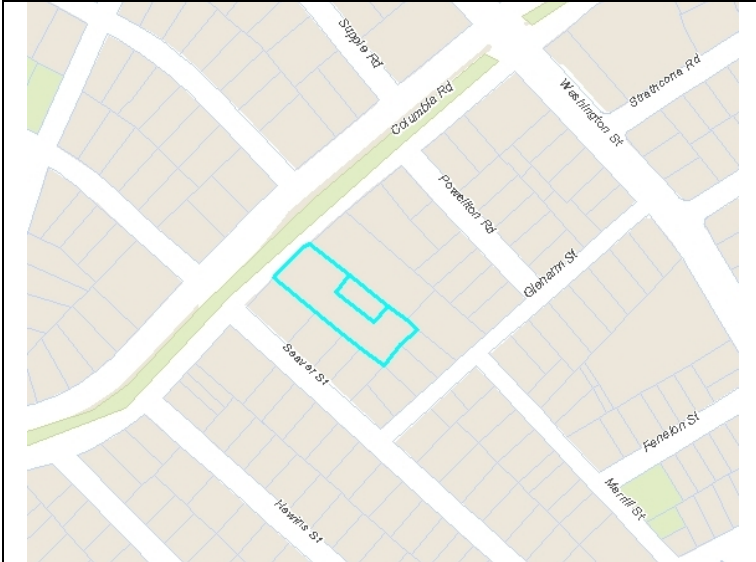
Exterior Material:

Foundation: stone

Wall/Trim: wood shingles/wood

Roof: asphalt shingles

Topographic or Assessor's Map



Outbuildings/Secondary Structures: To the rear of the chapel are the rectory, a single-family dwelling meant to serve as the pastor's residence, and the parish hall, a large meeting hall.

Major Alterations (with dates): 1916 addition to rear of chapel to accommodate new organ

Condition: Fair to Good; parish house is in fair condition

Moved: no | X | yes | | **Date** _____

Acreage: less than 1 acre

Setting: St. Mark's Episcopal Church has been identified as contributing to the proposed Grove Hall National Register District, near the intersection of Columbia Road and Blue Hill Avenue. The Grove Hall area is primarily residential, composed of large brick apartment buildings that create a massive street wall interspersed with older single-family dwellings and other buildings constructed between 1870 and 1940.

Recorded by: Kathryn McLaughlin, Steven T. Moga,
Emily Wolf

Organization: Boston Landmarks Commission

Date (month / year): January 2010

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INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

BOSTON

73 COLUMBIA ROAD

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

Area(s) Form No.

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

ZN	BOS. 13994
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Recommended for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.
If checked, you must attach a completed National Register Criteria Statement form.

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

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION:

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

St. Mark's Episcopal Church consists of three buildings: a chapel, a rectory, and a parish hall. The Church property occupies a central portion of the block bounded by Columbia Road, Powellton Road, Glenarm Street, and Seaver Street in the Grove Hall area of Dorchester. The three buildings, designed by architect Edmund O. Sylvester, present a unified Craftsman style design that also incorporates some elements of the English Gothic Revival style and are cohesive in terms of materials and decorative elements.

The chapel was constructed in 1904 at the front edge of a narrow, nearly rectangular parcel measuring approximately 87 feet wide by 240 feet long. The chapel faces Columbia Road and occupies the most visible portion of the parcel. The rectory, constructed in 1909, is located at the middle of the parcel, slightly northeast of the chapel at the opposite lot line; today, the City of Boston Assessor's Map shows that the rectory sits on a separate parcel, with no street frontage. The parish hall stands at the rear of the original parcel.

The St. Mark's Episcopal Church chapel building is a one-story, wood frame building that sits on a stone foundation. The long, rectangular chapel is approximately 27 feet wide, 58 ½ feet long, and 25 feet tall. Blending Craftsman and English Gothic Revival style elements, it is front-gabled, with a steeply pitched overhanging roof that features elaborated rafter ends. A smaller volume, comprised of a covered entranceway and porch, also front-gabled and with a steeply pitched overhanging roof and elaborated rafter ends, projects from the front of the main building volume. Trusses, a typical Craftsman and English Gothic Revival style decorative motif, adorn the gable end of the entry porch. Decorative beams are visible at the wide, unenclosed overhanging eaves at the rake end of both the chapel's entrance porch and the main building volume. The chapel's long side elevations are dominated by the steeply pitched roof, which is punctuated by triangular eyebrow dormers. A series of small, rectangular stained glass windows, which allow diffuse natural light to reach the chapel sanctuary, extend across the side elevations. The rear elevation was altered in 1916 to accommodate a new organ, which was installed behind the altar. A large round stained glass window is located at the upper portion of the rear wall, above the organ. The building is clad in plain, coursed wood shingles.

The St. Mark's Episcopal Church rectory, a two-and-a-half-story Craftsman style single family residence, is rectangular in plan and measures approximately 28 feet wide, 40 feet long, and 35 feet high. It is of wood frame construction and sits on a stone foundation. Its roof is less steeply pitched than the chapel, but it exhibits a similar fenestration pattern (with clear glazing instead of stained glass) and the same exterior wall cladding of plain, coursed wood shingles. The front elevation features a one-story covered porch with simple Doric columns.

The two-story parish hall is larger and bulkier than the chapel building, but is remarkably similar to it in terms of the arrangement of building volumes, materials, and decorative elements, and in its blending of Craftsman and English Gothic Revival style elements. The building features an irregular plan, measuring approximately 31 feet wide at the front, 44 feet wide at the rear, and 80 feet deep. Like the chapel and rectory, it is wood frame construction, set on a stone foundation, with plain, coursed wood shingles as the exterior wall cladding. As in the chapel, triangular eyebrow dormers punctuate the roof. The second story of the parish hall is devoted to a large gathering space with an open volume and exposed rafter beams overhead and a stage at the east end. A kitchen and dining room are located on the first floor of the parish hall.

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

BOSTON

73 COLUMBIA ROAD

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220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area(s) Form No.

ZN	BOS. 13994
----	------------

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

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

The development of St. Mark's Episcopal Church parallels the growth and expansion of Grove Hall, Mount Bowdoin, and surrounding neighborhoods in Roxbury and Dorchester following Boston's annexation of Dorchester in 1870. In the years following its annexation, precipitated by the advent of mass transit lines and associated residential and institutional development, Dorchester became one of Boston's "streetcar suburbs." The construction of the Church also coincides with the development of Columbia Road Parkway, beginning in 1897, which connected Franklin Park and the Dorchester Bay waterfront.

What is now St. Mark's Episcopal Church began as a consequence of a devastating fire that destroyed St. Mary's Episcopal Church, which was constructed in 1849 on Bowdoin Street, opposite Olney Street, in 1887. Following the fire, the St. Mary's congregation undertook the construction of a new church, to be located at Cushing Avenue and Stoughton Street in the Jones Hill area of Dorchester. While the new church was being built, many parishioners began meeting at the Mount Bowdoin library, establishing a mission Sunday school there in 1887.

In 1888, the mission moved to Wetherell Hall, at 22 Washington Street in Dorchester, and, because the new location was close to the Grove Hall area, became known as the Grove Hall Mission. The Grove Hall Mission became independent of St. Mary's Episcopal Church in 1897. On September 29, 1898, having adopted St. Mark as their patron to become St. Mark's Mission, the congregation purchased the parcel at 73 Columbia Road, Dorchester. They converted an existing cottage on the property to accommodate religious use, and began making plans to construct a church of their own there.

On April 25, 1904, the Feast of St. Mark, the cornerstone for the chapel was laid, and the building was completed on September 18, 1904, at a cost of approximately \$10,000.00. St. Mark's Mission had originally intended to construct a stone church, but a pressing need for additional space led to the construction of the wood framed chapel. The intention of the mission was to ultimately move the wooden chapel off of its stone foundation and to relocate it elsewhere on the property for use as a parish house or hall, allowing a new stone church to be built on the existing stone foundation. These plans, however, never came to fruition.

The chapel was incorporated as St. Mark's Parish in 1906, and the rectory and parish hall were built in 1909. St. Mark's Episcopal Church remains an active parish, continuously holding worship services at 73 Columbia Road since 1898.

At some point the original single parcel was divided into two parcels; the chapel and parish hall buildings sit on one parcel, while the rectory sits on a second parcel, which is without street frontage. The parish house is no longer used as a residence. The upper floor of the rectory hall is rented out to another congregation for their worship services.

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INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

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73 COLUMBIA ROAD

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220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area(s) Form No.

ZN BOS. 13994

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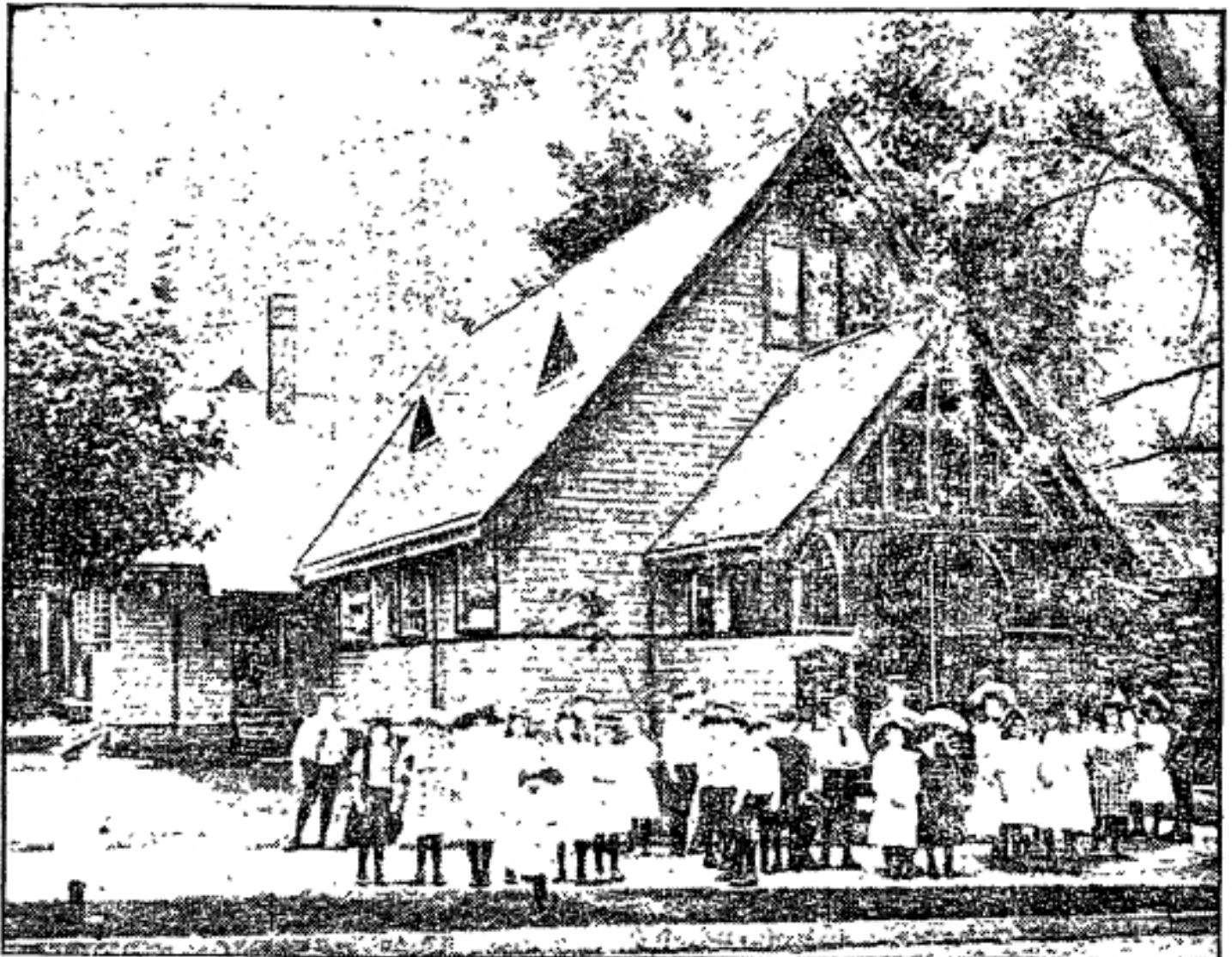
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Additional Photo Documentation



Figure 1: The rectory (left) (BOS.13995) and the parish hall (right) (BOS.13996). Both buildings were constructed to the rear of the chapel (1904) at 73 Columbia Road in 1909.

¹²⁵
**FIRST SERVICE IN ST MARK'S
EPISCOPAL CHAPEL, DORCHESTER**



NEW ST MARK'S CHAPEL, DORCHESTER.

Figure 2: Photograph of the new chapel from the *Boston Daily Globe*, September 19, 1904.

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Rectory, parish hall and chapel, view from Columbia Road



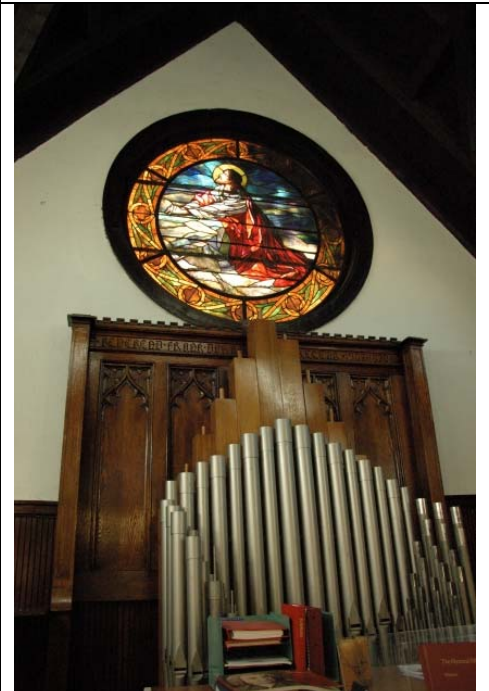
Chapel, with 1916 addition at rear



Chapel cornerstone



Chapel interior



Chapel interior, stained glass and organ

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Area(s) Form No.

ZN BOS. 13994



Chapel interior, pews and stained glass



Parish Hall (BOS.13996), second floor



Entrance to Parish Hall (1909)



Parish hall, detail of front entrance



Rectory, entrance facade

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----	------------



Rectory, SE elevation