

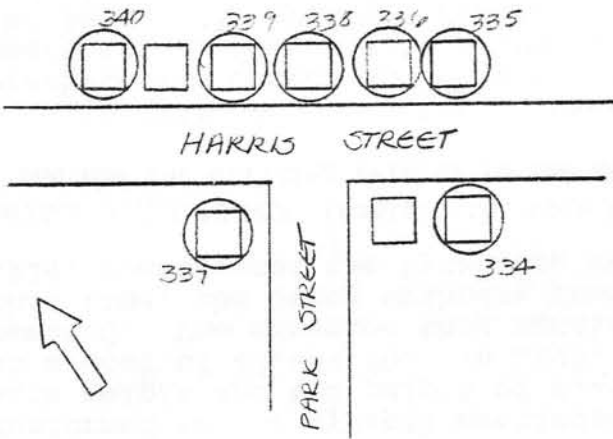
Area	Form no.
	337

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
 _____ Street, Boston, MA 02108



City Newburyport
 Address 5-7 Harris Street
 Historic Name Harris Street Meeting House
 Original Second Presbyterian Meeting
 House
 Present Greek Orthodox Church
 Ownership: Private individual
 Private organization Hellenic
Orthodox Community
 Public _____
 Original owner Second Presbyterian
 Society

Draw map showing location in relation to nearest cross streets and other buildings or geographical features. Indicate north.



DESCRIPTION:
 Date 1796
 Source Currier, "History of Nbpt."
 Style Federal
 Architect Unknown
 Exterior wall fabric Asbestos siding
over clapboards
 Outbuildings _____
Vestry / parish hall
 Major alterations (with dates) Interior
Victorianized (1856), steeple removed
(1907), tower altered (1924)
 Moved Reoriented on site Date 1856
 Approx. acreage 22,640 sq. ft.
 Setting Densely built up residential
area adjacent to State Street and the
central business district.

Recorded by Mary Jane Stirgwolt
 Office of
 Organization Community Development
 Date 6-30-80

(Staple additional sheets here)

ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE (describe important architectural features and evaluate in terms of other buildings within community)

The Harris Street Meetinghouse was built in 1796 to house the Second Presbyterian Society. Originally, the structure was oriented toward Green Street. In 1856, the church was reoriented to face Harris Street which had been laid out in 1796. As constructed in 1796, the meetinghouse conformed to the typical meetinghouse plan of the period. In 1856, the high pulpit and box pulpit of black walnut was placed in the meetinghouse at a cost of \$2,000.00. In 1907, the steeple of the meetinghouse was removed. The exterior then remained relatively unchanged until 1926. At that time, the Greek Orthodox Church, having acquired the building in 1924, constructed the Byzantine style belfry and remodeled the interior (cont).

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE (explain the role owners played in local or state history and how the building relates to the development of the community)

In 1794, Reverend Daniel Dana was ordained pastor of the First Presbyterian Church and Society. Shortly thereafter, members of the congregation, dissatisfied with his theological views, were organized as the Second Presbyterian Church in Newburyport. On Sept. 3, 1795, the proprietors purchased "about thirty-two rods of unoccupied land" upon which to build a meetinghouse. The cornerstone was laid May 16, 1796, and the building was dedicated on December 22nd.

Rev. John Boddily was installed in 1803. He preached to the congregation for 21 years causing no small amount of controversy by his belief in Democratic principles in a Federalist stronghold like Newburyport.

In 1826, Rev. Daniel Dana became pastor of the church. For the next twenty years, the society enjoyed the ministry of the very man who forced their secession from the First Presbyterian Church.

In July 1924, the members of the Second Presbyterian church sold the meetinghouse to the Greek Orthodox Congregation and returned to the fold of the First Presbyterian Society.

The congregation of the Second Presbyterian Society contained many of the Newburyport's most illustrious families. These included the Titcombs, Toppans and Coffins. According to one Newburyport historian, the church provided the nucleus of Newburyport's Democratic Society.

The bell, hung in the belfry in 1801, was cast by John Warner and Son, London, and was donated by Newburyport's eccentric Lord Timothy Dexter.

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

Newburyport Herald, January 1, 1907.

Newburyport Daily Herald, March 30, 1872.

J. J. Currier, History of Newburyport, 1764-1905, Vols. I and II,

S. Emery, Reminiscences of a Newburyport Nonagenarian, Newburyport, 1879.

Letter, Andover Organ Co. to Restoration Committee, Greek Orthodox Church, April 21, 1980

Greek Orthodox Church, "History of the Community"

INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
Office of the Secretary, Boston

Community: Newburyport	Form No: 337
Property Name: 5-7 Harris Street	

Indicate each item on inventory form which is being continued below.

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

The organ, still in working order, was Opus 261 of the E & GG Hook Company of Boston in 1859. The Hook firm was the most important organ firm in New England in the mid-19th century. At that time, each organ was designed specifically for the building in which it was to be housed and each organ was a unique instrument. The organ remains in its original location in the building and has had only the most minor alterations.

The Greek Orthodox Congregation has been a vital force in the development of Newburyport since the early 20th century. The church has provided a forum for this community for the last fifty years.

ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE (CONTINUED)

to conform to the Greek Orthodox tradition. The Harris Street meeting house retains the Victorian pews from the 1856 renovation. Unfortunately much of the original detail of the meetinghouse has not survived until the present day. The interior probably was similar, though less elaborate, than the interior of the First Religious Society of Newburyport's Meeting House on Pleasant Street. The parish hall behind the meetinghouse has undergone total renovation since 1951.

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