

# FORM B – BUILDING

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

28-127-A	Boston North	AF	BLM.81
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MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
MASSACHUSETTS ARCHIVES BUILDING  
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD  
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

**Town/City:** Belmont

**Place:** (*neighborhood or village*):  
Waverley

## Photograph



**Address:** 51 Lexington Street

**Historic Name:** Unitarian Church of Waverley

**Uses:** Present: church

Original: church

**Date of Construction:** 1896

**Source:** church history

**Style/Form:** Shingle Style (altered)

**Architect/Builder:** L.M. Harriman (1896);  
Edwin J. Lewis, Jr. (1909)

### Exterior Material:

Foundation: granite

Wall/Trim: vinyl siding, wood clapboards, wood shingles

Roof: asphalt shingles

### Outbuildings/Secondary Structures:

none

### Major Alterations (*with dates*):

1909 – rear parish house addition

2008 – new vinyl siding

2015 – new accessible entry and wheelchair ramp

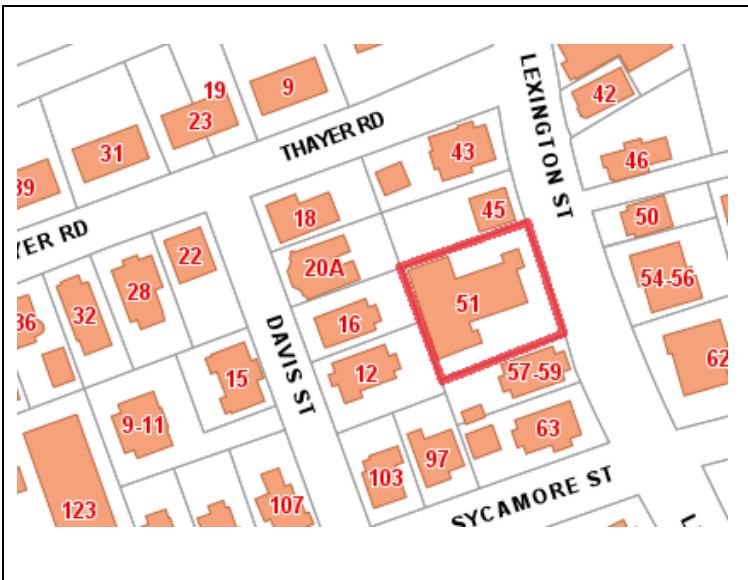
**Condition:** fair (due to siding)

**Moved:** no  yes  **Date:**

**Acreage:** 11,424 SF

**Setting:** major thoroughfare near Waverley commercial center

## Locus Map (north at top)



**Recorded by:** Lisa Mausolf

**Organization:** Belmont Historic District Commission

**Date** (*month / year*): July 2014

# INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

BELMONT

51 LEXINGTON STREET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

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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.*

## ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION:

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

The former Unitarian Church consists of a gabled sanctuary with a square entrance tower at the northeast corner and a single-story parish house addition to the rear (1909) giving the building a T-shaped plan. The church is set on a foundation of granite blocks laid with a beaded mortar. Originally shingles covered most of the church and the rear addition with the first floor of the church clad in wood clapboards. In recent years the front of the church and the tower have been covered in a vinyl shingle; the side elevations of the church remain clapboarded. The steeply-pitched gable roof is covered in asphalt siding and a small gable wood shingled dormer survives on each side toward the front with an eyebrow dormer toward the rear. The crenellation which originally capped the tower was removed at an unknown date. Most of the window openings are rectangular except for a pointed arch window filled with geometric leaded glass in the gable end of the sanctuary and a smaller one on the second floor of the tower. An arch with paneled embrasure marks the entrance.

The rear parish house addition retains its wood-shingled exterior and a higher level of integrity. The south entrance is marked by a Tudor half-timbered gable resting on posts. The original glass-and-panel doors survive. On the north façade of the parish house there is a distinctive projecting shingled gable with pointed arch recess.

## 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 Waverley Unitarian Society was organized in 1882 and initially met in Waverley Hall on Church Street. To accommodate the growing congregation a lot was purchased on Lexington Street between Thayer Road and Sycamore Street on which to erect a church.

Ground was broken for the building on August 14, 1896 and Mrs. B.F. Chandler, as the oldest member of the parish, had the honor of turning over the first shovelful of dirt. The cornerstone for the building was laid on October 3, 1896 with full Masonic rites, the only building in town to be dedicated in this manner. The designer of the building was L.M. Harriman. This appears to be Levi M. Harriman, a Cambridge carpenter. The building was completed in late 1896 and dedicated on January 7, 1897.

In 1909 the church was granted a building permit for the construction of a single-story parish house addition measuring 78' x 21' to the rear of the original building. The architect of the addition was Edwin J. Lewis, Jr. (1859-1937). Lewis was a native of Roxbury, who studied at MIT and worked in the office of the well-known Boston architects Peabody & Stearns before opening his own office in the 1890s. He designed both residential and church buildings (Withey: 370).

The church served for many years as the center of liberal religion in the Waverley area. Due to declining membership, the Waverley Unitarian Church united with the First Church in Belmont Unitarian on Concord Avenue in March 1948 and the Waverley building was sold. It has been used by a number of congregations since that time.

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