

NEWTON LOCAL LANDMARK REPORT

Swedenborgian Church

(19 Highland Ave)

**Prepared for:
Newton Historical
Commission**

August 24th, 2023

NAME: Swendenborgian Church ADDRESS: 19 Highland Ave

1. *Name of Property*

- a. *Historic Name:* Swedenborgian Church , Church of New Jerusalem
- b. *Common Name:* Church of the Open Word

2. *Location*

- a. *Street Address:* 19 Highland Ave
- b. *Zip Code:* 02460
- c. *Assessor's #:* 24009 0025

3. *Classification*

- a. *Ownership of Property:* Massachusetts New Church Union, 50 Quincy St
Cambridge, Ma 02138
- b. *Type of Property:* Church/Worship space
- c. *National Register Status:* Listed on the National Register of Historic Places as part of the Newtonville Historic District.

4. *Function or Use:* Church/Worship

5. *Zoning*

The Zoning District is MR1

6. *Description*

Neighborhood Description:

Newtonville is a commercial and residential suburban village, centered around the intersection of Washington and Walnut Streets. Newtonville experienced slow development until the mid-19th century, when residential development for commuters began around the Boston & Worcester Railroad. Today it also serves as a connection to I-90, continuing its history as a convenient location for commuters, and marked by late 19th century and early 20th century residential developments on relatively spacious lots.

Architectural Description:

Formation: The Church building has three masses: A bell tower, a nave, and a chancel projection on the east end of the church.

Roof: The roof of the nave and chancel both have a steeped pitch. The nave has a gable on the west and east facades, and the chancel projection creates another gable over the stained glass. Both of these roofs are slate.

Walls: Roxbury conglomerate puddingstone with an Indiana limestone trim.

Windows: Three Connick Studios stained glass windows at the chancel.

Parish House: Connected to Church by a shingle covered walkway, the Parish House should be considered, for the purposes of this landmark, a detached structure. While the Parish House would be determined to be a Historically Significant building in its own right, the building does not present as clear an architectural provenance as the church structure. The construction of the existing stone structure is on the footprint of the previous wood chapel, which predated the construction of the Church. However, the integrity of the wood chapel, or any piece of which exists, is unclear. Furthermore, two ill-fitting stucco additions have been constructed off of the Parish House.

7. *History of Property*

a. *Development History:*

- 1916 – Presumably a permit to remodel the chancel and install the stained glass windows. Interestingly, the permit actually doesn't describe the alteration. Architect Cram & Ferguson and builder Harry E. Hardy.
- 1917 – Permit to build frame garage
- 1969 - Permit to install a new set of stairs on the Parish House from ground to second floor, and new door. Builder Robert A Proctor.

8. *Significance of Property*

a. *Period of Significance:*

The period of significance for this property is 1897-1916, which is the period between the construction of the Church and the installation of the stained glass windows.

b. *Historical Significance:*

Newtonville served first as farmland through the mid-19th century. As Washington Street was expanded along the Boston & Worcester Railroad, Alexander Wasdworth was commissioned in 1850 to plan for the subdivision of land into spacious lots that would create the residential portion of the village. Walnut Street, as it ran perpendicular to Washington Street, became the village center.

The Swedenborgian Church built a wooden chapel on the site of the existing Parish House in 1867, as an offshoot of the mother church located in Boston. John Worcester, the first minister of the Swedenborgian church, was a Newtonville resident: first at Cabot Street, then later on to Highland Ave. The congregation was one of the first institutions to settle in Newtonville during this first period of development, the construction of their permanent Church building meant that they also participated in the small boom of Gothic Revival and Italianate development Newtonville experienced towards the end of the 19th century.

c. *Architectural Significance:*

The Swedenborgian Church in Newtonville was constructed in 1893 in a Gothic Revival style. It was designed by architectural firm Cram & Wentworth, and built in a puddingstone construction and limestone trim. Cram is renowned for his church constructions, 50 of which are on the National Register of Historic Places. Cram also go on to design the First Unitarian Church in West Newton. There have been no exterior alterations to the building.

Three stained glass windows, added in 1916, were designed by Charles Connick Studios when the chancel was enlarged through an interior remodel. The Charles Connick Studios were opened in Back Bay, Boston in 1913 and continued operation until 1986. Connick was a Newton resident and prolific designer of stained glass windows throughout Newton and Brookline, including installations at the Greek Evangelical Church in Newton Centre, Trinity Church in Newton, Second Congregational Church in Newton, and the Chapel at Newton Country Say.

9. *Designation*

a. *Landmark Designation Criteria:* The criteria for landmark designation as set forth in Section 22-93 of Newton's Landmark Ordinance:

- the property significantly represents an architectural type, style or design distinguished by innovation, rarity, uniqueness, or overall quality of design, detailing, materials or craftsmanship.
- the property is meaningfully associated with a person or persons who significantly contributed to the cultural, historic, architectural or archeological aspect of the development of the City of Newton, Commonwealth of Massachusetts, or the United States of America
- the property's identification as a notable work of an architect, designer, engineer or builder whose work is significant in the history or development of the City of Newton, Commonwealth of Massachusetts or the United States of America
- historic events or activities occurred at the property that have made an outstanding contribution to, or which best represent some important aspect of, the history of the City of Newton, Commonwealth of Massachusetts or the United States of America.

In determining whether to designate a property as a landmark, the commission shall also consider the following conditions:

- that the distinguishing characteristics of significance are for the most part original and intact or capable of restoration.
- that the property, location and setting is compatible with future preservation and maintenance; and
- the property's context in relation to the City's policies and adopted plans and the property's surrounding area.

10. *Standards of Review*

a. *General Standards:*

The property should generally be reviewed by the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Preservation. Any replacements of siding or windows, alterations to the footprint

of the building through demolition or addition, and masonry or foundation work should come before the commission for review.

b. *Specific Standards:*

Exterior Walls:

The stone walls should be preserved, as they have been largely unaltered. All mortar for repointing and maintenance should be reviewed by the commission and/or staff.

Windows:

The Charles Connick stained glass windows are an important feature of this building, significant to local history and architecture. The windows must be preserved.

Future Development:

The Parish House, which is attached to the Church by a covered walkway, should remain open to historically sensitive new development. Any demolition, addition, alteration to the Parish House or new construction on the site of the Parish House should be reviewed in regards to the impact on the Church structure. Any new development attached to the Church structure should adhere to the Standards for Rehabilitation.

11. *Notification*

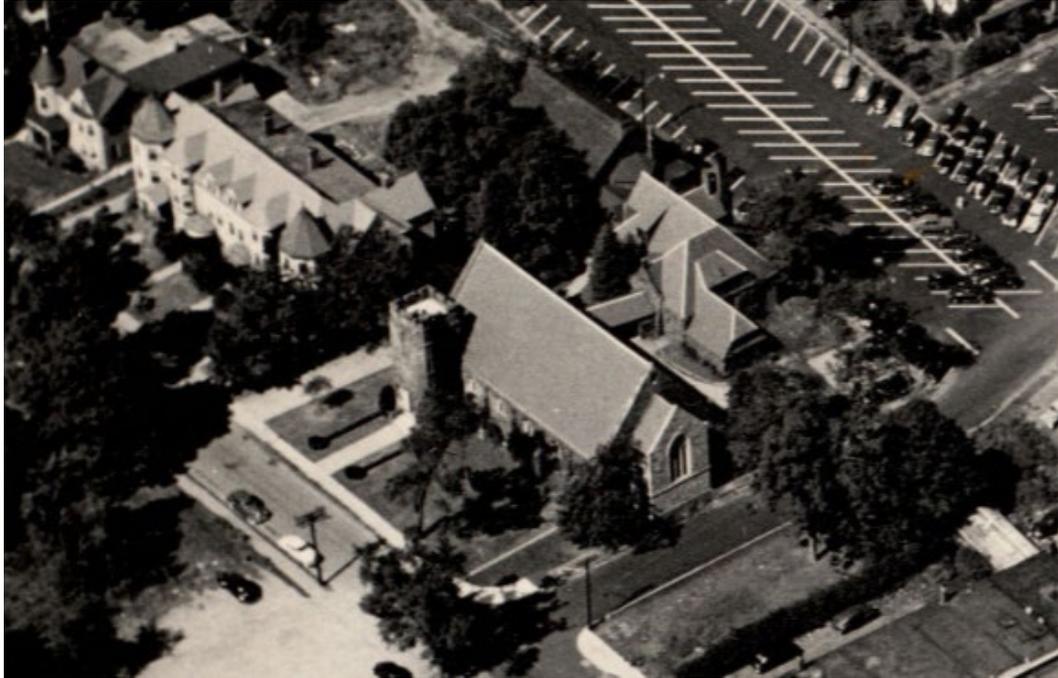
The following properties are considered abutters for the purposes of notification. Owners of these properties should receive notice when this property is considered for landmark designation and for any future under the Landmark Ordinance.

<u>ADDRESS</u>	<u>S/B/L</u>
460 NEWTONVILLE AVE	8657/357
P O BOX 216	8657/357
45 CHESTER ST	72349/365
P O BOX 590249	727/118
304 NEWTONVILLE AVE	20402/118
326 WALNUT ST	26548/58
307 AUBURN ST	39009/545
336 WALNUT ST	42145/332
1673A BEACON ST	41712/201
1673A BEACON ST	41712/205
396 WASHINGTON ST STE 132	42145/337
396 WASHINGTON ST SUITE # 132	42145/350
44-46 SALISBURY RD UN 46	70211/511
88 WASHINGTON PK U88	77654/311
90 WASHINGTON PK U90	49606/369
92 WASHINGTON PK 92	77878/326
165 COUNTRY CLUB DR	79803/319
96 WASHINGTON PK	80496/215
383 CABOT ST	64604/352

100 WASHINGTON PK 100	73702/105
102 WASHINGTON PK	30568/229
104 WASHINGTON PK 104	78424/443
106 WASHINTON PK UN 106	34289/245
19 FAIRMONT AVE	75636/480
110 WASHINGTON PK 110-1	66416/259
110 WASHINGTON PK U2	51490/255
110 WASHINGTON PK 3	60381/326
110 WASHINGTON PK 4	76395/253
110 WASHINGTON PK 110-5	72720/473
7 PATTEN CIR	62190/530
32 EDWARD RD	68277/399
110 WASHINGTON PK 110-8	59095/5
110 WASHINGTON PK UN 110-9	78733/35
112 WASHINGTON PK 112-1	73794/552
112 WASHINGTON PK 112-2	59240/298
81 MYRICK LA	62604/188
112 WASHINGTON PK UN 112 4	27384/347
PO BOX 800729	24846/230
200 WELLS AVE	79269/197
200 WELLS AVE	79269/197
30 ADAMS ST	76569/390
1000 COMM AVE	8070/30
28 AUSTIN ST	8070/30
14 MICA LN STE 111	79995/351
101 N TRYON ST	9697/104
50 CRESTWOOD RD	25249/45
5 BURLINGTON WOODS DR	71856/597
180 WINCHESTER ST	12364/67
5 BURLINGTON WOODS DR	71856/597
50 QUINCY ST	74536/515
25-31 HIGHLAND AVE UNIT 25-1	75276/477
25 HIGHLAND AVE U2	77076/417
25 HIGHLAND AVE 25 -3	65594/462
25 HIGHLAND AVE UN 4	48231/94
25-31 HIGHLAND AVE 25 UN5	78651/484
25 HIGHLAND AVE 25-6A	67364/476
25-31 HIGHLAND AVE UN 27	80143/280
25 31 HIGHLAND AVE UN 29	40551/76
31 HIGHLAND AVE 31-1	66471/270
25-31 HIGHLAND AVE UN 31-2	70315/364
977 BEACON ST	65314/142
31 HIGHLAND AVE UNIT 4	63695/594
31 HIGHLAND AVE 5	58229/29
10 WOODARD RD	30657/593
174 HIGHLAND ST	71618/214
33 HOVEY RD	35374/611

929 BEACON ST	43489/210
43 HIGHLAND AVE	75002/284
6 HIGHLAND TER 1	000U56/0164
6 HIGHLAND TER 2	84/81
19 QUIRK CT	135/106
4 HIGHLAND TER 2	121/137
2 HIGHLAND TER	1516/135
55 HIGHLAND AVE	79352/243
9 HIGHLAND PK	20628/525
82 N. MAIN ST APT 3425	62528/334
17 HIGHLAND PK	72038/459
1000 COMM AVE	000000/0000
1000 COMMONWEALTH AVE	80679/441
12 KILSYTH RD UN 4	79750/389
25 WALNUT PL	79212/229
355 WALNUT ST	68617/51
363 WALNUT ST	1474/19
7 BRIAR LANE	15594/188
727 WASHINGTON ST 3	76472/64
40 HIGHLAND AVE	63457/366
34 HIGHLAND AVE	11698/307
30 HIGHLAND AVE 1	61915/14
11 LORD NELSON CT	80413/262
38 WALNUT PL	47847/71
32 WALNUT PL NVL	79817/516
22 WALNUT PL NVL #1	76885/264
22 WALNUT PL NVL 2	64874/281
220 WOODWARD ST	69911/495

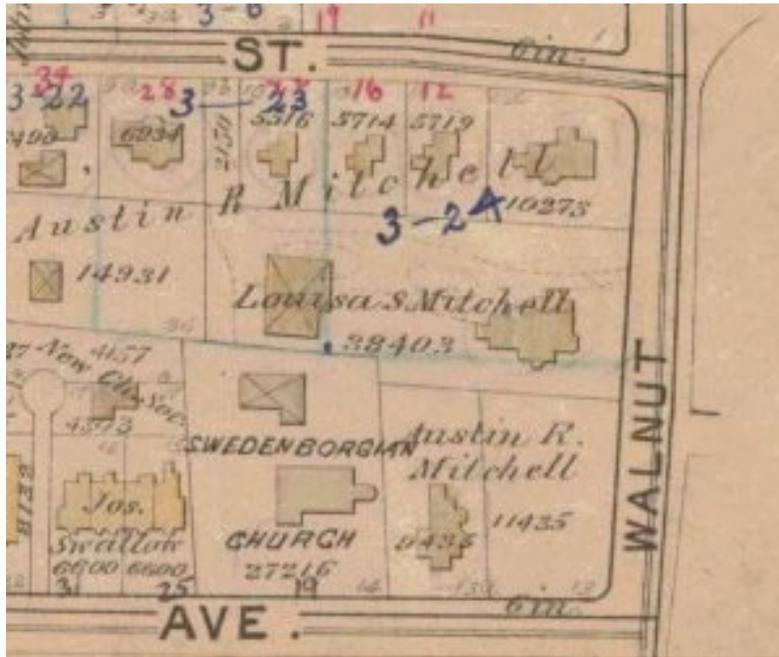
Photographs and Maps











1895 Atlas



1907 Atlas



Ruthanne Fuller
Mayor

Barney Heath
Director
Planning & Development

Joseph Iadonisi, Planning
Associate

Members

Kelley Brown Chair
Kevin McCormick, Vice Chair
Lee Breckenridge, Member
Amy Dain, Member
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Jennifer Molinsky, Member
Barney Heath, *ex officio*
Laxmi Rao, Alternate
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CITY OF NEWTON

Planning and Development Board

08/10/2023

To: Mr. Doug Cornelius, Chair
Newton Historical Commission
City of Newton
1000 Commonwealth Avenue
Newton, MA 02459

Subject: Planning & Development Board Recommendation on the Proposed
Landmark Designation for 2-12 Windsor Road

CC: Honorable Newton City Councilors
Mollie Hutchings, Chief Preservation Planner
Planning & Development Board

Dear Mr. Cornelius,

The Planning and Development Board is authorized under Newton's Landmark Ordinance (Sec 22-64 (d)) to make recommendations to the Newton Historical Commission regarding properties that have been nominated for landmark designation. The role of the Board in making such a recommendation is to evaluate "the relationship of the proposed designation to the City's adopted policies and plans and the effect of the proposed designation on the surrounding area." In addition, the Board "shall also make recommendations regarding any other planning considerations relevant to the proposed designation."

At its regular monthly meeting held on Monday, August 8th the Planning & Development Board reviewed the nomination materials and property owner's response as well as a summary staff memorandum prepared by Chief Preservation Planner Hutchings. In addition, several members of the Board visited the property to understand the building and surrounding context.

Mr. McCormick moved, seconded by Ms. Buddharaju, the following: The Planning & Development Board recommends that the Newton Historical Commission landmark the property at 2-12 Windsor Rd. However, the site is proposed to be included in the Village Center Overlay District and the Board advises that the landmark designation acknowledge the opportunity for commercial and residential development on the site.

In particular, it was the view of the Board that the entire parking lot and the section of the multi-building property at 10 Windsor did not appear to be contributing to the historic character of the site. The Board would urge that the NHC to review proposals for alterations, additions or new buildings on the site a focus on the key historic qualities of the site that ought to be preserved and with greater flexibility in considering the non-contributing portions of the site noted above.

City of Newton Planning and Development Board

The motion was approved 6-0-1 (Director Heath abstaining).

Sincerely,

Kelley Brown

Kelley Brown, Chair