

# FORM B – BUILDING

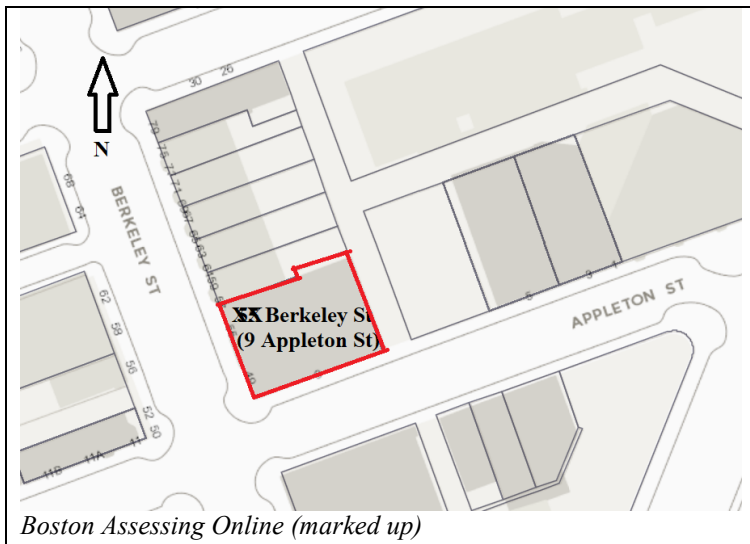
MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
MASSACHUSETTS ARCHIVES BUILDING  
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD  
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

## Photograph



Photo courtesy of Dave Bringham, Backside of America website

## Locus Map



Boston Assessing Online (marked up)

**Recorded by:** Lyle Nyberg

**Organization:** Independent historian

**Date (month / year):** October 2020

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

0500697000, et al

Boston South

BOS.AB; BOS.AC

BOS.

Nat'l Register District (05/08/1973); Local Historic District (11/14/1983)

**Town/City:** Boston

**Place:** (*neighborhood or village*):  
South End

**Address:** 9 Appleton Street

**Historic Name:** Parker Memorial Building

**Uses:** Present: Residential (condominiums) and retail (convenience store)

Original: Church, church hall, meeting hall

**Date of Construction:** 1872

**Source:** Dean Grodzins, "Theodore Parker," Dictionary of Unitarian & Universalist Biography; building inscription; see Historical Narrative below

**Style/Form:** Second Empire

**Architect/Builder:**

**Exterior Material:**

Foundation: Stone

Wall/Trim: Brick

Roof: Tar/gravel, flat

**Outbuildings/Secondary Structures:**

**Major Alterations (*with dates*):** Converted to apartments in early 1970s, then condominiums in 1981, filling in former large halls

**Condition:** Good

**Moved:** no ☒ yes ☐ **Date:**

**Acreage:** 7,200 square feet

**Setting:** Urban; level lot; corner property

# INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

BOSTON

9 APPLETON ST

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Area(s) Form No.

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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.*

This building is located at the north corner of Berkeley Street and Appleton Street in Boston's South End. It is four stories, 55 feet high. It has a rectangular plan of 70 feet along Berkeley and 100 feet along Appleton. It is constructed of red brick and light stone. The area is historic, full of Victorian residential buildings and a few churches. Surrounding properties (e.g. BOS.234, BOS.333) are listed historical sites. This is a great example of a meeting hall of the latter 1800s and is one of the few remaining ones constructed in the Second Empire style because, after the Great Boston Fire of 1872, "the mansard roof was less widely utilized in residential as well as commercial construction." The building is architecturally significant because of its exterior's intact form and elaborate brick and stone treatment.<sup>1</sup>

The City of Boston Assessing Online lists the parcel with about 36 condominiums (listed as 9 Appleton Street), and a 7-Eleven convenience store (listed as 49 Berkeley Street), evidently owned or managed by the 9 Appleton Place Condominium Association. The condominium entrance appears to be at 9 Appleton Street, and the 7-Eleven entrance at 49 Berkeley Street. The Berkeley Street entry is the most imposing element of the building, and historical reports identify the building primarily to Berkeley Street. Historical maps from 1887 onward, and city permits from about 1970 until recently, identify the building as 49 or 49-53 or 49-55 Berkeley Street. As far as the year of construction, the City of Boston Assessing Online lists the property as built in 1999. However, historical information and photos indicate it was constructed in 1872. See Historical Narrative below. In addition, a Google Satellite View photo from 2020 identifies this, among other things, as the site of the Boston Tea Party (no longer here). See Historical Narrative below.<sup>2</sup>

The building has a mansard roof and exuberant ornamentation on its main façades fronting Berkeley and Appleton Streets. It is three bays wide by six ranks deep, as described below.

The Berkeley Street façade has three bays. The matching **side bays** are four stories. The first stories have stone cornices across their width with elliptical curves, decorative designs, and a horizontal insert below the elliptical curves with vertical columns in relief and decorative designs at the ends. Modern metallic inserts in the upper half contain windows. The second stories have gangs of three windows (the center one being somewhat wider), with vertical brick columns on each side. They have light stone belt courses below, about 3/4s of the way up (interrupted by the windows), and above. Above the 3/4s belt course is a protruding light stone course running up and around the window surround. The third stories have gangs of three windows (the center one being somewhat wider), with *no* vertical brick columns on each side. They have light stone belt courses below. They have rounded arches above, which at the top are emphasized by protruding brick arches; the arch above the center window has a light stone keystone. Below the center windows are grilles. The fourth stories have paired dormer windows rising from the main facade's roof slope with brick columns. Light stone protruding belt courses are at the bottom of the windows and, at the top, run across the full width of the dormers. The gables have eaves with notable details in dark color, including inset verticals, a central corbel, and vergeboards that echo the design details in the cornices of the first story. The gables are surmounted by a spike or lightning rod. The mansard roof here appears to be shingled, probably asphalt, with piped downspouts at the left of each bay. Below the eaves at the sides of the windows are decorative designs in brick, similar to dentil molding. All windows above the first story appear to be double-hung, 1/1.

<sup>1</sup> In a search of MACRIS for Boston buildings used as church, church hall, or meeting hall, only five such buildings were found in the Second Empire style. One of those, [BOS.1287](#), 1723-1733 Washington Street, also in the South End, is the source of the quoted language. Second Empire style continued in the commercial district after the great fire, and many of these still stood in 1981, according to MHC Reconnaissance Survey Town Report, BOSTON (1981), 26. In an identical search except for Victorian Gothic style, 26 such buildings were found. Few if any of these have a mansard roof so typical of the Second Empire style.

<sup>2</sup> As to permits, see Boston Inspectional Services online database, <https://www.boston.gov/departments/inspectional-services/how-find-historical-permit-records>. The most records are for 49 Berkeley, and date from 1968 to about 2014.

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The Berkeley Street façade's **center bay** is dramatic. It gives the appearance of three stories. It extends out from the side bays. The entrance at the first story appears to occupy one and a half stories. It has a light colored, wide belt course about four feet above ground level. Above the belt course on each side of the entrance are light colored columns of classical design, with decorative features below in the belt course. The columns are flanked by smaller columns of pyramidal bumps, with those outside set into quoin-type columns of light stone. Above the columns is an arch in stones of alternating colors (brick and light stone), reminiscent of the Mezquita in Cordoba, Spain. The stones get larger toward the top. The top stone and the bottom two have decorative features. Beside the top of the arch are two diamond-shaped light stone inserts with squares of additional decorative features. Above the arch is a rectangular light stone panel, now blank, but which was previously inscribed, probably with the original Parker Memorial name. Above the panel is a protruding light stone course running up and around the panel, echoing the course over the second story windows on the side bays. Directly above this course is a set of tall windows extending up to the top of the third story. The set is a grid of three vertical panels surmounted by a circular window with the Star of David. These windows are encased in gray metallic surrounds that appear to match those on the first story of the building. The bottom three windows are double-hung, and in the panel above them is decorative scrollwork. Surrounding the top half of the circular window is a stone surround matching the form of the arch over the entrance. In its top stones is carved "1872," the year the building was constructed. Surrounding the arch are various brickwork features. Above that arch is a dormer, in a tower that extends higher than the main roof. The dormer window insert is taller and set higher than those on the fourth story of the side bays, because the eave of the center bay is set about a foot higher than those of the side bays. The dormer insert consists of a double-hung window below, an arch above that, and a circular window (evidently divided into nine parts) above that. The dormer has elaborate brickwork, a light stone belt course partway up, and a light stone gable. The gable has decorative elements in the base, and a protruding block at the top with what appears to be a Star of David carved into it. Above that is a decorative ironwork spike or lightning rod. As on the side bays, the roof is shingled, and the eaves have decorative designs in brick similar to dentil molding.

The Appleton Street side has six ranks in four segments of massed, detailed brickwork. The left segment has, on the second story, twin pairs of vertical rectangular windows, and on the third story, twin pairs of vertical windows with rounded arches above each. The next segment has, on the first story, paired vertical rectangular windows, and a single large window covering the second and third stories with a rounded arch above, and molding above that. The next and largest segment has, on the first story, paired vertical rectangular windows on the left, and an entrance on the right. The entrance has an extended gable with a central decorative feature all in brick, with internal steps leading up to a door with semicircular transom, then mail boxes, and presumably access to the condominiums. On the second story are twin large windows covering the second and third stories with rounded arches above each, and dentil molding (or corbels) above them. The right segment (fourth of four) echoes the adjacent segment but with plain molding instead of dentil molding. On that side, the fourth story has a chimney and four dormer windows extending from the mansard roof. Below the paired windows on the first story, in the second through fourth segments, are what appears to have been cellar access openings, some or all of which are now enclosed. The Appleton Street side has various belt courses in brick, notably one running between the first and second stories, and another (on the second through fourth segment) running under the bottom of the second story windows, with corbels emphasizing the bottom corners of each window. A stone belt course runs along the foot of the building. Many windows appear to be double-hung. However, there are windows set within metallic panels inserted in the tall window openings covering the second and third stories of the second through fourth segments. This was evidently the location of the original hall used for gatherings when this was the Parker Memorial Building. The number of condominiums suggests that they fill the space of the original hall.

The interior was not surveyed.

The exterior appearance is substantially like that shown in early photos. The building fits in well with the fabric of this historic area, particularly with its use of brick. Architectural features of the exterior are compelling and notable for their originality and craftsmanship. The building's overall appearance is elegant and harmonious. It appears to be well maintained.

## 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.*

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This building, the Parker Memorial Building, was built in 1872 by followers of Rev. Theodore Parker (1810-1860). He was a major American reformer, Transcendentalist, and abolitionist in the mid-1800s. After graduating from Harvard College and Harvard Divinity School, he began a ministry in the Unitarian Church in West Roxbury in 1837 that lasted until 1846. (The church there now is a Boston Landmark and was named for Parker.<sup>3</sup>) During this time he broke with Unitarian and Christian orthodoxy, adopting ideas from Transcendentalism. In 1846, he moved to Boston and led a new, independent congregation of followers, the 28th Congregational Society of Boston. It became the largest congregation in Boston. Members included influential figures such as Louisa May Alcott, William Lloyd Garrison, Julia Ward Howe, and Elizabeth Cady Stanton. They worshiped at the Melodeon from 1845 to 1852; the Boston Music Hall (now the Orpheum Theatre) from the building's opening in 1852 until 1863; the Melodeon again from 1863 until 1866; then the Parker Fraternity Rooms on 554 Washington Street. In 1853, Parker endorsed women's suffrage in the sermon "The Public Function of Woman" and the congregation supported women's suffrage. After Parker's death, his followers continued to meet, with various pastors. In 1872, they built the Parker Memorial Building at a cost of \$110,000, and moved there in 1873.<sup>4</sup>

The building was evidently built on land donated by John L. Gardner.<sup>5</sup>

The building was built during the development of Boston's South End on filled land in the mid-1800s. The adjacent Back Bay area was developed about the same time. Both areas included residential buildings, churches, and meeting halls, and such institutional buildings as the Museum of Natural History (1862), further north on Berkeley Street, and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) (1864), further north on Clarendon Street, and the Art Museum (1876) and Trinity Church (H. H. Richardson, 1872-77) at Copley Square. The Parker Memorial Building occupies land filled after about 1861. It is located in the City of Boston South End Landmark District, as well as the South End District, a National Register District (05/08/1973).<sup>6</sup>

As noted in the National Register of Historic Places Inventory Nomination Form, "The South End has been traditionally known for the large number of religious institutions serving the district. ... Through the years, the religious structures have housed congregations of all faiths. Architecturally, these churches provide focal points along the major avenues and contribute a

<sup>3</sup> "Parker, Theodore Unitarian Church," 1851 Centre Street, [BOS.10463](#), and see "First Parish Church of West Roxbury Parish House," 1851 Centre Street, [BOS.10838](#), and "Parker, Theodore Statue," 1851 Centre Street, [BOS.9381](#), MACRIS. According to MACRIS, the church is listed as a Local Landmark (04/09/1985); Preservation Restriction (05/26/1988); and Nat'l Register Individual Property (06/29/2020). That church, although historic, is not the building that Parker preached in, which was damaged in a fire in 1890 and torn down in 1914; nor is it in the same location as that building. It was named for Parker in 1962. See also "Theodore Parker Church," <https://www.tparkerchurch.org/about/our-stories/buildings/>.

<sup>4</sup> "The Parker Memorial Exercises at the Transfer of the Building," *Boston Post*, February 4, 1889, 8 (1868, \$110,000), <https://newspaperarchive.com/boston-post-feb-04-1889-p-8/>; "Theodore Parker," Wikipedia article and sources cited, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Theodore\\_Parker](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Theodore_Parker); *Boston Directory* (Boston: Sampson & Murdock Company, 1873), 815 ("Twenty-Eighth Congregational Society (Independent Cong.) Parker-Memorial, Berkley street, cor. Appleton. Organized 1845; Pastor, \_\_\_\_."), <https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/000499337>; *King's Handbook* (1881), quoted in text below; Dean Grodzins email, October 25, 2020; Nancy S. Seasholes, ed., *The Atlas of Boston History* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2019), 55, 101 (opening of Boston Music Hall). Parker's sermon included the statement (p. 16) "By nature, woman has the same Political Rights that man has, -- to vote, to hold office, to make and administer laws." Theodore Parker, J. M. W. Yerrinton, Rufus Leighton, *A sermon of the public function of woman: preached at the Music Hall* (Boston: Robert F. Wallcut, 1853), Lucy Stone (former owner of the copy), Miscellaneous Pamphlet Collection, and National American Woman Suffrage Association Collection, Library of Congress, <https://www.loc.gov/item/24029000/>.

<sup>5</sup> "The meeting house was built on land donated by a rich Bostonian, John Gardner, whose son married Isabelle [Isabella] Stewart." "The Other Boston Tea Party, The Hippest Club in Town," New England Historical Society, updated 2019, <https://www.newenglandhistoricalsociety.com/boston-tea-party-hippest-club-town/>; Steve Nelson and Charles Giuliano, "Steve Nelson on The Boston Tea Party: Reelin' and Rockin' (Part 1)," Berkshire Fine Arts, posted January 24, 2011, <https://www.berkshirefinearts.com/01-24-2011-steve-nelson-on-the-boston-tea-party.htm>. The name "John L. Gardner" appears on surrounding properties on the 1874 map, and the Master Condominium Certificate of Title, cited in a later note, says the land is subject to "the party wall agreement between the Proprietors of the Parker Memorial Meeting House and John L. Gardner, dated July 23, 1872, duly recorded in Book 1119 Page 30."

<sup>6</sup> See, generally, Nancy S. Seasholes, *Gaining Ground* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2003), particularly ch. 7 "Back Bay and South End," fig. 7.33, and 187-188, 190 (John L. Gardner); Seasholes, *The Atlas of Boston History*, plate 35 (100-101); MHC Reconnaissance Survey Town Report, BOSTON (1981), including 22 (Art Museum), 25 (Trinity Church); City of Boston South End Landmark District website, <https://www.boston.gov/historic-district/south-end-landmark-district>, and available at that website, Boston Landmarks Commission, "The South End: District Study Committee Report," revised 11-14-83, which mentions the Parker Memorial Church on page 15, describing it as Victorian Gothic Style (but see first footnote above in this inventory form).



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variation of form, style, and color to the residential blocks.”<sup>7</sup> The building was built in an inauspicious time for property values. As the South End Landmark District website notes, “After the Financial Panic of 1873, the most wealthy Bostonians moved to the brand new Back Bay, and, by the turn of the century, lodging houses geared towards the working class were almost the only residential structures built [in the South End].”<sup>8</sup>

The 1881 edition of *King's Handbook of Boston* said the hall had a seating capacity of 850, and described it this way:

**The Twenty-eighth Congregational Society** was founded by Theodore Parker. It was organized in November, 1845, by “friends of free thought,” after Mr. Parker had been preaching for some months in Boston. Services were held in the Melodeon until the autumn of 1852, and afterwards in the Music Hall. Mr. Parker preached regularly until his illness in 1859, and continued as minister until his death, May 10, 1860. For a while after this, Samuel R. Calthrop, now of Syracuse, N.Y., occupied the pulpit; from May, 1865, to July, 1866, David A. Wasson was the minister; during 1867 and 1868, Rev. Samuel Longfellow; from December, 1868, to November, 1871, James Vila Blake; and for several years after, J. L. Dudley. The society has also had occasional pulpit services of such men as Ralph Waldo Emerson, William Lloyd Garrison, Wendell Phillips, John Weiss, Moncure D. Conway, Francis E. Abbot, O. B. Frothingham; and such women as Ednah D. Cheney and Celia Burleigh. In 1866 the society removed to the Parker Fraternity Rooms, then at No. 554 Washington Street; and in 1873 to the building on Berkeley, corner of Appleton Street, then newly erected by the fraternity as a memorial to Theodore Parker, and known as the Parker Memorial Hall. The society, at present, has no pastor.<sup>9</sup>

Chiseled in the surround of the tall window over the original main entry on Berkeley Street is the building's date, 1872. The window contains a Star of David. Some assume this meant the building was a synagogue. However, according to John Hurley of the Unitarian Universalist Association in Boston, the symbol more likely reflected the Unitarians' interest in world religions coming together. It has been noted that the building was used for religious education by the Jewish congregation of Adath Israel (Temple Israel), starting in 1875.<sup>10</sup> Other religious organizations used the building, as discussed below.

The building hosted noted speakers and organizations. On February 16, 1879, Mary Baker Eddy, founder of the Christian Scientists, preached in Fraternity Hall in the Parker Memorial Building on Berkeley Street (entrance on Appleton). The building was associated with Thomas Wentworth Higginson (1823-1911), an American Unitarian minister, author, abolitionist, woman suffragist, and soldier. He was an associate of Theodore Parker and both were members of the Secret Six group of radical abolitionists. He was active in the Free Religious Association of America, which held meetings in the Parker Memorial Building. Notwithstanding the activity at the building, in 1881, there were reports of a sale of the building, for \$75,000.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>7</sup> National Register of Historic Places Inventory Nomination Form, 1973, available from MACRIS, [BOS.AB](#), “South End District,” National Register District (05/08/1973).

<sup>8</sup> City of Boston South End Landmark District website, <https://www.boston.gov/historic-district/south-end-landmark-district>, and 1983 District Study Committee Report to which it links. See also Nancy S. Seasholes, “Development of the South End and Back Bay, 1845-1882,” in Seasholes, *The Atlas of Boston History*, 68-69.

<sup>9</sup> *King's Handbook of Boston* (Cambridge, MA: Moses King, 4<sup>th</sup> ed., 1881), 174, and see 223 (seating capacity of 850), <https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/009008614>.

<sup>10</sup> Gail Ravgiala, “A window on the neighborhood: Condo owners in 150-year South End fixture are renovating to keep up with surroundings,” *Boston Globe*, February 5, 2006, H1/105 (Hurley); Michael Alan Ross, “The Jewish Friendship Trail,” <http://bostonwalks.tripod.com/SoEnd.html>; Robin Dexter, “Boston's Old South End Jewish Tour – Sun. Oct. 7th 2-4:15pm [2018],” <https://www.jewishboston.com/bostons-old-south-end-jewish-tour/>. The only source found concerning Adath Israel's use of the Parker Memorial Building is an 1888 report of a musical play to be performed there by the pupils of the Sabbath school of Temple Adath Israel. “Solomon Schindler as a Composer,” *Boston Globe*, February 22, 1888, 6. Interestingly, the main façade of the Theodore Parker Unitarian Church in West Roxbury, built in 1900, has a main rose window with six rounded prongs, a rounded version of the Star of David. [BOS.10463](#).

<sup>11</sup> “The Mary Baker Eddy Library; A Chronology of Events Surrounding the Life of Mary Baker Eddy,” <http://groundsmart-mail.com/documents/the-mary-baker-eddy-library-mary-baker-eddy-to-phineas-p-quimby-29-may-1862.html>; “Annual Meeting of Free Religious Association,” *The Index* (Boston: Index Association, May 20, 1880), 246, [https://www.google.com/books/edition/The\\_Index/T4ohAQAAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=0](https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_Index/T4ohAQAAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=0); *The Free Religious Index* (Boston: Free Religious Association), November 1880, 221 (Moncure D. Conway to speak to Parker Memorial Society), and January 27, 1881, 364, col. 1 (sale), available from link at bottom of page at <http://iapsop.com/archive/materials/index/>; “Thomas Wentworth Higginson,” Wikipedia article, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thomas\\_Wentworth\\_Higginson](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thomas_Wentworth_Higginson); “The Thirty-First Annual Convention and Festival of the Free Religious

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It appears that the sale did not happen. In 1888-1889, the congregation turned over the Parker Memorial Building to the Benevolent Fraternity of Churches. (The Benevolent Fraternity of Churches, or Benevolent Fraternity of Unitarian Churches, eventually became the Unitarian Universalist Urban Ministry.) This marked the end of Parker's congregation. The Benevolent Fraternity wanted the building to become the "cathedral church" of Boston Unitarianism.<sup>12</sup>

Instead, from 1892 to 1896, the Benevolent Fraternity pursued a plan for a new Parker Memorial building on Commonwealth Avenue in the Back Bay, in conjunction with the Church of the Unity (Unitarian). The plan involved selling the Church of the Unity's property on West Newton Street and the Parker Memorial Building at Berkeley and Appleton Streets. However, the plan was abandoned in 1896.<sup>13</sup>

The Parker Memorial Building continued to host many organizations, as reported in annual reports of the Benevolent Fraternity, and it served as the Benevolent Fraternity's central office. For example, see the excerpt below from its 1904 report.<sup>14</sup> There were Unitarian services, performances, and talks on religion, including by the Christadelphians.<sup>15</sup> One source said that the building was dedicated for Masonic use in 1908.<sup>16</sup>

In 1922, the Benevolent Fraternity sold the building to the Caledonian Society of Boston, which planned to make it the club's headquarters. A report of the sale said: "This parcel is considered one of the most prominent of its kind in the city, having been the scene of many important meetings, at which some of the most prominent men in all walks of life were the speakers. ... There are stores on the lower floor, the upper stories being devoted to halls, etc."<sup>17</sup> The Caledonian Club made it the home for many of the Scottish organizations in Greater Boston.<sup>18</sup>

The Parker Memorial name for the building lived on in maps, from 1874 until as late as 1912. (See Photographs and/or Maps section below.) These show the plan of the building as 7,200 square feet. A 1928 map calls it the Boston Caledonian Club Building Association, as does a 1938 map (which also includes "Calvary Temple" in the same building). While no title search was performed for this inventory form, a news report from 1937 indicates the building was to be auctioned.<sup>19</sup>

The 1904 Annual Report of the Benevolent Fraternity has a photo of the building on page 50 (see copy below) showing a plaque with the name Parker Memorial above the second story windows on the left rank of the Appleton Street side. A 1918 postcard

Association of America," *The Christian Register* (Boston: Christian Register Association, May 19, 1898), 565,

[https://www.google.com/books/edition/The\\_Unitarian\\_Register/PO8fAQAAAMAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=0](https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_Unitarian_Register/PO8fAQAAAMAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=0); *The Circleville (OH) Democrat and Watchman*, January 21, 1881, 1, col. 6, <https://ohiomemory.org/digital/collection/p16007coll45/id/392>.

<sup>12</sup> Dean Grodzins, email, October 13, 2020; "Theodore Parker," *The Unitarian* ["A Magazine of Liberal Christianity"], vol. IV, no. 3 (Ann Arbor, MI, March 1889), 129 ("cathedral"), [https://www.google.com/books/edition/The\\_Unitarian/TOJAAAAAYAAJ?hl=en](https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_Unitarian/TOJAAAAAYAAJ?hl=en). John Cummings Haynes, a businessman who was active in the construction of the Parker Memorial Building, was also instrumental in its transfer to the Benevolent Fraternity of Churches. "John Cummings Haynes," Thomas C. Quinn, *Massachusetts of to-day: A memorial of the state, historical and biographical, issued for the World's Columbian Exposition at Chicago* (Boston: Columbia Publishing Company, 1892), 143, <https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/009833941>.

<sup>13</sup> "400-416 Commonwealth," Back Bay Houses: Genealogies of Back Bay Houses website, <https://backbayhouses.org/400-416-commonwealth/>.

<sup>14</sup> *Seventieth Annual Report of the Benevolent Fraternity of Churches in the City of Boston with the Reports of the Treasurer and Ministers-at-Large 1903-1904* (Boston: Geo. H. Ellis Co., Printers, 1904), 63,

[https://www.google.com/books/edition/Annual\\_Report\\_of\\_the\\_Central\\_Board\\_of\\_th/5n8XAAAAAYAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=0](https://www.google.com/books/edition/Annual_Report_of_the_Central_Board_of_th/5n8XAAAAAYAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=0).

<sup>15</sup> "Outlook of Unitarianism," *Boston Globe*, February 3, 1890, 3; "Helpfulness an Art; Rev Mary T. Whitney Tells How It May be Acquired," *Boston Globe*, February 18, 1895, 2 (Sunday evening services with "no suggestion of orthodox church form," special music, and an hour's talk); "Parker Memorial," *Boston Globe*, March 17, 1895, 14 (Sunday evening services with boy choir); "Peace on Earth," *Boston Globe*, December 24, 1921, 13.

<sup>16</sup> Harry A. Williamson, "A Chronological History of Prince Hall Masonry 1784-1932," in *The Phylaxis*, June 1991, reprinted in "Pyramid Texts: The First in a series of documents distributed by Pyramid Lodge of Past Masters #962," 13, available from <http://www.grandlodgebulgaria.org/bg/?lang=en>.

<sup>17</sup> "Real Estate Transactions; Parker Memorial Sold to the Caledonian Society," *Boston Globe*, January 25, 1922, 5 (giving address as 49 Berkeley); see also similar item in *Boston Globe*, May 4, 1922, 19 (deed recorded).

<sup>18</sup> "Building Association to Note Anniversary," *Boston Globe*, May 5, 1924, 13.

<sup>19</sup> *Boston Globe*, February 19, 1937, 39.

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shows the building much as it appears today. A plaque (probably "Parker Memorial") is shown below the same second story windows on the Appleton Street side. On the Berkeley street side, in the central segment, there is an inscription ("Parker Memorial"?), over the entry (now blank), and a tower, almost rectangular, rising from the roof with cornice and flags or balustrades.<sup>20</sup>

A later summary said the building hosted "Scottish social groups (Caledonian Club), a religious group known as the Christadelphians, an antique shop, and by the 1950s, a number of television film producers."<sup>21</sup> Another source said: "Through the mid twentieth century it housed many organizations, including the Worcester County Creamery, a book store, the British Naval and Military Veteran's Association, Magna Film Productions [which reportedly produced TV commercials], and the Boston Tea Party dance hall. A fire damaged the building in 1972 and in 1975 it was converted to residential and commercial use."<sup>22</sup> Permits on file indicate it had a Christy's Market convenience store.

The building was converted into apartments in the early 1970s, and then into condominiums (and the ground-level store) in 1981. The *Boston Globe* profiled the past and present uses of the building and its tenants in a February 2006 article.<sup>23</sup>

Almost a year after the *Boston Globe* article, 100 Boston-area music people gathered near the building to celebrate the 40th anniversary of The Boston Tea Party, a legendary rock ballroom that started in that building. The Bostonian Society unveiled a green square plaque commemorating the Boston Tea Party, and the plaque is now affixed to the Berkeley Street side of the front corner column of the building.<sup>24</sup>

According to one attendee in the late 1960s,

The 2nd floor was the site of the original Boston Tea Party rock club (and I believe the start of WBCN as a rock FM station in a back room somewhere). The Tea Party moved to Lansdowne [sic] Street a couple of years later, but there were some legendary shows at this venue. I remember seeing the Jeff Beck Group there with Ron Wood on guitar and an unknown lead singer named Rod Stewart. Long ago....and far, far away.<sup>25</sup>

The Boston Tea Party had a capacity of 400, and it was called "a cathedral of the hippie era."<sup>26</sup> In August 1968, the building was cited for a violation because its permit allowed occupancy only for a retail store, storage room, and production rooms, not a "hall (dance)."<sup>27</sup>

After the Boston Tea Party relocated to 15 Lansdowne Street in July 1969, another music club called "Berkeley Street" was set to open in its place. Police were called to the premises in March 1970 to investigate reports of conducting public entertainment without a license. They found a private, pre-opening promotional event, which was allowable. The police report said that "soft drinks and potato chips were being dispensed free of charge," and

<sup>20</sup> "Some South End Images," copy of postcard listed in 2020 on HipPostcard, <https://www.hippocard.com/listing/boston-massachusetts-mass-ma-postcard-parker-memorial-hospital/13657871>.

<sup>21</sup> Ravgiala, "A window."

<sup>22</sup> "Some South End Images," South End Historical Society (with citation "Adapted from former South End Historical Society President and Historian Richard Card's article, The Parker Memorial."), posted January 4, 2012, <https://www.southendhistoricalsociety.org/some-south-end-images/>; 1972 *Broadcasting Yearbook*, D-21, right column (Magna, under Communications Productions entry), <https://worldradiohistory.com/Broadcasting-Yearbook.htm>.

<sup>23</sup> *Boston Globe*, May 18, 1974, 183 (ad for Berkeley Centre Apartments, 9 Appleton St.); Ravgiala, "A window." The historic plaque mentioned elsewhere in the text says the condominium conversion was in 1981. The condominium's Master Deed is dated September 4, 1981, recorded as Suffolk County Land Court Doc. 358076, and the Master Condominium Certificate of Title (C-34) is dated September 16, 1981. Thanks to Thomas High, BackBayHouses.org website for the information.

<sup>24</sup> "The Boston Tea Party," Music Museum of New England (giving address as 53 Berkeley), <https://www.mmone.org/the-boston-tea-party/>; "The Other Boston Tea Party, The Hippest Club in Town," New England Historical Society, updated 2019, <https://www.newenglandhistoricalsociety.com/boston-tea-party-hippest-club-town/>.

<sup>25</sup> Phil Hailer, as quoted in Dave Brigham, "End to End In Boston's South End," Backside of America website, posted October 12, 2019, <http://backsideofamerica.blogspot.com/2019/10/end-to-end-in-bostons-south-end.html>; "Boston Tea Party (concert venue)," Wikipedia article and sources cited (giving address as 53 Berkeley), [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Boston\\_Tea\\_Party\\_\(concert\\_venue\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Boston_Tea_Party_(concert_venue)).

<sup>26</sup> "The Other Boston Tea Party, The Hippest Club in Town," New England Historical Society.

<sup>27</sup> Building Department Inspector's Violation Report, August 5, 1968, Boston Inspectional Services online database.

**INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET**

BOSTON

9 APPLETON ST

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

Area(s) Form No.

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

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There were approximately 450 persons on the premises, of the so-called "Hippie" type, ranging in age from about 14 to 35 years of age, the entertainment being provided by one "Buddy Guy" and his six man musical group with songs being rendered by one "Big Mama Thornton."<sup>28</sup>

The place was doubtless the subject of the *Boston Globe's* later report in 1970, "a new 'home of the blues' opened on Berkeley Street in March and promptly closed its doors."<sup>29</sup>

In its original and later incarnations, the Parker Memorial Building played important roles in Boston's history.

**BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES** (in addition to footnotes above) (see Photographs and/or Maps, below)

"Parker Memorial Building, Berkeley Street," undated, New York Public Library Digital Collections, The Miriam and Ira D. Wallach Division of Art, Prints and Photographs: Photography Collection, The New York Public Library, <http://digitalcollections.nypl.org/items/510d47e0-8a1f-a3d9-e040-e00a18064a99>. Undated, but probably before 1895, since it appears there are no adjacent buildings on Berkeley Street, and these did not show up on maps until 1895. Adjacent buildings are not shown on the 1887 map. Note gas light, ruts in street, and possible hitching rails in front of building.

G. M. Hopkins, *Atlas of the County of Suffolk, Massachusetts, vol. 1, including Boston Proper* (Philadelphia: G.M. Hopkins & Co., 1874), plate U, pages 88-89, detail, Massachusetts Real Estate Atlas Digitization Project by the Massachusetts State Library, <https://archives.lib.state.ma.us/handle/2452/205982>

*Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Boston, Suffolk County, Massachusetts, Vol. 2* (New York: Sanborn Map Company, 1887), sheet 33, detail, Library of Congress, [https://www.loc.gov/item/sanborn03693\\_003/](https://www.loc.gov/item/sanborn03693_003/)

Geo. W. & Walter S. Bromley, *Atlas of the City of Boston: Boston Proper and Roxbury* (Philadelphia: G. W. Bromley & Co., 1895), plate 13, detail (Parker Memorial Hall), Massachusetts Real Estate Atlas Digitization Project by the Massachusetts State Library, <https://archives.lib.state.ma.us/handle/2452/205989>

Geo. W. & Walter S. Bromley, *Atlas of the City of Boston: Boston Proper and Back Bay* (Philadelphia: G. W. Bromley & Co., 1912), plate 18, detail (Parker Memorial, Benevolent Fraternity of Churches, Tr.), Massachusetts Real Estate Atlas Digitization Project by the Massachusetts State Library, <https://archives.lib.state.ma.us/handle/2452/206005>

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Dave Brigham, "End to End In Boston's South End," Backside of America website, posted October 12, 2019, <http://backsideofamerica.blogspot.com/2019/10/end-to-end-in-bostons-south-end.html>

**PHOTOGRAPHS and/or MAPS, etc.**

<sup>28</sup> "Investigation of Premises at 53 Berkeley Street, Boston," Police Department of the City of Boston report, District or Unit 4, March 21, 1970, Boston Inspectional Services online database.

<sup>29</sup> Nathan Cobb, "Rock suffers post-Woodstock sag in Hub," *Boston Globe*, December 27, 1970, 121, col. 2.





THEODORE PARKER MEMORIAL.  
*Annual Report of Benevolent Fraternity, 1904, 50 (edited)*



PARKER MEMORIAL.  
*Annual Report, 1903, 31*



"Parker Memorial Building, Berkeley Street," New York Public Library (edited for clarity), probably before 1895



INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

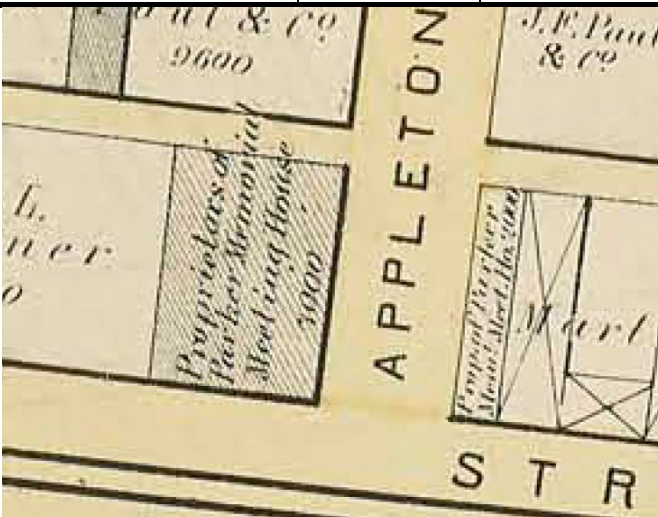
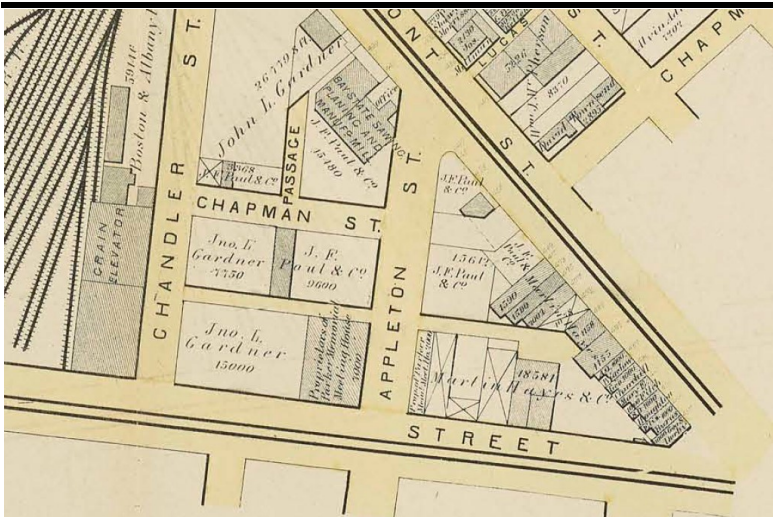
BOSTON

9 APPLETON ST

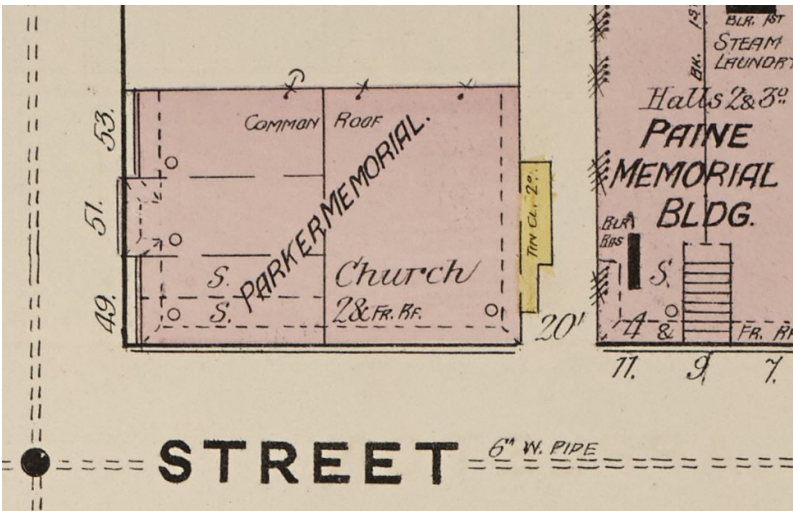
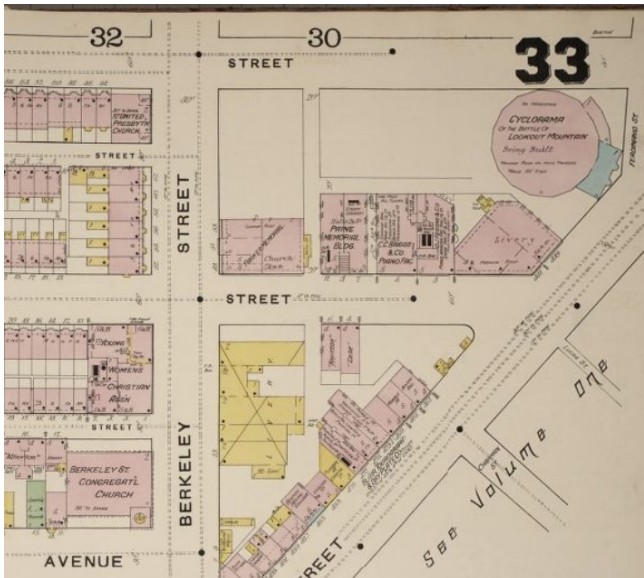
MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

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G. M. Hopkins, *Atlas of the County of Suffolk, Massachusetts, vol. 1, including Boston Proper* (Philadelphia: G.M. Hopkins & Co., 1874), plate U, pages 88-89, details, Massachusetts Real Estate Atlas Digitization Project by the Massachusetts State Library



Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Boston, Suffolk County, Massachusetts, Vol. 2 (New York: Sanborn Map Company, 1887), sheet 33, details, Library of Congress

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

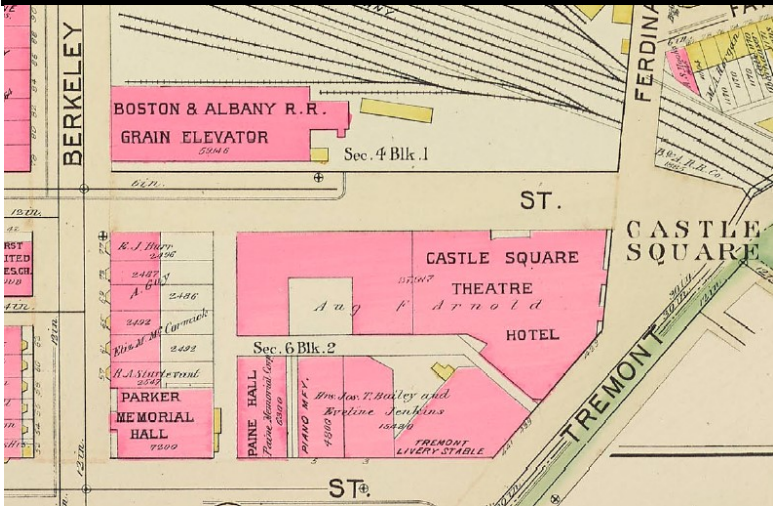
BOSTON

9 APPLETON ST

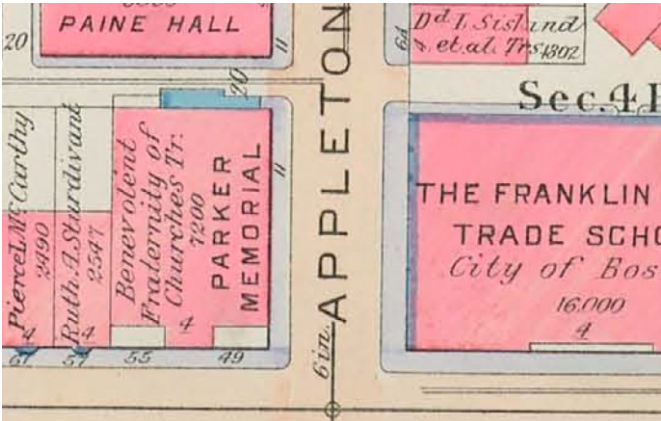
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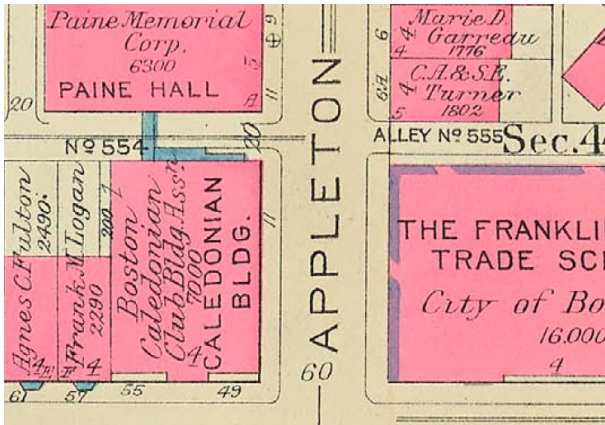
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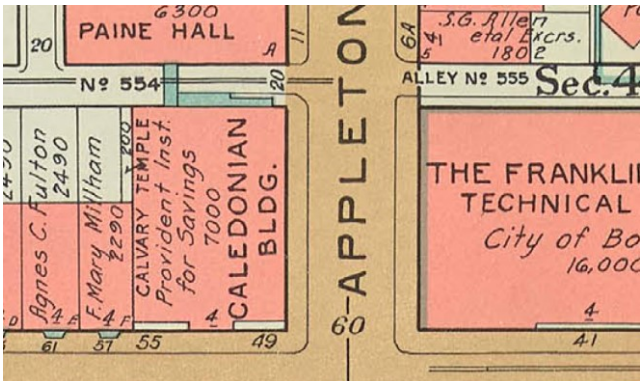
Bromley Atlas, 1895, detail, Massachusetts State Library



Bromley Atlas, 1912, detail, Massachusetts State Library



Bromley Atlas, 1928, detail, Massachusetts State Library



Bromley Atlas, 1938, detail, Massachusetts State Library



INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

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HOSPITALITY.

It is pleasant to be again able to chronicle the hospitalities extended to other organizations of the city. The following have been granted the use of halls in the Parker Memorial Building on one or more occasions during the year: Hale House, Negro Public Conference, Harvard Club, Fenway Sunday-school, Mothers' and Fathers' Club, Dorothea Dix House, First Church Working-girls' Club, Public School Association, Good Templars, Miss Wheelock's School for Kindergartners, John B. Finch Lodge, G. T., Ellis Memorial Club, Woman's Era Club, Massachusetts Working-women's Club, Barnard Memorial, South End House, Boston Educational and Historical Association (colored), Free Religious Association, and others to the number of 20 in all. The convention of the Free Religious Association in Parker Memorial Hall was devoted to the centennial celebration of R. W. Emerson's birth, and was an occasion of great interest and significance,—a most fitting use of our edifice. A pleasant

Excerpt from Annual Report of Benevolent Fraternity, 1904, page 63



# INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

BOSTON

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MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

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Area(s) Form No.

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Form 26

## POLICE DEPARTMENT OF THE CITY OF BOSTON

DISTRICT OR UNIT... Four

March 21, 1970

Central Complaint No. Journal Date

Pg.

REPORT NUMBER

REPORTED TO

TO	(NAME)	(RANK)	(DIST. OR UNIT)
Edmund L. McNamara	Commissioner	Headquarters	
FROM	(NAME)	(RANK)	(DIST. OR UNIT)
Paul J. Russell	Captain	District Four	

SUBJECT: Investigation of Premises at 53 Berkeley Street, Boston.

Sir:

At 8:40 P.M., Friday, March 20, 1970, Mr. Donald Homer of the Ellis Neighborhood Association came to the station and reported to Captain Francis E. Devin that the building located at 53 Berkeley Street, formerly occupied as "The Boston Tea Party" was open and operating without a license. Captain Devin immediately assigned Sergeants Matthew W. O'Loughlin and John J. Doyle to go to the above premises and make a thorough investigation and the Sergeants report as follows:

At 8:45 P.M., Friday, March 20, 1970, Sergeant Matthew W. O'Loughlin and Sergeant John J. Doyle responded to the building located at 53 Berkeley Street, to investigate a complaint that public entertainment was being presented with no permits or licenses having been issued for such entertainment.

The Sergeants interviewed one William C. Mullich, of 948 Cambridge Street, Cambridge, Mass., who represented himself as the Manager of a corporation named "Cloud Productions Inc." which corporation is composed of Mr. Mullich and the following three persons:

Ronald McCloud, of 948 Cambridge Street, Cambridge, Mass.  
Ronald Vanderbilt, of 948 Cambridge Street, Cambridge, Mass.  
Bruce Bean, of 47-A Trowbridge Street, Cambridge, Mass.

Mr. Mullich further reported that the corporation intends to operate under the business name of "Berkeley Street" and will have the official opening sometime in April at which time they expect to be officially licensed and that the premises were being used this evening as a promotional scheme in anticipation of the formal opening.

Further investigation by the Sergeants disclosed that no fee was being charged for admission to the premises, no advance sale of tickets had been made, soft drinks and potato chips were being dispensed free of charge, no voluntary donations had been solicited from guests and that the function this evening was strictly a private party staged for promotional purposes.

Night Operations Supervisor, Captain Andrew C. Bulens responded to 53 Berkeley Street at 9:15 P.M., this date, reporting that a communication had been received from the City of Boston Law Department stating that this

(Continued on Page Two)

Form 26A

Page No. Two

DISTRICT OR UNIT Four

March 21, 1970

Date

function would be allowable for this date while the above conditions prevailed.

There were approximately 450 persons on the premises, of the so-called "Hippie" type, ranging in age from about 14 to 35 years of age, the entertainment being provided by one "Buddy Guy" and his six man musical group with songs being rendered by one "Big Mama Thornton".

The Public Hall License #341811 issued by the Massachusetts Department of Public Safety allowing a maximum of 550 persons to be on the premises expired on July 31, 1969.

I respectfully recommend that a copy of this communication be forwarded to Mr. Richard J. Sinnott, Licensing Division, Mayor's Office for his information and guidance.

I further respectfully recommend that a copy of this communication be forwarded to the Commissioner of the City of Boston Building Department, the Fire Commissioner of the Boston Fire Department and also to the Commissioner of Public Safety for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts for inspection of the premises by their designees to insure compliance with all factors affecting the public safety.

Respectfully submitted,

Paul J. Russell  
Captain, Commanding District Four

**INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET**

BOSTON

9 APPLETON ST

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

Area(s) Form No.

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

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**National Register of Historic Places Criteria Statement Form**

Check all that apply:

☒ Individually eligible ☐ Eligible **only** in a historic district☒ Contributing to a potential historic district ☐ Potential historic districtCriteria: ☒ A ☐ B ☒ C ☐ DCriteria Considerations: ☒ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E ☒ F ☐ G

## Statement of Significance by Lyle Nyberg

The Parker Memorial Building at 9 Appleton Street is an intact distinctive example of large-scale, brick and stone meeting halls in the Second Empire style from the latter part of the 1800s. Erected in 1872 by the 28th Congregational Society of Boston for their headquarters, meetings, and religious services, the four-story building was designed with street-level offices (later stores), with a second-story meeting hall holding 850 people. Although the hall has been filled in with residential condominiums, historic architectural features of the exterior are remarkably intact. The building was included in the South End National Register District in 1973, and it is located in a National Register District (05/08/1973) (see BOS.AB). The building retains integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association, and meets Criteria A and C of the National Register.

The property is significant in American history and architecture. It was built by followers of Theodore Parker (1810-1860), a notable figure in American history. He was a famous preacher, Transcendentalist, and abolitionist in the mid-1800s. He went beyond the orthodoxy of the Unitarian and Christian beliefs of the time. He and his followers exemplify a religious Great Awakening during this period. The property is also notable in attracting famous speakers. In addition, the property is an excellent example of the Second Empire style, embodying its distinctive characteristics, and it is significant in American architecture. The property is a distinctive and key contributing component of the historical significance of the local and national historic districts.

The property qualifies under Criteria Consideration A: Religious Properties, because it derives its primary significance from architectural distinction and historical importance. Also, it is strongly associated with a religious leader, Theodore Parker, of great historical importance including that relating to abolitionism.

The property qualifies under Criteria Consideration F: Commemorative Properties, because (a) it may not have been primarily commemorative in intent (although it was named for Theodore Parker) since it was intended to provide a building for the followers of Theodore Parker, (b) it came to symbolize the values, ideas, and contributions valued by the followers and admirers of Parker, including eventually much of the Unitarian denomination, (c) the followers owned it from 1872 to 1888, a relatively short period during its life, and (d) design, age, tradition, and symbolic value invested it with its own exceptional significance, including as a meeting place for various faiths, a headquarters for Scottish organizations, and a legendary rock ballroom.