Form No. 10-300 (Rev. 10-74)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

THEME: Development of the English Colonies, 1700-1775

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RECEIVED
DATE ENTERED

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC: Massachusetts Hall

AND/OR COMMON: Massachusetts Hall

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER: Old Harvard Yard (off Massachusetts Avenue)

__NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN: Cambridge __VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT: Eighth

STATE: Massachusetts CODE: 025

COUNTY: Middlesex CODE: 017

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE	
__DISTRICT	__PUBLIC	X OCCUPIED	__AGRICULTURE	__MUSEUM
X BUILDING(S)	X PRIVATE	__UNOCCUPIED	__COMMERCIAL	__PARK
__STRUCTURE	__BOTH	__WORK IN PROGRESS	X EDUCATIONAL	__PRIVATE RESIDENCE
__SITE	**PUBLIC ACQUISITION**	**ACCESSIBLE**	__ENTERTAINMENT	__RELIGIOUS
__OBJECT	__IN PROCESS	__YES: RESTRICTED	__GOVERNMENT	__SCIENTIFIC
	__BEING CONSIDERED	__YES: UNRESTRICTED	__INDUSTRIAL	__TRANSPORTATION
		X NO	__MILITARY	__OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME: President and Fellows of Harvard College

STREET & NUMBER: Office of Government and Community Affairs, Harvard University

CITY, TOWN: Cambridge 02138 __VICINITY OF

STATE: Massachusetts

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.: Middlesex Registry of Deeds, Southern District

STREET & NUMBER:

CITY, TOWN: Cambridge 02141

STATE: Massachusetts

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE: Survey of Architectural History in Cambridge: Report Four - Old Cambridge

DATE: published 1973 __FEDERAL __STATE __COUNTY X LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS: Cambridge Historical Commission

CITY, TOWN: 57 Inman Street, Cambridge 02139

STATE: Massachusetts

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
X EXCELLENT	__DETERIORATED	__UNALTERED	X ORIGINAL SITE
__GOOD	__RUINS	X ALTERED	__MOVED DATE_____
__FAIR	__UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Massachusetts Hall stands near Massachusetts Avenue on the western side of the Old Yard, the original campus of Harvard College. Its long front facade faces north toward nearby Harvard Hall (built 1764; enlarged 1842 and 1870). At its rear and set at right angles to it are Straus and Matthews Halls (both 19th century). Near the western end of Massachusetts Hall is the Johnson Gate, an imposing neo-Georgian structure designed by McKim, Mead and White and erected in 1889.

Early Georgian in style, Massachusetts Hall is a simple rectangular building measuring approximately 95 by 40 feet (12 by 4 bays); it is three stories high with a fourth under the broad gambrel roof. The roof is broken by dormers on its lower front and rear slopes and by six interior chimneys arranged in pairs at the center and at either end of the building. Those at the ends are connected by parapets and shaped by recessed channels on their outer faces. The break of the gambrel is marked by wooden balustrades which run along either side of the roof between the parapets.

The walls of Massachusetts Hall are plainly treated, marked only by brick belt courses between stories; the brick masonry is laid in English bond below the watertable and in Flemish bond above, except at the ends where there is a mixture of English and common bonds. Windows in the building are 12/12 sash with the exception of those in the center two bays on the front and rear facades, which have 6 lights over 6 in a vertical arrangement. Entrances consist of panelled doors topped by five-light transoms in simple molded surrounds; those on the front and rear facades are surmounted by full entablatures with projecting cornices.

Built to serve solely as a dormitory, Massachusetts Hall originally followed a two-entry plan with no connection between entries on the individual floors; however, the interior plan of the building has been altered repeatedly (see significance). The most recent changes were made in 1939 when the first two floors were remodeled to serve as administrative offices. Despite these numerous alterations, a good deal of the 18th century character of the building's interior has been restored, particularly on the ground floor in panelled dados, fireplace surrounds, wide window reveals and interior shutters. The exterior has remained remarkably unaltered and it is in this that the primary architectural significance of the building lies.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
__PREHISTORIC	__ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	__COMMUNITY PLANNING	__LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	__RELIGION
__1400-1499	__ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	__CONSERVATION	__LAW	__SCIENCE
__1500-1599	__AGRICULTURE	__ECONOMICS	__LITERATURE	__SCULPTURE
__1600-1699	__ARCHITECTURE	__EDUCATION	__MILITARY	__SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
X 1700-1799	__ART	__ENGINEERING	__MUSIC	__THEATER
__1800-1899	__COMMERCE	__EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	__PHILOSOPHY	__TRANSPORTATION
__1900-	__COMMUNICATIONS	__INDUSTRY	__POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	X OTHER (SPECIFY)
		__INVENTION	Development of the English Colonies, 1700-1775	

SPECIFIC DATES 1718-1720 BUILDER/ARCHITECT John Leverett

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Massachusetts Hall, a four-story brick building with gambrel roof, stands just off Massachusetts Avenue on the western side of the Old Yard of Harvard College. Erected in 1718-1720, it is the oldest surviving building of the first Colonial institution for higher learning. As such, it possesses great significance, not only in the history of American education but in the story of the development of England's North American colonies during the 18th century.

Massachusetts Hall now houses administrative offices of Harvard University and, above the second floor, also serves as a freshman dormitory. The restored building, maintained in excellent condition, is not open to the general public.

Historical Background

Harvard College was established in 1636 although it did not receive its name and begin its active existence until two years later. While the founding and early years of the college belong to the seventeenth century, Massachusetts Hall, built in the early years of the 18th century, notably exemplifies the striving for intellectual development and the first groping toward educational liberalism in the century which saw the English colonies become the United States of America. The college was intended primarily to supply clergymen for the colonies but its graduates entered all walks of Colonial life. Its liberal arts course was patterned on that of Oxford and Cambridge and both of those institutions recognized Harvard degrees. The college was the site of the first laboratory for experimental physics prior to the Revolution and it developed a strong curriculum in mathematics and physical sciences. While most of its students in the eighteenth century were from New England, the college rolls show a scattering of young men from the other colonies, Bermuda and the West Indies.

Massachusetts Hall was the fifth major building erected for Harvard College and is the oldest of its buildings that survives. The structure was designed in Early Georgian style by John Leverett, who had become president of the college in 1708; a floor plan attributed to Leverett is preserved in the Harvard University Archives. Some sources indicate that Benjamin Wadsworth, who later became president of the college, was also involved in planning the building. Construction was begun in 1718, after the Massachusetts provincial legislature appropriated £ 3,500 for that purpose and was completed two years later.

(Continued)

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

(See Continuance Sheet)

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY less than one

UTM REFERENCES

	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
A				B			
C				D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The National Historic Landmark designation for Massachusetts Hall applies only to the building itself. Boundaries for the designation follow a line parallel to and ten feet beyond the foundation line of Massachusetts Hlll.

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE Polly M. Rettig, Historian, Landmark Review Project: original form prepared by Charles W. Snell, Historian, 12/19/67

ORGANIZATION Historic Sites Survey, National Park Service

DATE 3/3/75

STREET & NUMBER 1100 L Street NW.

TELEPHONE 202-523-5464

CITY OR TOWN Washington 20240

STATE D.C.

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL ___ STATE ___ LOCAL ___

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE

TITLE N/A National Historic Landmark

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER (NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARKS)

DATE

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST: W Smith

DATE 2/10/77

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER