PH0016284 (NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARKS) LM

Form 10-300
(July 1969)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY – NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries – complete applicable sections)

STATE:	
Massachusetts	
COUNTY:	
Middlesex	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

1. NAME

COMMON: Memorial Hall

AND/OR HISTORIC:

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER: Cambridge and Quincy Streets, Harvard University campus

CITY OR TOWN: Cambridge

STATE: Massachusetts | CODE: | COUNTY: Middlesex | CODE:

3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP		STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
☐ District ☒ Building ☐ Site ☐ Structure ☐ Object	☐ Public ☒ Private ☐ Both	Public Acquisition: ☐ In Process ☐ Being Considered	☒ Occupied ☐ Unoccupied ☐ Preservation work in progress	Yes: ☐ Restricted ☒ Unrestricted ☐ No

PRESENT USE *(Check One or More as Appropriate)*

☐ Agricultural	☐ Government	☐ Park	☐ Transportation	☐ Comments
☐ Commercial	☐ Industrial	☐ Private Residence	☐ Other *(Specify)*	
☒ Educational	☐ Military	☐ Religious		
☐ Entertainment	☐ Museum	☐ Scientific		

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME: Harvard University

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN: Cambridge 02138 | STATE: Massachusetts | CODE:

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC: Middlesex County Court House, South District

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN: East Cambridge | STATE: Massachusetts | CODE:

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:

DATE OF SURVEY: ☐ Federal ☐ State ☐ County ☐ Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN: | STATE: | CODE:

STATE: | COUNTY: | FOR NPS USE ONLY | ENTRY NUMBER | DATE

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7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One) ☐ Excellent ☒ Good ☐ Fair ☐ Deteriorated ☐ Ruins ☐ Unexposed	
	(Check One) ☒ Altered ☐ Unaltered	(Check One) ☐ Moved ☒ Original Site

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL *(if known)* PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Memorial Hall is a large cathedral-like structure with walls of red and black brick, trim in Nova Scotia stone, and a massive central tower. The building has a cruciform plan. The long arm, running east-west, is about 310 feet in length and two stories in height; the short (north-south) arm, or transepts, three-stories high, is 114 feet long and, including the flanking towers, about 85 feet wide. The apse and nave sections of the long axis have Gothic tracery windows set in the second story level between their exterior buttresses. The north and south ends of the transepts are each three bays wide, arcaded, contain the main entrances, are flanked by wide square three-story towers that are topped by high pyramidal roofs. The second and third story levels of these ends, and also of the gable end at the west end of the nave are each occupied by a giant tracery window that includes a rose window in its design. In the center, over the crossing of the arms, rises a massive square brick tower, about five stories in height. The tall pinnacled roof that once surmounted this tower was destroyed by fire and has never been rebuilt.

In function the structure is divided into three sections: At the west, was a dining hall, in the center, a memorial hall, and to the east, a theater or auditorium. The dining hall, now called the Great Hall, is 58 feet 6 inches wide and 149 feet long. The interior walls show the brick construction and there are galleries at the east and west ends. The room is ten bays long and nine of these bays, on either side, are occupied by stained-glass tracery windows. The spectacular vaulted ceiling is of the open-timber hammer-beam type.

The Memorial Hall, or vestibule, of the center transept section is 112 feet long (interior dimensions), 30 feet wide, and 58 feet high. The pavement is marble, the walls plastered, and the vaulted ceiling with vaulting shafts below is of brown ash. The walls below are occupied to the height of 18 feet by a carved black walnut screen in the form of an arcade. The arches, 28 in number, contain a marble tablet surmounted by a mosaic or inlay of carved and colored marbles. On these tablets are inscribed the names of the 136 graduates or students of Harvard who fell in defense of the Union during the Civil War. Above these the wall is occupied by inscriptions.

A center door in the west wall gives access to the Great Hall, or dining room, and two doors in either end of the east wall of the hall open into the Sanders Theater or Auditorium. These latter doors are on three different levels and are reached by means of two staircases.

The Sanders Theater is located in the "apse" and east end of the structure. The seven-sided room, with a stained-glass tracery window set in each bay, is about 95 feet long east-west and 100 feet broad at the west wall. The stage or platform is set against the west wall and the seats, arranged in three general tiers, rise against the other surrounding walls. This rooms also has a great vaulted ceiling and exposed wooden ribs.

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Continuation Sheet)

STATE	
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(Number all entries)

7. Description: (1) Memorial Hall Harvard

The Interiors, like the exterior, is still substantially original, and are particularily noteworthy. Memorial Hall is in good condition and is open to visitors.

8. SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD *(Check One or More as Appropriate)*

- [ ] Pre-Columbian
- [ ] 15th Century
- [ ] 16th Century
- [ ] 17th Century
- [ ] 18th Century
- [x] 19th Century
- [ ] 20th Century

SPECIFIC DATE(S) *(If Applicable and Known)* 1870-78

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE *(Check One or More as Appropriate)*

Aboriginal
- [ ] Prehistoric
- [ ] Historic

- [ ] Agriculture
- [x] Architecture
- [ ] Art
- [ ] Commerce
- [ ] Communications
- [ ] Conservation
- [ ] Education
- [ ] Engineering
- [ ] Industry
- [ ] Invention
- [ ] Landscape Architecture
- [ ] Literature
- [ ] Military
- [ ] Music
- [ ] Political
- [ ] Religion/Philosophy
- [ ] Science
- [ ] Sculpture
- [ ] Social/Humanitarian
- [ ] Theater
- [ ] Transportation
- [ ] Urban Planning
- [ ] Other *(Specify)*

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Designed by William Robert Ware and Henry Van Brunt and erected in 1870-78, Memorial Hall is one of the boldest, most dramatic, and original examples of a public building composed in the mature High Victorian Gothic style in the United States. Except for the loss of the high roof of the tall central tower, Memorial Hall remains substantially as built.

History

The competition for designing a building as a memorial to Harvard men who died in defense of the Union in the Civil War was won in 1865 by William R. Ware and Henry Van Brunt of Boston. Their plan called for a Victorian Gothic structure in a cathedral form in which the nave would serve as the dining hall, the transepts as the memorial hall, and the apse as a theater.

The foundations of the dining hall and memorial vestibule were laid in 1870, the walls and roof completed in 1872, and both sections were dedicated in 1874. Work on the Sanders theater portion began in the spring of 1875 and was finished in 1878. Total cost of construction was about $375,000. The nave and apse sections of the building have served a wide range of secular purposes over the years: as dining hall and theater, refectory and concert hall, and also for commencement exercises. In the 1940's a fire destroyed the tall pinnacled roof that originally crowned the central tower and this feature has never been replaced.

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Memorial Hall
(Number all entries)

9. Major Bibliographical References for Memorial Hall, Cambridge:

Walter H. Kilham, Boston After Bulfinch, An Account of Its Architecture, 1800-1900 (Cambridge, 1948), 75-76, 78-79.

Christopher Tunnard and Henry H. Reed, American Skyline (Boston, 1955), 113.

John Burchard and Albert Bush-Brown, The Architecture of America, A Social and Cultural History (Boston and Toronto, 1961), 116, 173-75, 179, 186, 191.

Alan Gowans, Images of American Living (Philadelphia and New York, 1964), 336.

The American Architect and Building News, January 8, 1876, 12-13: May 30, 1885, 259: February 26, 1887, 107.

Monographs of American Architecture, No. 4 - Memorial Hall, (Harvard University, Cambridge, 1887).

William A. Coles, editor, Architecture and Society, Selected Essays of Henry Van Brunt (Cambridge, 1969), 16, 17-18, 211, 534.

Robert B. Shaffer, "Ruskin, Norton, and Memorial Hall," Harvard Library Bulletin, III (Spring, 1949), 213-231.

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Henry-Russell Hitchcock, Architecture, Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries (Baltimore, 1963), 192.

Fiske Kimball, American Architecture (Indianapolis, 1928), 124.

Thomas E. Tallmadge, The Story of Architecture in America (London, 1928), 159.

Massachusetts, A Guide to Its Places and People (American Guide Series) (Boston, 1937), 198.

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY						OR	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES					
CORNER	LATITUDE			LONGITUDE			LATITUDE			LONGITUDE		
	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds
NW	°	'	"	°	'	"	42 °	22 '	33 "	71 °	06 '	57"
NE	°	'	"	°	'	"						
SE	°	'	"	°	'	"						
SW	°	'	"	°	'	"						

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: 1/2 acre

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

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE: Charles W. Snell, Survey Historian

ORGANIZATION: Division of History, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation, National Park

DATE: 7/8/70

STREET AND NUMBER: 801 19th Street, N.W.

CITY OR TOWN: Washington

STATE: D. C.

CODE:

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison 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. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National ☐ State ☐ Local ☐

Name _____

Title _____

Date _____

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

_____
Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date _____

ATTEST:

_____
Keeper of The National Register

Date _____

SEE INSTRUCTIONS