

Massachusetts Cultural Resource Information System

Scanned Record Cover Page

Inventory No:	BOS.2623
Historic Name:	Trinity Church
Common Name:	Trinity Episcopal Church
Address:	206 Clarendon St Copley Sq and Boylston St
City/Town:	Boston
Village/Neighborhood:	Back Bay;
Local No:	
Year Constructed:	1875
Architectural Style(s):	Richardsonian Romanesque;
Architect(s):	Burlison and Grills; Burne-Jones, Edward Coley; Clayton and Bell; Collens, Willis and Beckonert; Cottier, Daniel; Evans, John and Company; Holiday, Henry; LaFarge, John; Maginnis and Walsh; Maginnis, Charles Donagh; Morris, William; Norcross Brothers; Penny, O. W.; Redmond, Margaret; Richardson, Henry Hobson; Shepley, Bulfinch, Richardson and Abbott; Shepley, Hugh R.; Shepley, Rutan and Coolidge; Wentworth, B.;
Use(s):	Church; Church Hall;
Significance:	Architecture; Art; Religion;
Area(s):	BOS.BT
Designation(s):	MA Archaeo/Historic Landmark (06/25/1965); Preservation Restriction (07/15/1965); Nat'l Historic Landmark (07/01/1970); Nat'l Register Individual Property (07/01/1970); Nat'l Register District (08/14/1973); Preservation Restriction (09/27/2006);
Building Materials:	Roof: Ceramic Tile; Slate; Wall: Ashlar Random Laid; Brown Stone; Glass; Granite; Sandstone; Stone, Cut; Unglazed Terra Cotta; Foundation: Coursed Ashlar; Granite; Stone, Cut;
Demolished	No



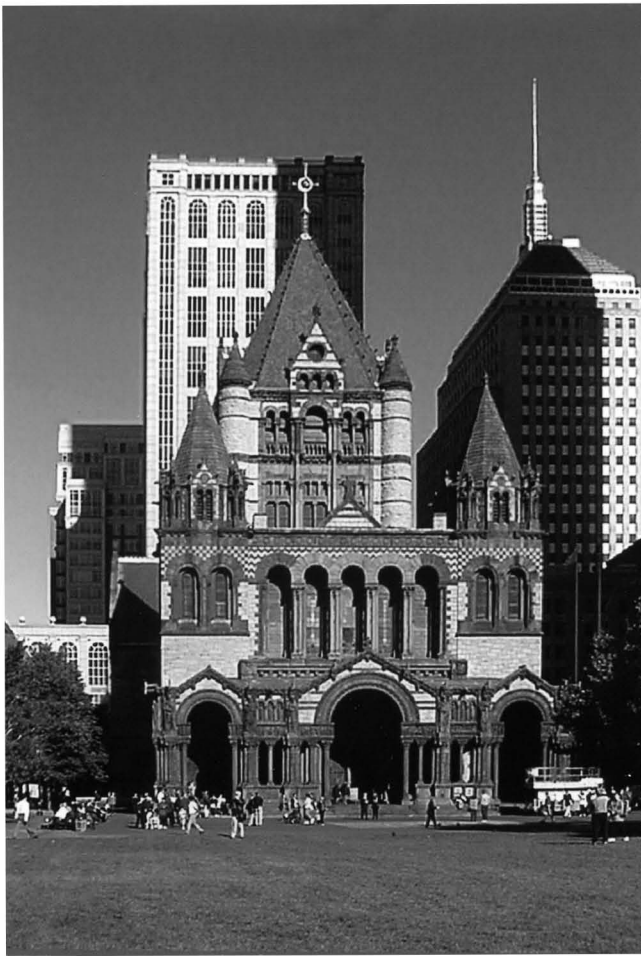
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Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Massachusetts Historical Commission
220 Morrissey Boulevard, Boston, Massachusetts 02125
www.sec.state.ma.us/mhc



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

Assessor's Number: [] USGS Quad: [] Area(s): BT Form Number: 2623

Town Boston

Place (neighborhood or village)

Copley Square
Back Bay

Address 206 CLARENDON ST.
BOSTON, MA 02116

Historic Name

Trinity Church in the City of Boston

Uses: Present

Church

Original

Church

Date of Construction

1872 - 1877

Source

Church records

Style/Form

Richardsonian Romanesque

Architect/Builder

H. H. Richardson/Norcross Brothers

Exterior Material:

Foundation

Westerly Granite

Wall/Trim

Dedham Granite Ashlar/East Longmeadow Sandstone

Roof

Red Clay Tile and Black Slate

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures

Parish House

Major Alterations (with dates)

Roofs added to Front Towers - 1886

Front Porch Addition - 1897

Chancel Alteration - 1938

Undercroft Expansion - 2005

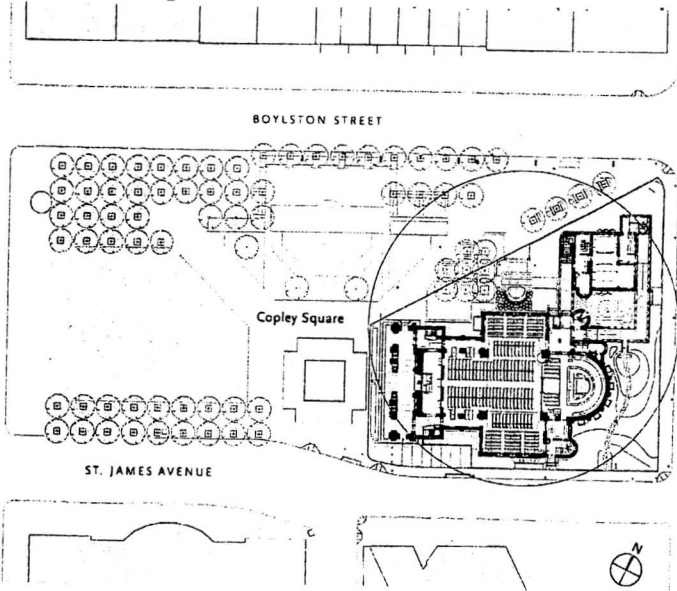
Condition Fair

Moved no yes Date

Acreage

Setting The east side of Copley Square, bordering the Square and facing the Boston Public Library.

Sketch Map



Recorded by Jean Carroon AIA

Organization Goody Clancy

Date December/2006

RECEIVED

JAN 08 2007

MASS. HIST. COMM

INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

Town

BOSTON

Property Address

206 CLARENDON ST

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

Area(s) Form No.

BT	2623
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Trinity Church in the City of Boston
Architectural Description

Constructed between 1872 and 1877 and considered one of the most significant buildings in America, Trinity Church in Copley Square, Boston, is a milestone in the architectural history of this country. Completed in 1877 it was designed by the distinguished Boston architect, Henry Hobson Richardson. His work at Trinity set an example which has been widely followed and has become known as Richardsonian Romanesque.

Richardson's plan for the church is a modified Greek cross, with four equal arms radiating from a central square. It was meant to evoke elements of the Early Christian Church and reflected an emphasis on teaching, preaching and direct interaction with the congregation and community as the center of the ministry.

The Church is also noted for the beauty of the murals on the interior tower walls, which were painted in the winter of 1876-77 by the eminent painter John La Farge with the assistance of several other skilled and well-known artists of the time.

Richardson characterized his architectural style at Trinity Church as a "free rendering of the French Romanesque," particularly that of the Auvergne region. The exterior walls of Dedham granite ashlar are trimmed in red East Longmeadow sandstone. The plan is based on a modified Greek cross, with four roughly equal, short arms radiating out from a central square (the crossing). The crossing opens upward to a monumental central tower 107 feet high. The main floor of the church consists of 10,900 square feet; and three galleries provide an additional 4,200 square feet. When full, the church can accommodate approximately 1,300 people.

The church is connected to a Parish House by a small cloister. The Parish House was built in 1873-1874 and has been significantly altered on the interior in several renovation campaigns that began in the early 20th c. The building currently contains three floors and a mezzanine, which accommodate parish activities and outreach programs.

Historical Narrative

Trinity Church and Old South Church along with the Museum of Fine Arts (where the Copley Plaza Hotel now stands) were among the first buildings in this area of the newly developing Back Bay. With the completion of the Boston Public Library in 1885, the square became a cultural gathering place for the new neighborhood.

Trinity was the Church of the great preacher, Phillips Brooks, who became Bishop of the Protestant Episcopal Diocese of Massachusetts, and is well remembered as the author of the hymn "O Little Town of Bethlehem". A member of Boston's academic elite and a Harvard University graduate, Brooks was a charismatic preacher and Christian leader whose faith and vision formed the cornerstone of the Episcopal church as it is known today. He is the only American listed in the Episcopal Church's Calendar of Commemoration. At his death in 1893, the City of Boston offices closed for a day and the Boston Stock Market suspended trading during his funeral.

The exterior of Trinity Church is largely unchanged since its completion in 1877, with the exception of the west façade facing the Boston Public Library. In 1886, pyramidal roofs covered in stone were added to the two small towers flanking the main entrances and in 1897, a porch was added by Hugh Shepley, the successor to the firm after Richardson's death in 1885. Although the dates are not known, photographic evidence indicates

that the tile roof on the main tower was replaced possibly in the 1930's and work receipts record extensive slate roof work in the 1950's which is probably when the decorative slate pattern on the Parish House was replaced with a monolithic black slate.

The stained glass windows in Trinity Church represent a variety of styles and methods. The church contained only clear glass windows at its consecration in 1877 with the exception of one window in the chancel. Twenty-five colorful, figurative windows – all by European artists – were installed between 1877 and 1882 including designs by Edward Burne-Jones, William Morris, Burlison & Grills, Daniel Cottier, Clayton & Bell and Henry Holiday. From 1883 to 1902, John La Farge created 4 windows for the sanctuary and one for the Parish House. Windows by Margaret Redmond, a leader in the Boston Arts & Crafts Society were added in 1927.

The interior of the sanctuary has been changing since its dedication as follows:

1883	Chancel organ relocated to west balcony Uncarved pulpit added
1902	Wooden Chancel floor replaced with stone Brownstone choir rails added at chancel Wooden choir stalls added
1916 ✓	Wooden pulpit carved with high and bas-relief figures
1938 ✓	Maginnis & Walsh chancel design installed including gold-leaf stenciling, decorative painting, imported marble sculpted panels and marble altar and altar rail. Original Richardson light fixtures removed
1956-57 ✓	Tower Paint infill and distemper overpainting
2005 ✓	Tower La Farge decorative paint and murals restored

The Parish House of Trinity Church was completed in November of 1874, two years before the sanctuary building and originally was organized with a first floor of offices and a three story meeting space above. The need for more space, however, quickly necessitated changes to the floor plans by adding intermediary floors and a mezzanine space in several building campaigns in the 20th century. In 2005, the Parish House was renovated again. This same renovation project created usable space below the sanctuary in what had formerly been a dirt basement. The new basement spaces added 15,000 square feet of space that include classrooms, offices, kitchen, gift shop and bathrooms.

Bibliography and References

Chester, Arthur Herbert, *Trinity Church in the City of Boston: An Historical Descriptive Account with a Guide to its Windows and Paintings*. J. Wilson and Son, University Press, Cambridge, (1888).

Floyd, Margaret Henderson, *Henry Hobson Richardson: A Genius for Architecture*. The Monacelli Press, New York, (1997).

Norton, Bettina A., Ruth Tucker, Patsy C. Boyce, Cynthia D. Fleming, Rebecca Karo, and Henry S. Miller, Jr., *Trinity Church: The Story of an Episcopal Parish in the City of Boston*, The Wardens & Vestry of Trinity Church Boston, Boston, (1978)

O'Gorman, James F., *Living Architecture: A Biography of H. H. Richardson*, Simon and Schuster, New York, (1997).

Romig, Edger Dutcher, *The Story of Trinity Church in the City of Boston*, The Wardens and Vestry, Boston (1952)

Trinity Church: The Story of an Episcopal Parish in the City of Boston, The Wardens & Vestry of Trinity Church, Boston, (1933)

Weinberg, Helene Barbara, *The Decorative Work of John La Farge*, Garland Publishing, Inc. New York & London, (1977)

LBT MEDIS - 8/14/73

2623

ADDRESS: Copley Square ;Boylston/Dartmouth

MA/HL - 6/25/65
PR - 6/25/65

USGS BOST, S
SBLT A

NAME: Trinity Church; same present

original

NHL - 7/11/70

MAP NO.: 24N-11E

SUB AREA: BB comm'l;

NRIND - 7/1/70

PR 9/27/66 EXP 9/27/80

Copley Sq.

DATE: 1874-77; National Register form source

ARCHITECT: Henry Hobson Richardson

source

BUILDER:

source

OWNER: Trinity Church

original

present

PHOTOGRAPHS

TYPE: non-residential; church

NO. OF STORIES (1st to cornice; plus):

ROOF: pitched

MATERIALS: granite; freestone

BRIEF DESCRIPTION: Richardsonian Romanesque Style cruciform Church of granite, richly ornamented with freestone decorative details; central tower with octagonal roof, corner turrets. later Colonnaded entry porch. Parish house at rear joined to church by colonnaded cloister.

EXTERIOR ALTERATION: minor

CONDITION: good

LOT AREA (sq. feet): 45,642

NOTEWORTHY SITE CHARACTERISTICS: faces open plaza of Copley Square and Boston Public Library

SIGNIFICANCE: (cont'd on reverse)
(from NR nomination): Of highest national significance, Trinity Church is considered by many to be one H.H. Richardson's greatest work....(which) went further than any other building if its era in establishing a style and an architect. The building became a national model for the Richardsonian Romanesque style.
(see NR form)

Moved; date if known _____

Themes (check as many as applicable)

- | | | | | | |
|---------------------------|--------|----------------------------|-------|-------------------------|-------|
| Aboriginal | _____ | Conservation | _____ | Recreation | _____ |
| Agricultural | _____ | Education | _____ | Religion | _____ |
| Architectural | ✓_____ | Exploration/
settlement | _____ | Science/
invention | _____ |
| The Arts | _____ | Industry | _____ | Social/
humanitarian | _____ |
| Commerce | _____ | Military | _____ | Transportation | _____ |
| Communication | _____ | Political | _____ | | |
| Community/
development | _____ | | | | |

Significance (include explanation of themes checked above)

Preservation Consideration (accessibility, re-use possibilities, capacity for public use and enjoyment, protection, utilities, context)

Located within Back Bay National Register District

Bibliography and/or references (such as local histories, deeds, assessor's records, early maps, etc.)

2623
BB

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY
DIVISION OF INSPECTION

alt.

CASE **B** RACK **6** PLAN RECORD APART. **1** NO. **73810**

BUILDING **Trinity Church** STORIES

CITY OR TOWN **Boston** STREET **Copley Square**

TO BE USED FOR **church** CLASS

OWNER **Trinity Church**

ARCHITECT **Collens, Willis & Beckonert**

CERTIFICATE APPROVAL - SPECIFICATION REQUIREMENTS - REFERRED

DATE **5/9/52**

INSPECTOR **T.H. Dahill**

FORM BU.1 9M-4-48-23404