

FORM B – BUILDING

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

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

415-02914-301 Southbridge STU.A STU.39
NRDIS 11/9/1977

Town/City: Sturbridge

Place: (*neighborhood or village*): Sturbridge Center

Photograph



Address: 301 Main Street

Historic Name: Sturbridge Center School

Uses: Present: Other Governmental; Town Offices
Original: Public School

Date of Construction: 1855

Source: Holley and Wilken 1970; Davis 1856

Style/Form: Greek Revival

Architect/Builder: Unknown

Exterior Material:

Foundation: Stone

Wall/Trim: Brick/Stone Trim

Roof: Slate Shingle

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures: None

Major Alterations (*with dates*): basement reinforced, 1934; chimneys removed, mid-20th c.; new windows and building stabilized, 1997; completely remodeled, rear addition built, 2011

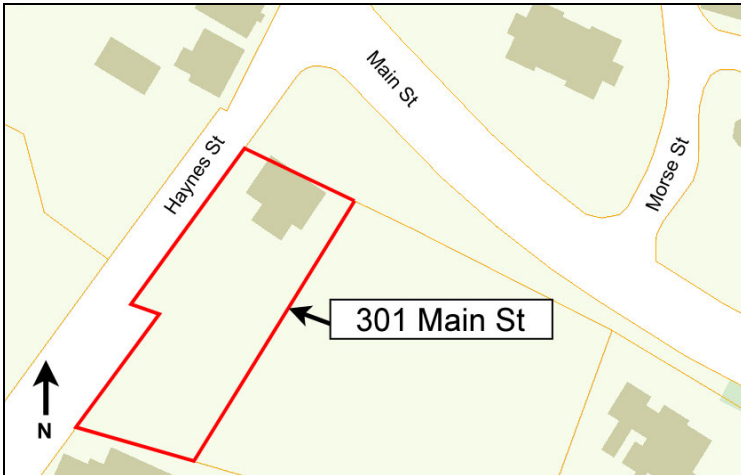
Condition: Good

Moved: no yes **Date:**

Acreage: .59 acres

Setting: The building occupies a roughly rectangular-shaped lot at the southeast corner of the intersection of Main and Haynes streets in a mixed-use, residential and civic area immediately west of the Sturbridge Cemetery. It is set back from Main Street atop a small hill. An asphalt access road is north of the building, and an asphalt-paved parking lot is to the south.

Locus Map



Recorded by: L. Kline, G. Pineo, E. Giacomarra; PAL

Organization: Sturbridge Historical Commission

Date (*month / year*): May 2018

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

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STURBRIDGE

301 MAIN STREET

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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

The Sturbridge Center School (1855, altered 1997 and 2011, STU.39) is a north-facing, Greek Revival-style, two-story, five-bay-by-three-bay, T-shaped, brick building with a two-story, three-bay-by-two-bay addition (2011) extending from the south elevation. The building has a slate-shingled, side-gable roof and a stone foundation. The gable ends have corbelled cornices, and a brick chimney pierces the center of the roof of the addition. Two-story brick pilasters are evenly arranged across the north elevation, visually dividing it into five bays. Window openings are centered in all five bays of the second story and in the second and fourth bays of the first story. Entrances in the first, third, and fifth bays consist of four-panel wood doors flanked by five-light sidelights and topped with four-light transoms. The doors and windows have stone sills and lintels. Above the center entrance is a large signboard carved with the words "Sturbridge Center Office Building." Secondary entrances in the west and south elevations of the addition are filled with modern, four-panel wood doors that have eight-light transoms. The west entrance is sheltered by a shed-roof overhang and has an eight-light sidelight beneath a four-light casement window. Fenestration throughout the building consists of evenly spaced, twelve-over-twelve, double-hung wood replacement sash.

The building's basement was reinforced by the WPA in 1934. The building was stabilized in 1997 and completely remodeled by the town in 2011.

The Sturbridge Center School is a fine example of a Greek Revival-style brick building in Sturbridge.

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

The Sturbridge Center School (1855, altered 1997 and 2011, STU.39) is in the center of Sturbridge, just west of the Sturbridge Town Common. The area was settled ca. 1725 by residents of Medfield, and Sturbridge was incorporated as a town in 1738 (MHC 1984:3-4). Three schools were built in Sturbridge in 1753; prior to that, classes may have been held in private residences (MHC 1984:4). In the mid-nineteenth century, Sturbridge Center became the institutional center of town with the expansion of churches and the construction of the Sturbridge Town Hall, 308 Main Street (1838, STU.4), and the Sturbridge Center School (MHC 1984:7).

The school was constructed by the Town of Sturbridge after a town vote in 1852 to consolidate the East Schoolhouse, 265 Main Street (1822, STU.31) and the West Schoolhouse (demolished with the construction of I-84). The first Center School constructed on the property was destroyed by a fire in the winter of 1855, and the current building was constructed that same year (Davis 1856:40). Further research in town reports may yield information about the builder. The building was used as a school for the residents of Sturbridge Center through the mid-twentieth century, when the first Burgess Elementary School was constructed ca. 1950 (Holley and Wilkin 1970; Davis 1856:40; Chase 1938; Walling 1857; Beers 1870; Richards 1898). The building also served as the town library in the late nineteenth century, prior to the construction of the Joshua Hyde Public Library, 306 Main Street (1896, STU.11) (Holley and Wilkin 1970).

After students moved out of the Center School, the building housed offices for the Sturbridge Police Department until about 1988, after which time the building was abandoned and fell victim to vandalism. In 1997, the town stabilized the building, replacing the windows, adding a fire escape, cleaning graffiti, and ensuring the basement met building code (Reid 2005). In 2011, the building was completely renovated for use by town government departments.

The building is still owned by the Town of Sturbridge and currently contains offices for the Planning Department, Building Inspector, Board of Health, Conservation and Recreation Department, Veterans Department, and Tree Warden and general meeting space (Sturbridge Assessor 2018).

The Sturbridge Center School was listed in the National Register of Historic Places on November 9, 1977, as part of the Sturbridge Common Historic District.

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PHOTOGRAPH



Photo 2. Sturbridge Center School, 301 Main Street, looking northeast at 2011 rear addition.

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HISTORIC IMAGES

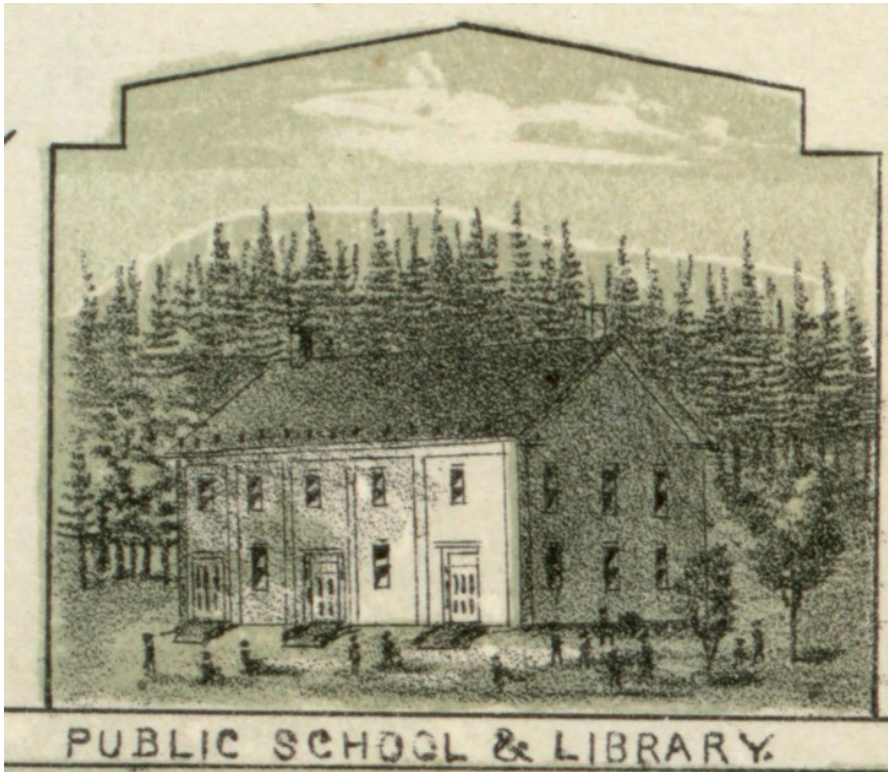


Figure 1. 1892 image of the Sturbridge Center School (Bailey 1892).



Figure 2. Undated photograph of the Sturbridge Center School (Sturbridge Historical Society files, Sturbridge Public Library).