

FORM B – BUILDING

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

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

415-02914-308

Southbridge

STU.A

STU.4
STU.923

NRDIS 11/9/1977

Town/City: Sturbridge

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

Photograph



Address: 308 Main Street

Historic Name: Sturbridge Town Hall

Uses: Present: Town Hall

Original: Town Hall, Meeting Hall, Agricultural Hall

Date of Construction: 1838, 1858, 1910

Source: Holley and Wilken 1970

Style/Form: Greek Revival, Colonial Revival

Architect/Builder: Unknown

Exterior Material:

Foundation: Granite

Wall/Trim: Brick/Granite Trim

Roof: Slate Shingle

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures: None

Major Alterations (*with dates*): expanded 16 feet and second story added, 1858; facade window configuration altered, projecting gable and columns added, 1909–1910; renovation and construction of rear addition, 2011

Condition: Good

Moved: no yes **Date:**

Acreage: 1 acre

Setting: The building occupies a roughly rectangular-shaped lot at the northwest corner of the intersection of Main and Maple Streets in a mixed-use area near the Sturbridge Town Common with residential, municipal, and ecclesiastical buildings. It is set back from Main Street with a grass lawn at the front and asphalt-paved parking lots at the rear.

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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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 Town Hall (1838, altered 1858, 1909–1910, 2011, STU.4) is a south-facing, temple-front, Greek Revival-style, two-story, three-bay-by-eight-bay, brick building with a two-story addition (2011) on the north elevation. The building has a stone foundation and a slate-shingled, pedimented end-gable roof. The gable peaks are clad in drop boards and have oculus windows. The south (facade) elevation is recessed beneath a projecting gable supported by four two-story Ionic columns. Four square pilasters aligned with the columns define the bays, and a stone belt course runs beneath the second-story windows. The main entrance is centered in the facade and consists of paired four-panel, three-light wood doors with a molded wood surround. A secondary entrance is centered in the north (rear) elevation and consists of a modern, fully glazed door set within a recess with a molded wood surround. The windows in the first story of the facade are eight-over-eight, double-hung wood sash with stone sills and brick arches with stone keystones. A tripartite window centered in the second story consists of a twelve-over-twelve, double-hung wood sash flanked by nine-over-nine, double-hung wood sash. The outer bays of the second story contain paired six-over-six, double-hung wood sash with stone sills and lintels. Fenestration in the east and west elevations consists of twelve-over-twelve, double-hung wood sash with stone sills and lintels.

The Sturbridge Honor Roll Memorial (late 20th century, STU.923) is at the north edge of a brick-paved area immediately south of Town Hall. The memorial is a stepped stone wall consisting of five sections: the three central sections were built in the late twentieth century, and the two outer sections were added after 2008. Each section has an inset bronze plaque on the south side with the name of a war and a list of the soldiers who fought in it and an inset plate on the north side with the insignia of an American military branch. From left to right, the plaques commemorate the American Revolution (1775–1783), the Korean Conflict (1950–1955), World War II (1940–1946), the Vietnam Conflict (1961–1975), and troops who have served or are serving in the Middle East.

The Sturbridge Town Hall is a good example of a Greek Revival-style building which was later altered with Colonial Revival-style elements in the twentieth century.

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

The Sturbridge Town Hall (1838, altered 1858, 1909–1910, 2011, STU.4) 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). At the time of settlement, all town matters were taken up at the meetinghouse rather than in a separate building for town government. In 1835, the residents of Sturbridge voted to construct the town hall, which was completed in 1838. The building was initially one story and 16 feet shorter than its current dimensions. Called the “Town House,” it was shared with the Worcester South Agricultural Society (Holley and Wilkin 1970; Burns 2006).

In 1858, the town voted to extend the building 16 feet on the condition that the Agricultural Society build a second story. A granite slab engraved with the words “Agricultural Hall” was installed above the entrance facing Main Street (now likely hidden behind the town hall plaque, or removed during the 1909–1910 renovations) (Chase 1938:8). The Agricultural Society used the hall for exhibits during fairs held on the Town Common. People attending to town business or visiting the Agricultural Society tied their horses up in several horse sheds north of the building (Richards 1898; Sanborn 1899). In 1868, the town bought out the Agricultural Society and took full ownership of the building (Burns 1988:105).

In 1909–1910, the town remodeled the building to its current appearance (Chase 1938:8). The gable end was extended forward, and four large Ionic columns were added to support it. The openings in the east and west bays of the facade were altered, with the first-story openings changed from doors to windows and the second-story windows changed from single twelve-over-twelve, double-hung sash to the current paired six-over-six sash. By 1918, three horse sheds remained: one immediately northeast of the building and two to the northwest (the current location of auxiliary parking). All the sheds had been removed by 1948 (Sanborn 1918, 1948).

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In the mid-twentieth century, the former agricultural hall on the second story of the building was used as a summer theater (*Bakersfield Californian* 1954). The building remained relatively unchanged until 2011, when it was fully renovated, and a two-story addition was constructed on the rear (north) elevation.

The Sturbridge Honor Roll Memorial (STU.923), a memorial to soldiers from Sturbridge who fought in various conflicts, was installed south of the town hall in the late twentieth century. The memorial was expanded after 2008 to its current configuration.

The Sturbridge Town Hall 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. The Sturbridge Honor Roll Memorial, looking northeast.

HISTORIC IMAGES

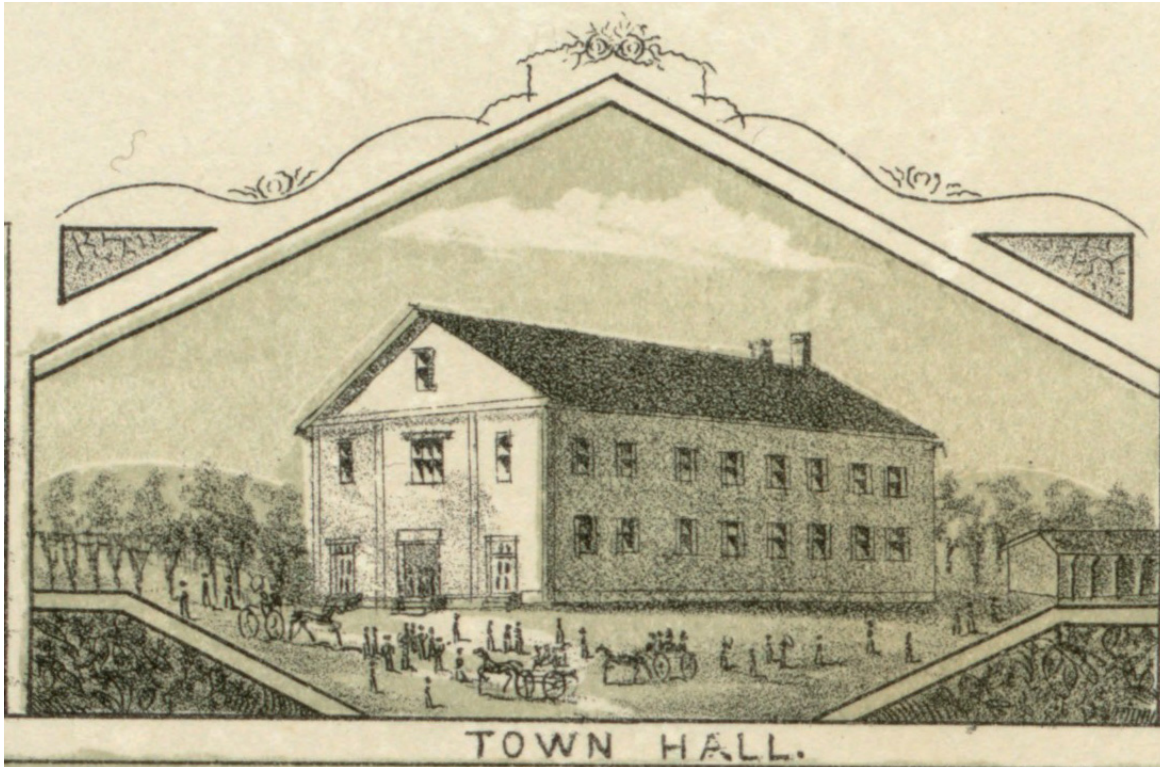


Figure 1. 1892 image of Sturbridge Town Hall, after expansion (Bailey 1892).

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Figure 2. Sturbridge Town Hall, ca. 1900; to the left is 310 Main Street, and to the right is a small hitching shed (no longer extant) (State Library of Massachusetts).