

## FORM B - BUILDING

MAY 15 1989

530

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
80 BOYLSTON STREET  
BOSTON, MA 02116

AREA	FORM NO.
D	401

Town SouthbridgeAddress 24 Elm StreetHistoric Name Elm Street Fire HouseUse: Present fire stationOriginal fire station

## DESCRIPTION

Date 1899Source historical filesStyle Eclectic, Late-19th CenturyArchitect George H. Clemence, WorcesterExterior Wall Fabric brickOutbuildings noneMajor Alterations (with dates) addition of additional truck bays (mid 20th c)Condition GoodMoved no Date n/aAcreage less than one acreSetting commercial/civic area

Photo (3"x3" or 3"x5", black and white) Indicate address of property on back of photo. Staple to left side of form.

300-2-1

Sketch Map: Draw map showing property's location in relation to nearest cross streets and/or geographical features. Indicate all buildings between inventoried property and nearest intersection(s). Indicate north

UTM REFERENCE 18/745 295/4662 060USGS QUADRANGLE Southbridge - Mass-ConnSCALE 1:25,000Recorded by E. Woodford, S. Ceccacci  
ed. S. CeccacciOrganization Southbridge Historical Com-  
missionDate May 1986

## NATIONAL REGISTER CRITERIA STATEMENT (if applicable)

The Elm Street Fire House is significant for its association with the expansion and development of Southbridge's commercial and institutional center late in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and for its impressive brick Renaissance Revival design. It meets National Register criteria A and C at the local level and retains integrity of setting, location, materials, workmanship, design, feeling, and association. The boundaries indicated on the attached assessors map are those of current ownership.

## ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE Describe important architectural features and evaluate in terms of other buildings within the community.

Composed of elements of the Classical, Gothic and Romanesque styles, this building is identified as a fire house by its tower and the row of arched truck entrances on the ground floor. The horizontal lines of the main body of the building, the rusticated treatment of the ground floor, the keystones above the second story facade windows and the modillioned eave treatment are of Classical inspiration. The high pitched roofs and dormers are Gothic in feeling. The repeated round arched windows and truck bays together with the brick corbelling and the massiveness of the tower are Romanesque. Without the vertical accent of the tower, the building would have a much more Classical feel to it.

The use of the tower was popular for all sorts of buildings from churches, to factories, to commercial and public buildings during the late-19th century as a picturesque architectural feature. For fire houses the tower often had two practical purposes; it could house a bell to sound the alarm and also serve to hang fire hoses to dry after use.

(See Continuation Sheet)

## HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE Explain the role owners played in local or state history and how the building relates to the development of the community.

Until 1832, the only fire apparatus in Southbridge was a tub engine owned by the Hamilton Woolen Company. In 1832 the town appropriated \$350, to be matched by private subscription, to buy a tub engine for the town. At the same town meeting it was agreed to establish volunteer teams to man both the new engine and the existing Hamilton Mill fire apparatus. As a result, Engine Company\*1 was established for the town center and Engine Company\*2 was formed for Globe Village. The engine in the town center was kept at several locations in what were apparently rudimentary buildings until about 1860 when an engine house was built on Central Street. In 1875 new steam fire engines replaced the old hand type.

The establishment of a town fire department in 1880 was an important step toward the modernization of fire protection in Southbridge. During the 1890's two new fire houses were built. The first was in Globe Village in 1894 (form #D-454). The present building was built after the town appropriated \$23,000 for its construction. During this same period the town was able to boast an ample supply of water, supplied by hydrants and subterranean street reservoirs, for fighting fires. A Gamewell Fire Alarm System was also functioning during the 1890's.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

- \_\_\_\_\_. Souvenir of Southbridge 1898. Southbridge(?): George Grant-Press Print, 1898, pp. 66-69.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Tiger Engine Co. 7 (A New Fire Department for Southbridge)", Southbridge Evening News, 2/14/1964.

INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
Office of the Secretary, Boston

Community:	Southbridge	Form No:	D-401
Property Name:	Elm St. Fire House Elm Street		

Indicate each item on inventory form which is being continued below.

ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE (cont'd)

The building was designed by George H. Clemence (1862-1924) a young Worcester architect, who had already built at least two Worcester fire houses when he received this commission. Southbridge directories show that during the 1890's Clemence kept an office in Southbridge as well as in Worcester. He designed the now altered Southbridge Armory and many, if not all, of the buildings of the Worcester & Southbridge Street Railway, including the elegant Overlook Hotel (not the Masonic Home) in Charlton. Unfortunately, lack of documentation has not permitted identification of other buildings by Clemence in Southbridge.

Clemence was one of Worcester's most important architects during the late-19th and early-20th centuries. He received commissions for numerous Worcester public buildings, schools, and residences, many of which still exist and have been listed on the National Register.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number \_\_\_\_\_ Page \_\_\_\_\_

Multiple Resource Area  
Thematic Group

Name Southbridge MRA  
State Worcester County, MASSACHUSETTS

Nomination/Type of Review	Date/Signature
21. Comins--Wall House <b>Substantive Review</b>	Keeper <u>Beth L. Savage</u> 6-22-89 Attest _____
22. Congregational Church <b>Entered in the National Register</b>	Keeper <u>Shelene Byers</u> 6/22/89 Attest _____
23. Cummings, E.B., House <b>Entered in the National Register</b>	Keeper <u>Shelene Byers</u> 6/22/89 Attest _____
24. Dani and Soldani Cabinet Makers and Wood Workers Factory <b>Entered in the National Register</b>	Keeper <u>Shelene Byers</u> 6/22/89 Attest _____
25. Dennison School House <b>Entered in the National Register</b>	Keeper <u>Shelene Byers</u> 6/22/89 Attest _____
26. Dresser, Sylvester, House <b>Entered in the National Register</b>	Keeper <u>Shelene Byers</u> 6/22/89 Attest _____
27. Dunbar--Vinton House <b>Entered in the National Register</b>	Keeper <u>Shelene Byers</u> 6/22/89 Attest _____
28. Durfee, Henry E., Farmhouse <b>Entered in the National Register</b>	Keeper <u>Shelene Byers</u> 6/22/89 Attest _____
29. Elm Street Fire House <b>Entered in the National Register</b>	Keeper <u>Shelene Byers</u> 6/22/89 Attest _____
30. Evangelical Free Church <b>Entered in the National Register</b>	Keeper <u>Shelene Byers</u> 6/22/89 Attest _____

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY NAME: Elm Street Fire House

MULTIPLE NAME: Southbridge MRA

STATE & COUNTY: MASSACHUSETTS, Worcester

DATE RECEIVED: 5/15/89      DATE OF PENDING LIST: 5/31/89  
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 6/16/89      DATE OF 45TH DAY: 6/29/89  
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 89000530

NOMINATOR: STATE

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N    DATA PROBLEM: N    LANDSCAPE: N    LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N  
OTHER: N    PDIL: N    PERIOD: N    PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N  
REQUEST: N    SAMPLE: N    SLR DRAFT: N    NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

ACCEPT     RETURN     REJECT    6/22/89 DATE

Entered in the  
National Register

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

RECOM./CRITERIA \_\_\_\_\_  
REVIEWER \_\_\_\_\_  
DISCIPLINE \_\_\_\_\_  
DATE \_\_\_\_\_

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N

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CLASSIFICATION

count       resource type

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STATE/FEDERAL AGENCY CERTIFICATION

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FUNCTION

historic       current

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DESCRIPTION

architectural classification  
 materials  
 descriptive text

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SIGNIFICANCE

Period              Areas of Significance--Check and justify below

Specific dates                      Builder/Architect  
Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

summary paragraph  
 completeness  
 clarity  
 applicable criteria  
 justification of areas checked  
 relating significance to the resource  
 context  
 relationship of integrity to significance  
 justification of exception  
 other

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BIBLIOGRAPHY

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GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

acreage               verbal boundary description  
 UTMs                   boundary justification

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ACCOMPANYING DOCUMENTATION/PRESENTATION

sketch maps       USGS maps       photographs       presentation

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OTHER COMMENTS

Questions concerning this nomination may be directed to

\_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_



24 Elm St. Fire Station, D-401  
Southbridge, MA MA  
Ceccacci, 1986  
Southbridge Historical Comm.  
Roll #2.1

22m Street Fire House

D-401



SOUTHERIDGE MASS  
MIRA

JOHN E. O'NEILL & ASSOCIATES  
ALBANY, MAINE

SOUTHERIDGE, MASS.

SCALE IN FEET  
0 100 200

Please refer to the map in the  
Multiple Property Cover Sheet  
for this property

Multiple Property Cover Sheet Reference Number: 64000294