

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination FormSee instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

For NPS use only

received

APR 18 1984

date entered

1. Name

historic Memorial Town Hall

and/or common Town Hall

2. Location

street & number Main Street

N/A not for publication

city, town Monson

N/A vicinity of

state Massachusetts

code

025

county

Hampden

code

013

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
☐ district	☒ public	☒ occupied	☐ agriculture
☒ building(s)	☐ private	☐ unoccupied	☐ commercial
☐ structure	☐ both	☐ work in progress	☐ educational
☐ site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	☒ entertainment
☐ object	N/A in process	☒ yes: restricted	☒ government
	☐ being considered	☐ yes: unrestricted	☐ industrial
		☐ no	☐ military
			☒ museum
			☐ park
			☐ private residence
			☐ religious
			☐ scientific
			☐ transportation
			☐ other:

4. Owner of Property

name Town of Monson Massachusetts

street & number Town Hall Main Street

city, town Monson

N/A vicinity of

state Massachusetts

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Springfield Registry of Deeds

street & number East Columbus Avenue and State Street

city, town Springfield

state Massachusetts

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

Inventory of the Historic Assets of
title the Commonwealth, #250has this property been determined eligible? ☐ yes ☒ no

date 1982

☐ federal ☒ state ☐ county ☐ local

depository for survey records

Massachusetts Historical Commission

city, town Boston

state Massachusetts

7. Description

Memorial Town Hall, Monson, MA

Condition

☒ excellent
☐ good
☐ fair

☐ deteriorated
☐ ruins
☐ unexposed

Check one

☒ unaltered
☐ altered

Check one

☒ original site
☐ moved date n/a

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Monson Memorial Town Hall is located on a one acre lot facing west on Main Street in the town's commercial/civic center. Set back 100 feet from the street on a site which slopes to the east, the building stands on property donated in 1884 by the Reynold's family, Monson's leading industrialists in the 19th century. This large stone structure stands out from its commercial and residential neighbors as an important local landmark. In keeping with its memorial character, two cannons- one from the Civil War, the other from World War I- and a monument grace the front lawn.

Memorial Hall was designed in 1885 in the Victorian Gothic style by local architect George Potter. Although rather complex in its roofline and massing, the Town Hall is basically T shaped in plan with a four story rectangular tower at its northwest corner, an octagonal turret at its southwest corner, a gabled pavillion centered on the facade (west elevation), and a cross gable on the south elevation. This two story structure is constructed of rock faced random laid granite ashlar. Decorative trim used throughout the building includes heavy stone modillions at the roofline and alternative blue and white granite voussoirs forming the gothic arches which frame most entries and window openings and are a noted feature of the structure.

The building is covered by a slate roof which consists of three components. These include a front hip portion which is broken by a cross gable on the west elevation, a gambrel roof mid-section, and a gable roof at the rear of the building. These roof components also delineate the use of interior space which from front to back are: town offices and GAR Hall, auditorium and balcony, and a stage area. All ridges of the roof are trimmed with copper cresting.

Windows generally appear in clusters of two, three and five openings, and contain double or triple hung, single paned sash. They are headed either by simple stone labels or the polychromatic pointed arches already described. All elevations are asymmetrical.

The west elevation is the facade of the building and features the structure's most distinguished elements. Centered on this elevation is the main entry contained within a 2½ story gabled pavillion highlighted at its apex by a checkerboard pattern of blue and white granite. This element is further enhanced by a gothic arch which frames a cluster of three windows at the second story. The entry is protected by an open one story portico with pointed arches and buttresses. Fenestration on this elevation is arranged in pairs on either side of the pavillion. Other architectural elements of note on the facade are the tower and turret which are located respectively at the elevations northern and southern corners. The square faced tower rises four stories and is capped by a pyramidal hipped roof which is supported by granite columns. It contains openings in each of its faces. Those on the first and third story are framed by arches, and except for an entry on the west face, they enclose pairs of windows. Openings on the second level are in groups of three and are capped by flat stone lintels. At the facade's southern corner is a 45 foot octagonal turret which features a statue of a Civil War soldier at its peak. Arched windows are located at the height of the building's second story and plaques, framed by sharply pointed arches are inset at the first story level.

The north and south elevations form the walls of the building's auditorium and stage area. The dominant features on these two faces are two rows of five stained glass windows with those on the lower level highlighted by arches of blue and white granite blocks. At the eastern end of these elevations cross gables are placed where the gambrel roof portion of the building meets the gable roof section. Below these gables are two rows of windows placed in groups of three.

8. Significance

Memorial Town Hall, Monston, MA

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
☐ prehistoric	☐ archeology-prehistoric	☐ community planning	☐ landscape architecture	☐ religion
☐ 1400-1499	☐ archeology-historic	☐ conservation	☐ law	☐ science
☐ 1500-1599	☐ agriculture	☐ economics	☐ literature	☐ sculpture
☐ 1600-1699	☒ architecture	☐ education	☒ military	☐ social/
☐ 1700-1799	☒ art	☐ engineering	☒ music	☐ humanitarian
☒ 1800-1899	☐ commerce	☐ exploration/settlement	☐ philosophy	☒ theater
☐ 1900-	☐ communications	☐ industry	☒ politics/government	☐ transportation
		☐ invention		☐ other (specify)

Specific dates 1885 **Builder/Architect** George E. Potter

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Monson Memorial Town Hall possesses integrity of location, design, materials, workmanship, setting, and association. It is significant as the community's most important piece of public architecture built of a material (granite) quarried locally, and endowed by a family prominent in Monson during the 19th century. In addition, it possesses enduring associations with the civic development of the community. Thus, the Memorial Hall meets criteria A, B, and C of the National Register of Historic Places.

A cornerstone building in the center of Monson, the Memorial Hall building stands as a credit to the town and an honor to the patriot soldiers in whose memory it was designed and built. The Reynold's family who proposed the project were generous and public-spirited; they conceived of the building to be a local landmark, constructed by local builder's with local materials, for local war heroes.

The idea for the Memorial Hall originated at the annual town meeting in 1884. A proposition was made by Rice M. Reynolds to donate a site and along with his brother Ted, both offered to donate \$5,000 to the building fund. Their father, Joseph Reynolds, also offered a like sum, on the condition that the town contribute \$20,000. It was further stipulated that the building be a memorial structure, be constructed of granite and be completed before May 1, 1885.

The Reynolds family holds a distinguished place in Monson's history; its members were astute businessmen and industrialists and generous, public-spirited citizens. Joseph Reynolds, the patriarch, came to Monson in 1821. He was at the forefront of the industrial revolution, and in his youth, had worked under Eli Whitney, inventor of the cotton gin, at Whitneyville, CT. He owned and operated a number of mills in Monson which produced satinnet and cotton jeans. Active in public life, he filled many town offices and in 1854 was elected State Senator.

His sons Rice and Theodore also played important roles in Monson's history. At age 16 Rice went into business with his father. He too was active in town politics and served as selectman, water supply commissioner and district representative to the state legislature. He was one of the original incorporators of the Monson Savings Bank and later became a trustee. Theodore, less dominant in business and less publicly active than his brother, is best known as a collector. Among his acquisitions were rare books, paintings, plants. Coins and international playing cards.

Dedicated on Memorial Day in 1885, Memorial Hall, as stipulated by the Reynold's family, was constructed of local granite from the Monson quarry. Opened by the Federal government in 1809 to obtain stone for building the Springfield Armory, (NHL; 1974) the quarry had become by the mid-19th century an important privately operated local resource which produced the largest amount of granite in the Connecticut River Valley. Monson granite quarried by William Flynt in the late 19th century was used locally as a building material for a number of structures which included the Universalist Church (1888) and Town library (1882).

9. Major Bibliographical References

"Articles of Agreement between the Town of Monson and Building Committee." Monson, November 23, 1883.

Eddy, Charles W. Monson. Illustrated by Charles W. Eddy. Ware, Ma, 1884.

(Continued)

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property .91 acres

Quadrangle name Monson

Quadrangle scale 1:25,000

UTM References

A

1	8
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7	2	2	1	8	0
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4	6	6	3	8	8	0
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C

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H

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Verbal boundary description and justification

Deed Description: "A certain tract of land situate on the Easterly side of Main Street in said Monson bounded and described as follows viz: Beginning at an iron bolt driven
(Continued)

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code
N/A			

state	code	county	code
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11. Form Prepared By

Kathryn, Kubie, Preservation Planner, Massachusetts Historical Commission with
name/title Bette B. Roberts, Monson Historical Commission and Antoinette E. Tomasik, LPVRPC

organization Massachusetts Historical Commission date January 1984

street & number 294 Washington Street telephone 727-8470

city or town Boston state Massachusetts

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

☐ national

☐ state

☒ local

Patricia L. Weslow

As the designated State Historic Preservation 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.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

State Historic Preservation Officer
title Massachusetts Historical Commission

date 4/10/84

For NPS use only

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

Entered in the
National Register

date 5/17/84

for Melores Byers
Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet Memorial Town Hall

Item number

7 & 8

Page

1

The interior of Memorial Hall remains intact from its time of construction and reflects its multiple use in community life. The front portion of the building contains meeting rooms and display space on the first floor, a GAR Hall on the second floor, and the town vault and lock-up in the basement. To the rear of these municipal rooms is the auditorium and stage. This portion of the building was altered in 1902 when the roof was raised and the stage area rebuilt.

8. Significance (Cont'd)

It was also used in buildings as far west as Topeka, Kansas, and Keokuk, Iowa as well as locally in many cities and towns in Hamden County, MA and the rest of New England. A noted and documented example of its use as a building material is the 1880s H.H. Richardson designed railroad station in Ware, MA.

Since its construction, Memorial Hall has stood as a prominent landmark in the compact commercial/civic center of Monson and has been the local center for political, social, civic, and charitable activities. Although to date little is known of the architect, George E. Potter, except that he was a resident of Monson and during the 1870s designed a number of commercial buildings and brick townhouses in nearby Springfield, this is clearly a monumental design. As intended when constructed, the building continues to house the town's municipal offices as well as the town safe and lock-up. Until recently, the building's auditorium was used for town meetings, high school graduations, and also provided a facility for local concerts and theatricals which were often sponsored by charitable groups such as the Red Cross, the King's Daughters, and the Masons.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

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received

date entered

Continuation sheet Memorial Town Hall Item number 9 & 10 Page 1

9. Major Bibliographical References (Cont'd)

Monson Historical Society. History of Monson, Massachusetts. Monson, 1960.

Springfield Registry of Deeds. Book 397, page 276.

The Springfield Union Supplement. October 22, 1885.

Everts, Louis. History of the Connecticut Valley in Massachusetts.
Philadelphia, J.B. Lippincott & Company, 1879

10. Geographical Data (con'd)

in the ground in the Easterly line of said street at the South Westerly corner of land of Edward P. Newton. Thence Easterly on said Newton's land about 29 3½ feet to a stone monument. Thence Southerly on land of Solomon F. Cushman abot 162 and 3/4 feet to a stone monument. Thence Westerly on land of said Cushman about 33½ feet to a stone monument Thence N. 79°14' W. 70 and 9/10 feet onland of Alvin A. Gage. Thence S. 89° 4' W. 116 and 8/10 feet on land of said Gage to an iron bolt driven in the ground in the Easterly line of said Main Street. Thence N. 25° 7' W. about 146 feet on said street to the place of beginning. Subject to a right of way conveyed to said CUshman his heirs and assigns across said land from said street near the home of said Gage to his land in the rear of said premises for agricultural purposes only.

This deed is upon the express condition however that the Inhabitants of Monson shall erect said premises and complete the same on or before May 1st A.D. 1885 a Town House the same to be known as a Memorial Hall in honor of our "Patriot Soldiers."



Police Station

Post Office

Monson House

Church

Church

MAIN ST

ST

CUSHMAN ST

Town Hall
F/R.M. Reynolds
1882
162.8

Fire Dept.

Norcross

High way Dept

Monson Town Hall
Assessor's Map for
1980

Scale 1" = 100 ft.
Earl Coleman

N

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Memorial Town Hall
Hampden County
MASSACHUSETTS

Working No. APR 18 1984
Fed. Reg. Date: 2-5-85
Date Due: 5/17/84 - 6/2/84
Action: ☒ ACCEPT 5/17/84
☐ RETURN
☐ REJECT
Federal Agency: _____

Entered in the
National Register

- ☐ resubmission
☐ nomination by person or local government
☐ owner objection
☐ appeal

Substantive Review: ☐ sample ☐ request ☐ appeal ☐ NR decision

Reviewer's comments:

Recom./Criteria _____
Reviewer _____
Discipline _____
Date _____
_____ see continuation sheet

Nomination returned for: _____ technical corrections cited below
_____ substantive reasons discussed below

1. Name

2. Location

3. Classification

Category	Ownership Public Acquisition	Status Accessible	Present Use
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4. Owner of Property

5. Location of Legal Description

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

Has this property been determined eligible? ☐ yes ☐ no

7. Description

Condition

- ☐ excellent ☐ deteriorated
☐ good ☐ ruins
☐ fair ☐ unexposed

Check one

- ☐ unaltered
☐ altered

Check one

- ☐ original site
☐ moved date _____

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

- ☐ summary paragraph
☐ completeness
☐ clarity
☐ alterations/integrity
☐ dates
☐ boundary selection

8. 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

9. Major Bibliographical References

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property _____

Quadrangle name _____

UTM References _____

Verbal boundary description and justification _____

11. Form Prepared By

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

____ national ____ state ____ local

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

title date

13. Other

- ☐ Maps
☐ Photographs
☐ Other

Questions concerning this nomination may be directed to _____

Signed _____ Date _____ Phone: _____

Comments for any item may be continued on an attached sheet



Monson Town Hall
Main St.
Monson, Ma. 01057

Neg. #1 of #1 loc. French
& Son,
Front-rt. Side Monson.

PHOTOGRAPHY
by French & Son
413-283-3261

613 82
FRENCH & SON

MONSON QUADRANGLE
MASSACHUSETTS-CONNECTICUT
7.5 MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC)

Monson Town Hall
U.S.G.S. Map for
TII. 2. A.