

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY  
RECEIVED APR 5 1976  
DATE ENTERED APR 30 1976

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC Wellesley Town Hall and Library

AND/OR COMMON  
*W* Wellesley Town Hall (preferred)

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER 525 Washington Street

CITY, TOWN Wellesley VICINITY OF \_\_\_\_\_ NOT FOR PUBLICATION  
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT 10

STATE Massachusetts CODE 025 COUNTY Norfolk CODE 021

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE <input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL <input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL <input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	<b>PUBLIC ACQUISITION</b>	<b>ACCESSIBLE</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT <input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME Town of Wellesley

STREET & NUMBER 525 Washington Street

CITY, TOWN Wellesley VICINITY OF \_\_\_\_\_ STATE Massachusetts 02181

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Norfolk County Registry of Deeds

STREET & NUMBER 650 High Street

CITY, TOWN Dedham STATE Massachusetts

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE Inventory of the Historic Assets of the Commonwealth

DATE 1973  FEDERAL  STATE  COUNTY  LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS Massachusetts Historical Commission

CITY, TOWN Boston STATE Massachusetts

# 7 DESCRIPTION

## CONDITION

EXCELLENT  
 GOOD  
 FAIR

DETERIORATED  
 RUINS  
 UNEXPOSED

## CHECK ONE

UNALTERED  
 ALTERED

## CHECK ONE

ORIGINAL SITE  
 MOVED DATE \_\_\_\_\_

### DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Wellesley Town Hall is situated on top of a small hill in the middle of Hunnewell Park, located near the center of Wellesley. The Park is roughly bounded on the south by Washington Street, on the west by Grove Street, on the north by the Penn Central Railroad, and on the east by Linden Street. The building is set back about 300 feet from Washington Street, and is approached by a sweeping circular drive.

The building, basically rectangular in plan with attached towers, bays and other irregular projections, was constructed in two parts. The original building, the library, was erected in 1881, and in 1883 the Town Hall was added to the west. Originally the two buildings, while they were visually connected on the exterior, were separated on the interior, and each had its own entrance. When the library was moved into a new building in 1959 the two buildings were joined on the interior, and the entire space used for the town offices. The alterations manifested themselves on the exterior by a few minor door changes; the porticoed doors to the library on the southeast facade were turned into windows and a new entrance constructed just west of the original entrance; a new fire door, reached by a long flight of metal stairs was added to the northeast elevation. Other than these changes the building looks essentially as it did in 1883.

The building was designed by G. R. Shaw and H. S. Hunnewell and executed in granite rubble and red sandstone. The two story structure has a high battered basement and a steeply pitched red slate roof with copper trim. The roofline is irregular, consisting of a hip roof intersected by gables, ridges, and conical towers. Two sandstone belt courses encircle the building, one at the first floor level, the other just beneath the window on the first floor. The southeast facade, encompassing both the 1881 and 1883 portions of the building has two stepped gable ends separated by a recessed area, now used as an entrance. The original library entrance with a sandstone ionic columned portico is complimented by a large window flanked by ionic columns, to the east on the second floor. The entablature above this window breaks through the cornice and extends into the baroque gable end. A large palladian window with a narrow balustraded balcony, on the second floor, breaks through the cornice into the stepped gable end of the western half of the facade.

The southwest facade, which contains the entrance into the original 1883 Town Hall, also has a large decorated gable end, and is flanked by two round towers with steep conical roofs. A tetrastyle ionic portico with full entablature extends across the three bay slightly projecting pavilion under this front gable. A large circular window with a clock face marked with gold leaf Roman numerals is located in the center of the gable end and is visible from inside the assembly room on the attic floor. Each of the towers flanking the entrance contains a spiral staircase rising from the basement to the assembly room, with narrow sash windows circling the building, following the line of the staircase. The towers have a wide bracketed belt course at the level of the cornice of the main structure, with a small circular room above, and a highly decorated dormer window breaking through the tower cornice.

The northwest elevation is a mirror image of the southeast facade except for the addition of a small circular tower in place of the entrance on the other side. The northeast elevation has an elaborate gable end on the eastern side, extending at right angles from the ridge roof, with a bay window underneath.

# 8 SIGNIFICANCE

## PERIOD

## AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW

<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1881/1883

BUILDER/ARCHITECT Shaw and Hunnewell

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Wellesley Town Hall is a significant architectural focal point in Wellesley, and is closely identified with the political and cultural development of the town.

The land on which the Town Hall is located was part of a fifty acre estate belonging to Dr. William Thomas Green Morton, who in 1846 first introduced the use of ether as an anaesthetic. Etherton Cottage, Dr. Morton's home, is said to have stood on the site where the library was built in 1881. Thirty acres of Dr. Morton's estate were bought in 1879 by Horatio H. Hunnewell, a wealthy banker, railroad tycoon and an important entrepreneur in Boston, who was married to Isabella Welles, the daughter of another wealthy and prominent family in the area. When West Needham separated from Needham in 1881 and was incorporated as the Town of Wellesley, Hunnewell donated ten acres from his estate to the new town, in recognition of the honor bestowed on his wife's family. He also built the library which now stands in the part (the eastern portion of the present building) and in 1883 added the Town Hall.

The donation of public buildings to a community by wealthy citizens was a fairly common occurrence in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, and was indicative of the sense of the civic responsibility felt by the prominent citizens of the time. The Wellesley Town Hall and library, built when the town had just been incorporated, was a symbol of the pride of the new community, and has served as a rallying point for the political and cultural development of Wellesley ever since.

The architectural quality of the Town Hall reflects the civic pride of the people who built it. The building is rich in detail, and the massing and materials are striking. The architects, Shaw and Hunnewell, were known particularly for their work in Boston's Back Bay, but they carried their urban skills out to the country without losing their ability to design interesting but useable space.

## 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Bradford, Gamaliel, Early Days in Wellesley, Wellesley National Bank, Wellesley, MA 1929  
Fisk, Joseph E. History of the Town of Wellesley, Massachusetts, Pilgrim Press, Boston, Chicago, 1917  
Hunnewell, Hollis, Diary of Horatio Hollis Hunnewell, 3 vols., Boston, 1906

## 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 9 acres

UTM REFERENCES

A 

1	9	3	1	1	0	5	0	4	6	8	5	1	8	0
ZONE		EASTING					NORTHING							

  
C 

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

B 

ZONE		EASTING					NORTHING							

  
D 

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

## 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Christine Boulding, Preservation Planner, and Adrienne Singer

ORGANIZATION

Massachusetts Historical Commission

DATE

March 1976

STREET & NUMBER

294 Washington Street

TELEPHONE

617-727-8470

CITY OR TOWN

Boston

STATE

Massachusetts 02108

## 12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL

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

*Elizabeth Reed Aradon*

TITLE

Executive Director, Massachusetts Historical Commission

DATE

3/26/76

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

*Acting*

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

DATE

4/30/76

ATTEST:

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

4.30.76

Property Wellesley Town Hall

State Massachusetts

Working Number 4.5.76.2954

Norfolk

**TECHNICAL**

Photos 2  
Maps 1

**CONTROL**

OK <sup>cm</sup> 4.6.76

**HISTORIAN**

Accept  
E. Smith  
4-13-76

**ARCHITECTURAL HISTORIAN**

Accept 4/14/76

*Carol Huberman*

*cat ok Lebowich*

**ARCHEOLOGIST**

**OTHER**

**HAER**

Inventory \_\_\_\_\_

Review \_\_\_\_\_

**REVIEW UNIT CHIEF**

Accept  
Cole  
4.19.76

**BRANCH CHIEF**

**KEEPER**

*Henry*  
4.30.76

National Register Write-up \_\_\_\_\_

Send-back \_\_\_\_\_

Entered APR 30 1976

Federal Register Entry 6-1-76

Re-submit \_\_\_\_\_

INT:2106-74



Wellesley Town Hall, Wellesley, MA  
David Gunner, May 1975  
Wellesley Historical Commission  
looking northeast at southwest facade and  
southeast facade

photo #1 42  
*Norfolk County*

APR 5 1976

(15)

MS 14

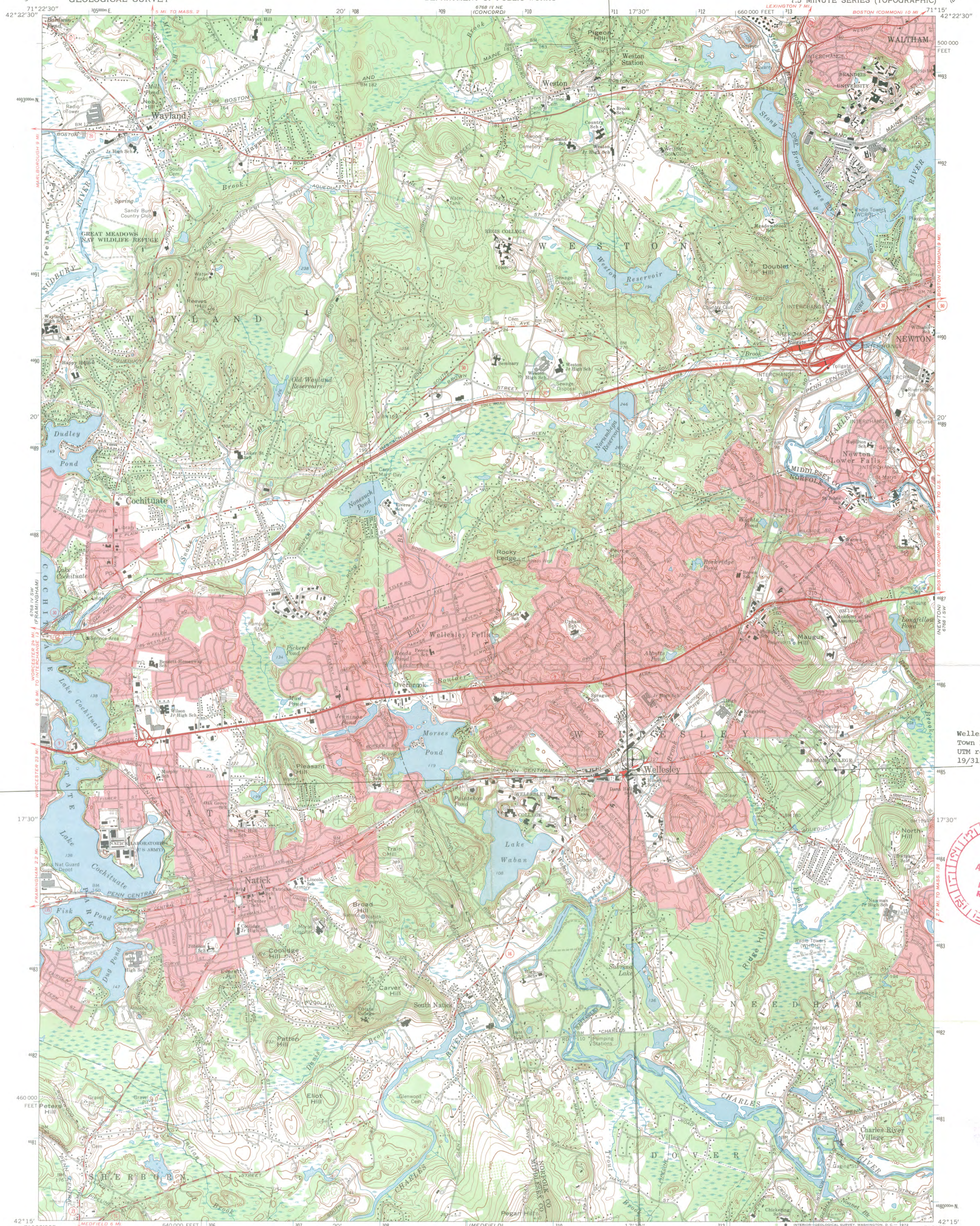


Wellesley Town Hall, Wellesley, MA  
David Gunner, May 1975  
Wellesley Historical Commission  
looking southwest at northeast and northwest  
elevations

photo #2 of 2

*Norfolk County.*

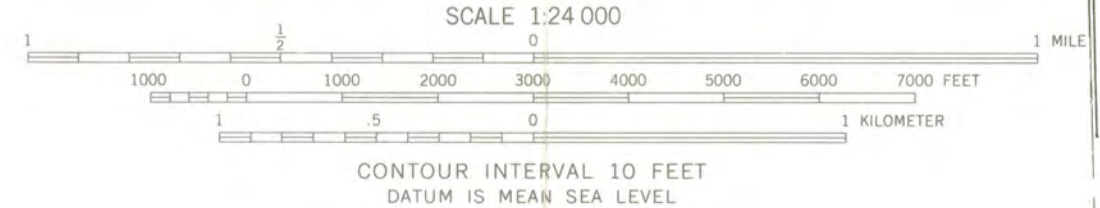
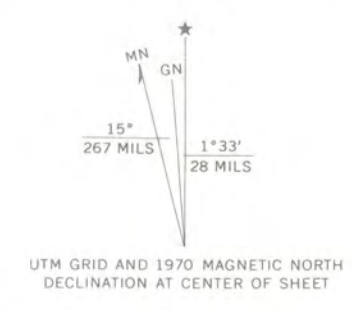
APR 5 1976



Wellesley, Wellesley  
Town Hall  
UTM reference:  
19/311050/4665180



Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey  
Control by USGS, USC&GS and Massachusetts Geodetic Survey  
Topography by planetable surveys 1940-1941  
Revised from aerial photographs taken 1969. Field checked 1970  
Polyconic projection, 1927 North American datum  
10,000-foot grid based on Massachusetts coordinate system,  
mainland zone  
1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks,  
zone 19, shown in blue  
Red tint indicates areas in which only landmark buildings are shown



ROAD CLASSIFICATION

Primary highway, hard surface	Light-duty road, hard or improved surface
Secondary highway, hard surface	Unimproved road
Interstate Route	U. S. Route
	State Route



THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS  
FOR SALE BY U. S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, WASHINGTON, D. C. 20242  
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

NATICK, MASS.  
N4215-W7115/7.5  
1970  
AMS 6768 IV SE-SERIES V814

ENTRIES IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

STATE MASSACHUSETTS

Date Entered APR 30 1978

<u>Name</u>	<u>Location</u>
Peirce, Peter, Store	Middleborough Plymouth County
Belcher, Jonathan, House	Randolph Norfolk County
Fernald, George P., House	Medford Middlesex County
Albree-Hall-Lawrence, House	Medford Middlesex County
Smith Alumnae Gymnasium	Northampton Hampshire County
Futnam, General Israel, House	Danvers Essex County
Dillingham House	Brewster vicinity Barnstable County
Wellesley Town Hall	Wellesley Norfolk County

Also Notified

- |                            |                                     |
|----------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Hon. Edward M. Kennedy     | State Historic Preservation Officer |
| Hon. Edward W. Brooke      | Mrs. Elizabeth R. Amadon            |
| Hon. Margaret M. Heckler   | Executive Director, Massachusetts   |
| Hon. James A. Burke        | Historical Commission               |
| Hon. Torbert H. MacDonald  | 294 Washington Street               |
| Hon. Silvio O. Conte       | Boston, Massachusetts 02108         |
| Hon. Michael J. Harrington |                                     |
| Hon. Gerry E. Studds       |                                     |

Regional Director, North Atlantic Region

5/4/76

MOIT:djb

PR

NEWS (7)  
SPRINGFIELD, MASS.  
D. 95,528

Mass. Hist.  
New England  
Newspaper

MAY 24 1976

## Historians Schedule Workshop

WESTFIELD — The Massachusetts Historical Commission will sponsor one of a series of spring regional preservation workshops on June 12 at Westfield State College.

Registration will begin at 9 a.m. followed by the sessions to open at 9:30 a.m. with Elizabeth Reed Amadon, executive director of the commission, delivering a speech.

Other participants will include Secretary of the State Paul Guzzi and representatives from the Office of State Planning, regional planning agencies and the New England Field Service Office of the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

Presentations will be given regarding local historic commissions, historic districts, inventory, archeology, National Register, grants, environmental impact statements and current preservation legislation. The afternoon session will consist of small group discussions on the technical aspects of the procedures.

The general public and all Westfield area historical commissions, societies and individuals interested in historical preservation are invited to the all-day session.

Serving as host will be the Westfield Historical Commission. Additional information is available from Barbara Bush of this city.

TOWNSMAN  
WELLESLEY, MASS.  
W. 2,300

Mass. Hist.

MAY 20 1976

New  
England  
Newspaper

## Town Hall accepted in National Register

Wellesley Town Hall at 525 Washington street, nominated for placement in the National Register of Historic Places by the Massachusetts Historical Commission, has been accepted, State Secretary Paul Guzzi, Chairman of the Commission, has been informed by Gary Everhardt, Director of the National Park Service in the United States Department of the Interior.

Significant architecturally as a focal point in Wellesley, it is closely identified with the political and cultural development of the town. The land on which the Town Hall is located was part of a 50-acre estate belonging to Dr. William Thomas Green Morton, who in 1846, first introduced the use of ether as an

anaesthetic. Ethern Cottage, Dr. Morton's home, is said to have stood on the site where the library was built in 1881.

Thirty acres of Dr. Morton's estate were bought in 1879 by Horatio H. Hunnewell, wealthy banker, railroad tycoon and important entrepreneur in Boston, who was married to Isabella Welles, daughter of another wealthy and prominent family in the area. When West Needham separated from Needham in 1881, and was incorporated as the Town of Wellesley, Hunnewell donated 10 acres from his estate to the new town, in recognition of the honor bestowed on his wife's family. He also built the library which now stands in the eastern portion of the present building and in 1883, added the Town Hall.

The donation of public buildings to a community by wealthy citizens was a fairly common occurrence in the last quarter of the 19th century and was indicative of the sense of the civic responsibility felt by the prominent citizens of the time.

The Town Hall architects, Shaw and Hunnewell, were known particularly for their work in Boston's Back Bay, but they carried their urban skills out to the country.

The two-story structure is executed in granite rubble and red sandstone. Alterations through the years have been minor and the building is essentially unchanged from its original appearance in 1883.

# NR Data Sheet

DATE: April 19, 1976  
Reviewer INITIALS: LEBORCOK

NR DOE  
4-30-76

NAME AS IT APPEARS IN FEDERAL REGISTER:

Wellesley Town Hall  
" " " and library  
see

OTHER NAMES:

LOCATION:

STREET & NUMBER 525 Washington St

CITY, TOWN Wellesley

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT 10

STATE Ma

VICINITY OF

COUNTY code  
Norfolk 021

Municipal

OWNER OF PROPERTY: (Circle)

PRIVATE STATE LOCAL GOV'T MUNICIPAL COUNTY OTHER

ADMINISTRATOR (underline)

FEDERAL (AGENCY NAME):

NPS REGION: (CIRCLE) N. ATLANTIC MID ATLANTIC SOUTHEAST MIDWEST  
SOUTHWEST ROCKY MOUNTAIN WEST PACIFIC NORTHWEST

## FEATURES:

INTERIOR Substantially intact-1  unknown - 4 - not applicable - 7  
EXTERIOR Substantially intact-2  unknown - 5 - not applicable - 8  
ENVIRONS Substantially intact-3  unknown - 6 - Not applicable - 9

- Interior, exterior, environs not intact - 0

CONDITION - EXCELLENT  GOOD  FAIR  
- DETERIORATED  RUINS  UNEXPOSED  Unexcavated   
- UNALTERED  ALTERED  Reconstructed  Excavated   
- ORIGINAL SITE  MOVED  Unknown

ACCESS - Yes-restricted  Yes-unrestricted  No access  Unknown

historic district? YES  NO

WITHIN NATIONAL REGISTER HISTORIC DISTRICT? YES  NO   
IF YES, NAME:

WITHIN NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK? YES  NO   
IF YES, NAME:

ADAPTIVE USE:

YES  NO  Saved? YES  NO

FUNCTION(S): (use vocabulary words)

then- library / town hall

now- town hall

## SIGNIFICANCE:

- ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC
- ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC
- AGRICULTURE
- ARCHITECTURE
- ART
- COMMERCE
- COMMUNICATIONS
- CONSERVATION
- ECONOMICS
- EDUCATION
- ENGINEERING
- EXPLORATION
- INDUSTRY
- INVENTION
- LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE
- LAW/Gov't/politics
- LITERATURE
- MILITARY
- MUSIC
- PHILOSOPHY
- POLITICS/GOVERNMENT
- RELIGION
- SCIENCE
- SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
- TRANSPORTATION
- OTHER (SPECIFY)
- entertainment
- health
- recreation
- settlement
- socio/cultural
- urban & commun planning

Claims

"first" YES  NO   
"oldest" YES  NO   
"only" YES  NO

ARCHITECTURAL STYLE:

G.R.

H.S.

3

architect/m.builder: Shaw Hummell

landscape/garden designer:

interior decorator:

engineer:

artist/artisan:

builder/contractor:

ETHNIC GROUP:

NAMES:

personal

(label role & appropriate date)

events

institutional

DATES:

DATE OF CONSTRUCTION (Specific date or 1/4 of century):

✓ 1881 1/4 - 1883

DATE(S) OF "MAJOR" ALTERATIONS:

HISTORICALLY SIGNIFICANT DATE(S):

SOURCE:

(OF NOMINATION)

PRIVATE

STATE

LOCAL GOV'T

MUNICIPAL

COUNTY

OTHER

FEDERAL AGENCY:

ACREAGE:

(to nearest tenth of an acre)

9

COMMENTS:

(include architectural information here)

Designed by prominent Boston architectural firm, The Wellesley Town Hall and Library displays Richardsonian inspired use of stone and is characteristic of 19th C eclecticism in use of details and of civic pride example of local beneficence.

SIGNIFICANCE:

(maximum two sentences)

2 story, granite rubble + red sandstone, rectangle, irregular red slate roof with copper trim, towers, stepped gables, clock, Palladian windows

ARCHITECTURAL STYLE:

G.R.

H.S.

(3)

architect/m.builder: Shaw → Hummell

landscape/garden designer:

interior decorator:

engineer:

artist/artisan:

builder/contractor:

ETHNIC GROUP:

NAMES:

personal

(label role & appropriate date)

events

institutional

DATES:

DATE OF CONSTRUCTION (Specific date or 1/4 of century):

1881-1883

DATE(S) OF "MAJOR" ALTERATIONS:

HISTORICALLY SIGNIFICANT DATE(S):

SOURCE:

(OF NOMINATION)

PRIVATE

STATE

LOCAL GOV'T

MUNICIPAL

COUNTY

Stone, 2 1/2 stories, irregular shape, red slate gabled and hipped roof sections, <sup>with stepped or curvilinear parapets</sup> with copper trim, interior end chimneys, front center entrance with flanking round-arched windows <sup>and clock in gable above</sup>, balustraded Ionic tetrastyle entrance portico <sup>with entablature</sup>, flanking round stair towers with narrow ~~sets~~ windows, and conical caps, <sup>and round dormers;</sup> belt courses, variously decorated stepped gable ends, clock face in front gable, round arched window with narrow balustraded balcony in side gable, porticoes. Chateausque and Richardsonian Romanesque elements. <sup>An</sup> Architectural focal point significant in <sup>town's</sup> cultural & political development of W. Chesley.