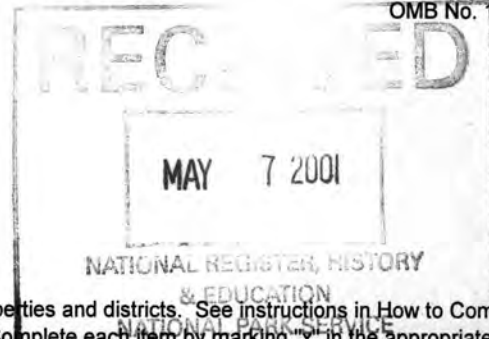


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form



This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "X" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name WARREN TOWN HALL

other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number 1 Main Street _____ not for publication

city or town Warren _____ vicinity _____

state Massachusetts code MA county Worcester code 027 zip code 01083

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this ☒ nomination
☐ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of
Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property
☒ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant
☐ nationally ☐ statewide ☒ locally. (☐ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Brona Simon May 1, 2001
Signature of certifying official/Title _____ Date
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer, Massachusetts Historical Commission

State or Federal agency and bureau _____

In my opinion, the property ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. (☐ See continuation sheet for additional Comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title _____ Date _____

State or Federal agency and bureau _____

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:

- ☒ entered in the National Register
☐ See continuation sheet.
- ☐ determined eligible for the
National Register
☐ See continuation sheet.
- ☐ determined not eligible for the
National Register
- ☐ removed from the
National Register
- ☐ other (explain): _____

[Signature] _____
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

Gordon H. Beall 6.14.01

Warren Town Hall
Name of Property

Worcester, MA
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply)

☐ private
☒ public-local
☐ public-State
☐ public-Federal

(Check only one box)

☒ building(s)
☐ district
☐ site
☐ structure
☐ object

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing

Noncontributing

1 building
sites
structures
objects
1 Total

Name of related multiple property listing

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

n/a

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

GOVERNMENT: town hall

SOCIAL: meeting hall

RECREATION and CULTURE: auditorium

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

GOVERNMENT: police station

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

LATE 19th and EARLY 20th CENTURY REVIVAL:

Italian Renaissance

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation brick

walls brick

roof slate shingles

other (entry portico and window trim): stone/

limestone

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

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National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 1

Warren Town Hall
Warren (Worcester), MA

Narrative Description

The Warren Town Hall is a Renaissance-inspired building constructed in 1900 on the ruins of the previous town hall (1879). It is built to the lot lines of a rectangular parcel at the southwest corner of Main Street and Maple Street. As the tallest and most dramatic structure in the town center, the Town Hall complements the open space of the town common it faces and its civic function is clearly distinct from the surrounding 19th century commercial storefronts and mill structures.

In general form, the building is a rectangular two-story, hipped-roof structure of cream-colored brick with a square bell tower anchoring the northeast corner and a one-story limestone entry portico on the east elevation. It is one of the most prominent and sophisticated public buildings in town and its 73-foot tower can be seen from all directions. (photo #1)

The placement of the current town hall was designed to strengthen the identity of the center village of Warren as the location of civic life. The town hall site had previously been occupied by a series of mills and small factories, the last of which was a sawmill that was heavily damaged by floods in 1870. The site selected for the Town Hall in 1878 relates directly to the nearby railroad station, the First Congregational Church, the Warren Public Library, and the adjacent cluster of downtown commercial blocks.

The original (1879) Town Hall on this site was a hip-roofed Romanesque Revival-style building of red brick and brownstone with arched windows and doors and towers at the north and south corners. Secondary gables accented the roofline along the front and side elevations. The Romanesque Revival building was heavily damaged by two fires in 1897 and 1900. (see illustration)

The shell of the old Town Hall was subsequently enlarged and extensively rebuilt in a style inspired by the Italian Renaissance under the direction of Dwight & Chandler, architects, of Boston. Henry Hyde Dwight, who was descended from the Dwight family of Warren and had close ties to the town, led the drive to rebuild and improve the Town Hall.

The shell of the damaged building was faced with buff or cream-colored brick, retaining the original fenestration pattern, and the building was extended 30 ft. toward the rear to make a new rectangular footprint of 115 by 55 feet. The roofline was simplified and supported by heavy trusses. The south tower and secondary gables were eliminated, and the north tower was entirely rebuilt from the second floor. As part of the 1900 reconstruction, the interior of the Town Hall was entirely rebuilt with a new arrangement of rooms and a generous use of oak trim. The new interior layout was designed to provide natural light

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Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 2

Warren Town Hall
Warren (Worcester), MA

and ventilation for all offices on the first floor and a large public auditorium on the second floor. The total project was expected to cost up to \$30,000.

The Town Hall resulting from the 1900 rebuilding is rectangular in plan with a prominent hipped roof of dark gray slate. The flat central portion of the roof hosts a metal ventilator and a small louvered cupola (also for ventilation).

The main elevations are pierced by pairs of 1/1 wood windows at the first floor, arrayed in a balanced but asymmetrical pattern to accommodate offices and secondary entrances. A band of limestone trim defines the second floor, where blind arches accommodate paired 1/1 windows, steel spandrel panels and semicircular fanlights. A horizontal band of cross-hatched brickwork adds visual interest to the second story, unifying the steel spandrels set into each window bay. All of the windows appear to date from the original construction (1900).

The northeast corner of the building is anchored by a rectangular 73-foot-tall campanile that springs from limestone arches at grade and rises above the upper roofline. The campanile, which features public clock faces set into all four sides of the shaft, terminates in a wooden balustrade and steps back to a partially enclosed belfry flanked by Doric columns. The belfry is topped by a pyramidal hipped roof in copper and terminates in a full-bodied eagle weathervane.

At street level, the main entrance to Town Hall is defined by a portico of Ohio freestone (limestone) in the Classical Revival style along the front (east) side of the building. The broad portico features a granite base and steps. Six limestone columns of the Doric order arrayed along the front of the portico are echoed by engaged pilasters that frame the oak center doors. The portico roof features a classically proportioned cornice with dentillated trim and scrolled modillion blocks supporting a modest overhang. A limestone balustrade in a simple geometric pattern rests directly above the portico. **(photo #2)**

Set under the classical portico, the main entry consists of a pair of oak four-panel doors with a single glass light set into each top panel. The doors are framed by engaged and reeded pilasters and by half-length 1/1 windows. The entry is surmounted by a rectangular transom that helps to light the main vestibule.

At the base of the tower, facing east, is a classical Roman arch supported by engaged and reeded pilasters. Within the arched recess is an unused entry accessed by four stone steps. The entry itself consists of a pair of modern flush-panel doors (now severely delaminated) and an arched transom. **(photos # 3,5)**

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Section number 7 Page 3

Warren Town Hall
Warren (Worcester), MA

Along the north elevation are two secondary entrances, both set into the plane of the wall. One entrance is defined by a low set of three granite steps leading to a modern aluminum and glass door. The other entry, marked by a decorative metal movie theater marquee suspended by chains from the wall of the building, consists of a pair of three-panel wooden doors. (photo #4)

Upon passing through the limestone portico, one enters through massive double doors a generous tiled vestibule with twin staircases rising at either side. The vestibule is paneled with golden oak; the staircases feature oak handrails and scrolled iron balustrades. A small office under the north staircase served for the payment of town bills and as a ticket office for auditorium events.

On the first floor, the plan consists of a long central corridor accessed directly from the vestibule. Offices are arrayed on both sides of the hallway to take advantage of the natural light and ventilation supplied by windows along the north and south elevations. The three original offices on the left side of the hallway were designated for assessors, selectmen, and school committee use, but featured rolling partitions that allowed the offices to be opened as one large space. All the entries and offices are trimmed in oak. The center corridor terminates at a short flight of stairs leading to a meeting room formerly known as Memorial Hall. The meeting room measures 28 by 42 feet with an adjacent kitchen and a utility staircase up to the main auditorium.

On the second floor, the two staircases open to a smaller lobby area with adjacent cloakrooms. Through paneled oak doors, one enters a large municipal auditorium with a proscenium stage at the far (west) end and dressing rooms backstage. The auditorium is a multi-purpose space with a flat hardwood-strip floor and no fixed seating. The rear third of the auditorium is fitted with a curved and elliptical balcony with stepped seating and iron balustrade. The balcony is accessed by a secondary staircase from the second floor lobby. Another tower provides access from the balcony to the campanile. Pairs of 1/1 windows are arrayed along each side of the auditorium, with each pair topped above the balcony level with a semicircular fanlight.

The basement of the rebuilt town hall featured a concrete floor to minimize dampness and three iron cells intended as a police lock-up and storage for town records. The basement also accommodated a new steam boiler and heating system.

The Town Hall has had only one significant modification to the 1900 design. The original 90-ft. campanile (1900) was topped by a steeply-pitched pyramidal roof with projecting eaves, supported by heavy cylindrical columns. A structural weakness detected in 1937 led to rebuilding of the tower at a cost of \$9,000. The height was reduced 17 ft. from the original 90 ft., the heavy columns were replaced by a wooden belfry enclosure, and the wide eaves of the pyramidal roof were trimmed back.

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Warren Town Hall
Warren (Worcester), MA

Henry Hyde Dwight and Howland Shaw Chandler apprenticed as draftsmen together in Boston in 1891, and established their own architectural practice by 1895. Their office was initially located at 6 Beacon Street (Tremont Place) and from 1901 at 31 Beacon Street. Throughout the partnership, Henry Hyde Dwight occupied a substantial home at 306 Commonwealth Avenue in Boston, while Howland Chandler boarded at 201 Brighton Avenue in the neighborhood of Allston. Neither architect is listed in the 1970 edition of Henry Withey's Biographical Dictionary of American Architects (Deceased), but both have been frequently confused with other Boston architects of the same period.

In some references, Henry Hyde Dwight has been confused with Benjamin Franklin Dwight (d. 1893), who designed several Boston warehouse and factory buildings, as well as theaters, country homes and mercantile blocks. Howland Shaw Chandler has been frequently confused with his contemporary Joseph Everett Chandler (1864-1945), a leader in the Colonial Revival movement who was responsible for the early restoration of the Old State House in Boston, the Paul Revere House and several properties owned by the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities. No direct connection with either of these other architects has yet been discovered.

The partnership of Dwight and Chandler seems to have lasted only until 1905, when Henry Hyde Dwight was no longer listed in the Boston city directories. The only evidence of Howland S. Chandler's later career is that he provided the photographs for a 1924 publication by Walter Rowlands, Curious Old Gravestones In and About Boston, although he was listed in directories as an architect into the 1930s.

The Warren Town Hall is one of the few works of the partnership positively identified so far. Other buildings attributed to Dwight and Chandler include two houses on Commonwealth Avenue in Boston (the J.G. Webster House, 306 Commonwealth Ave., erected 1896, and the L.A. Wright House, 482 Commonwealth Ave., erected 1898). Dwight and Chandler are also credited with the Charles Ward House in Brookline, Mass. (67 Colchester St., erected 1902), and with a single commercial structure, the Congress Street Trust Building (19-25 Congress St. in Boston, erected 1902). The latter building in particular shows a strong classical vocabulary that relates to the details of the Warren Town Hall.

The Town Hall is an important focal point in the center village of Warren. By its size and location, it dominates the town center and helps to balance the former railroad station directly across the town common.

The town common at the center of Warren is now somewhat reduced due to successive road widening and public parking. It is surrounded by a cluster of other notable buildings and types that define the center village:

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Warren Town Hall
Warren (Worcester), MA

Railroad Station (ca. 1890) – a one-story sandstone and granite building designed by Shepley, Rutan & Coolidge in the Richardsonian Romanesque style.

Commercial blocks (ca. 1880-1900) – a small row of two- and three-story vernacular brick blocks exhibiting decorative fronts in the late Victorian style, despite later alterations.

Warren Public Library (NR 2000) – a brownstone and granite building in the Romanesque Revival style with prominent arches and tower, carved filigree and even an owl representing the building's role as a repository of wisdom; designed by Worcester architect Amos Cutting.

Federated Church (formerly First Congregational Church, 1875) – a wood-frame building in the Victorian Gothic style, also designed by Cutting.

St. Paul's Roman Catholic Church (1896) – a highly detailed brick building in the ecclesiastical Gothic style, located on a small knoll just outside the village center.

The design of the new Warren Town Hall was influenced by a team of "outsiders" from the Boston area who, while clearly committed to the well-being of Warren, also sought to bring a degree of architectural sophistication to the town. If it had not been for their leadership in design and their significant financial support of the project, it is unlikely that such a building would have been erected out of the ruins of the previous town hall.

Unfortunately, the confidence and optimism expressed in the new Town Hall was not fully warranted. Within only a few decades, most of the mills in Warren had closed or moved south. Warren was left as a depressed former mill town and many of its buildings were neglected, demolished, or insensitively altered in an attempt to look more modern.

A growing concern for energy efficiency and a new awareness of the need for universal access combined to make the cost of maintaining and improving the Town Hall appear prohibitive. In 1991, when the Warren Elementary School moved to a new building on South Street, the former school building on High Street became available. Town offices were moved to the former High Street school in 1992 and Town Meetings were shifted to the former school gym.

Soon afterwards, the Warren Police Station, which already occupied two small rooms in the Town Hall, expanded into most of the empty offices. A handicapped-accessible ramp to the first-floor was installed near the south end through the double doors that formerly led to Memorial Hall.

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Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 6

Warren Town Hall
Warren (Worcester), MA

While the auditorium and second floor of the Town Hall are no longer in active use, the building has been adequately maintained. Warren's old Town Hall still retains a high degree of architectural and historical significance with only a modest degree of alteration.

Archaeological Description

While no prehistoric sites are recorded on the town hall property, sites may be present. Five sites are recorded in the general area (within one mile). Most known sites are located in similar locations as the town hall on terraced locales near the Quaboag River. Environmental characteristics of the Town Hall site include several locational criteria (slope, soil drainage, distance to wetlands) that are favorable indicators for many types of prehistoric sites. Prior to historic development, the parcel included a well drained, level to moderately sloping landscape near the confluence of Wigwam Brook and the Quaboag River. Since the mid-18th century, the property has been extensively developed by several industries and two successive town halls. Given the above information, the small size (approximately 1/3 acre) of the property and extensive historic industrial and municipal landuse of the property the potential for locating significant prehistoric survivals is low. Any prehistoric resources present on the property would probably lack integrity and significance.

A high potential exists for locating historic archaeological resources on the town hall property. Artifacts and structural evidence of facilities related to an iron furnace in operation by 1746 may survive behind the town hall site. After the iron furnace ceased operations, a fulling mill, scythe factory (1803) and satinet factory were successively located on the town hall site. The factory housing the above industries washed away during a flood caused by the breeching of the Wigwam Brook dam in 1837. A sawmill was subsequently built on the property by Horatio Nichols. A blacksmith and carriage shop also stood on the site. At the time the first town hall was constructed in 1879, the sawmill was abandoned and presumably demolished but the blacksmith and carriage shops probably remained standing. Structural evidence and industrial features, especially trash deposits, may survive from the long list of industries that occupied this site prior to the town halls. Potential for recovering intact evidence of later industries such as the sawmill may be higher. The potential for recovering intact evidence of waterpower related resources related to various industries may also be higher than other historic period resources. Below grade power canals leading to and from Wigwam Brook and the Quaboag River to industries located on the town hall property may survive below the town hall and the surrounding property. Structural evidence related to the original town hall construction may also survive, however, these resources may have been incorporated into the existing town hall during its rebuilding and enlargement.

(end)

Warren Town Hall

Name of Property

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- ☒ **A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- ☐ **B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- ☒ **C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- ☐ **D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- ☐ **A** owned by religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- ☐ **B** removed from its original location.
- ☐ **C** a birthplace or grave.
- ☐ **D** a cemetery.
- ☐ **E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- ☐ **F** a commemorative property.
- ☐ **G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- ☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- ☐ previously listed in the National Register
- ☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register
- ☐ designated a National Historic Landmark
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Worcester, MA

County and State

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE

COMMUNITY PLANNING AND GOVERNMENT

ENTERTAINMENT

POLITICS/GOVERNMENT

Period of Significance

1900-1951

Significant Dates

1900

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Cultural Affiliation

N/a

Architect/Builder

Henry Hyde Dwight and Howland Shaw Chandler

Primary location of additional data:

- ☒ State Historic Preservation Office
- ☐ Other State agency
- ☐ Federal agency
- ☒ Local government
- ☐ University
- ☐ Other

Name of repository:

Warren Public Library

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 1

Warren Town Hall
Warren (Worcester), MA

Historical Significance

The Warren Town Hall has played a key role in the political and community life of the town since its construction in 1900 on the ruins of a predecessor that had been destroyed in a fire. The present building and its predecessors have stood at the center of the town's civic life since its earliest days. At the same time, the evolution of the Town Hall reflects fundamental changes in the character of the town.

As one of the last in a series of great public buildings erected in Warren's center village, the Town Hall represents the strength and optimism of the community at a critical juncture. The choice to rebuild and even enlarge the town hall after the 1900 fire expressed a sense of pride and confidence. The choice of material - a blond brick set off by a fine gray limestone - further emphasized the more modern and even progressive outlook of the project's advocates at the dawn of the 20th century. The design of the front portico and the campanile show a sophisticated stylistic intent that surpasses the town's other major buildings.

The Town Hall has survived with very little modification and retains its integrity of design, location, materials, workmanship, feeling and association. It meets National Register Criterion A as an expression of Warren's Progressive optimism in the early 20th century. It also meets National Register Criterion C as the sole documented local example of the work of a minor Boston architectural firm, Dwight & Chandler.

I. Colonial Period: First Meetinghouse

Warren, a typical "second generation" Massachusetts town, was established as the town of Western in 1741, comprising portions set off from Brookfield, Brimfield, and Palmer. Brookfield, in Worcester County, provided the largest segment, which explains why Western remained in that county, although the other contributing towns were located in old Hampshire (now Hampden) County.

The reason given for the separation was the conventional one that distance made it burdensome to attend vital meetings in the older towns. Brookfield, in particular, was a sprawling town. It had not taken long for the problem to surface, since the first permanent English-speaking colonists had moved into the area that became Western only about a decade before the petition for the new town was presented.

One of the first orders of business for the new town was to locate and erect a meetinghouse, which would customarily serve both religious and municipal functions. The town of Western was characterized by widely dispersed farmsteads, with no distinct center. Since the reason for forming the town had been to

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Section number 8 Page 2

Warren Town Hall
Warren (Worcester), MA

reduce travel time to attend meetings, it became an important consideration to locate the meetinghouse in the geographical center of town. This was determined to be on Comey's Hill, near the intersection of present Washington and Southbridge streets, and a lot was purchased there in late 1742.

A committee was appointed in May 1743 to construct the meetinghouse. The structure was built to dimensions of 45 x 35 feet and 20 feet from sill to plate. With town meetings held to approve each stage of the process, construction proceeded at a deliberate pace. The building was not considered complete until 1749, although meetings probably took place there earlier. Meetings were held in private homes until the meetinghouse was completed. Additional seating was added to accommodate new arrivals in town in 1751. This first meetinghouse served through the Revolutionary period and remained in use until 1797.

II. Federal Period: Second Meetinghouse

Agitation to replace the meetinghouse began soon after the settling of a new minister in 1792. Although specific complaints were not recorded, it seems that the building, then less than 50 years old, had fallen into grave disrepair. A contentious debate over the location of the replacement building raged for several years and was not resolved until 1795. The site chosen was at the lower (west) end of the Common, and the building was completed in time to hold Thanksgiving services there in 1797.

The statewide movement toward separation of civic and ecclesiastical functions became acute in the 1820s and prompted new arrangements in Western. In 1828, after refusing to pay the minister's salary for several years, the town granted the Congregational Society ownership of the meetinghouse. The town was allowed to continue using a portion of the building for civic meetings. Meanwhile, the Universalists had split from the established church and in 1821 constructed the first church edifice in the town built by a denomination other than the Congregationalists.

Due to a boundary adjustment, the second meetinghouse was still located near the geographical center of the town. Gradually, the town's commercial and residential center grew up around the meetinghouse. Fortuitously, this location was also near the Quaboag River. This stream and its tributaries offered considerable waterpower potential. Small-scale, usually seasonal, manufacturing to serve local needs had begun in the mid 18th-century, and industrial development accelerated rapidly in the next century. Because of the fortunate location of the meetinghouse, industrial growth did not result in a shift away from the existing center, as occurred in many other New England towns.

Western was changing fundamentally in the 1830s, evolving from a dispersed agricultural town to an industrial town with a commercial center. The change of the town's name from Western to Warren (after

(continued)

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Section number 8 Page 3

Warren Town Hall
Warren (Worcester), MA

General Joseph Warren, a hero of the War for Independence and a casualty of the Battle of Bunker Hill) in 1834 symbolized the profound transition. (The choice of Warren seems to be purely honorific, as no direct ties between the Revolutionary patriot and the town have been discovered.) Although the new name was not adopted as a deliberate break with the past, it nevertheless represented the forces of modernization that were reshaping the town. The reason given for the change was the increasing confusion of the mail with the town of Weston, nearer to Boston, which in the prevailing Yankee pronunciation would have sounded virtually the same. However, this concern in and of itself testified to the irreversible shift from rural isolation, as the problem could hardly have arisen with the scanty and irregular mails of the 18th Century.

Another oddity associated with the change of name is that the old designation of Western was abandoned just before the Western Railroad entered the town. Warren, as it had become, was served by the extension from Worcester to Springfield, opened in 1839. Bearing the same name as the east-west trunk railroad of Massachusetts might have conveyed some coincidental benefit to the town of Western.

Rapid population growth followed in the wake of the Western Railroad. Prior to that, Warren's population increase had been relatively sluggish compared to many other Worcester County towns. From 1800 to 1840 Warren's population grew from 979 to only 1290, but in the next 40 years it exploded to 3889. Much of this increase was due to new industry, as the agricultural population had probably reached the maximum that could be sustained.

The earlier shift of the town center to the banks of the Quaboag proved fortuitous again. Since railroads customarily follow river valleys, Warren was spared the painful relocation to the vicinity of the railroad that many New England towns experienced. Warren's civic leaders reinforced the relationship with the railroad company by transferring a portion of the Common as a site for the depot.

Possibly in anticipation of the railroad's arrival, an effort was launched to improve the Common. One aspect of this campaign was the removal of the meetinghouse to an elevated location on present Winthrop Terrace, a short distance to the northwest. (The building survived in this location until 1874, when it was destroyed by fire. It was replaced in the following year by a church that is still extant.)

III. Early Industrial Period: An Interlude of Municipal Expediency

When the Congregational church was moved from town land in 1837, the town lost any formal claim on it. Possibly the town could have arranged to continue holding meetings in the church, but that was not done. Instead, Warren entered a 40-year period in which civic functions were carried on in a variety of locations, some of which were private. This lapse into expediency is surprising in view of Warren's visible growth in population and affluence, and is attributable in part to dissension within the town.

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Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 4

Warren Town Hall
Warren (Worcester), MA

Beginning in 1837, town meetings and other large public gatherings were held in Union Hall, on the property of Asahel Fairbank, at the corner of Main and River streets. This building burned, and meetings were then held in another Union Hall, above the Union Store on Main Street, owned by Samuel D. Stoddard and later known as Fairbanks & Newton.

Seeking more permanent accommodations, the selectmen in 1855 proposed to locate a new town hall on the Common. Once again, the contentiousness that had plagued earlier deliberations about the subject surfaced. "Town meeting after town meeting followed in quick succession, and Warren was stirred to its greatest depth. The town house plan failed and the common was graded and ornamented in the style to be seen at present [1874]." (Darling, 20)

After the failure of this initiative, the town purchased a private academy, Quaboag Seminary, located on Furnace (later Factory) Hill, and used the school for town meetings, as well as educational purposes, between 1856 and 1869. From 1870 to 1878 Warren again resorted to private accommodations, holding meetings in Brigham's Hall, a new building at the foot of Southbridge Street.

IV. Late Industrial Period: First Town Hall

In 1878, with Warren approaching its 19th century peak of prosperity, the lack of a permanent town hall at last became unacceptable. Once again the choice of location was contentious in the town. A new factor in the debate (though it may have been present to some degree in the 1855 iteration) was the rise of the mill village of West Warren. This community, located on the Quaboag about two miles west of the center village, grew rapidly in the mid 19th-century. Even though the villages both emphasized manufacturing, their industrial bases differed. West Warren was centered around a sprawling cotton mill, while the older village stressed manufacture of machinery and other metalworking, as well as boot and shoe making.

The center village contained cotton and woolen factories as well, but in general the jobs it provided were more skilled and better paid. The industries there derived predominantly from local capital; whereas the West Warren complex, although it had local origins, was controlled by outside capitalists. Industrialization had a profound impact on the town's population makeup. Some Irish had arrived with the coming of the Western Railroad. Later, factory jobs attracted French Canadians and then Poles, so that Warren changed from a town almost exclusively Protestant and Yankee to one that was predominantly Roman Catholic and "ethnic."

Based on contemporary accounts, the dispute over the location of the town hall arose almost entirely from parochial factors, rather than any discernible ethnic, class, or economic considerations. West Warren

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Section number 8 Page 5

Warren Town Hall
Warren (Worcester), MA

residents argued against spending a large amount of money on a town hall for the benefit of the "center folks." The issue was thrashed out at a long and divisive town meeting on March 16, 1878, which resulted in the approval of a new town hall in the center village by the relatively narrow margin of 246-199. Some opponents remained unreconciled and threatened to continue the battle on legal and financial grounds.

The site chosen lay at the center of activity in Warren's center village. It was one block from the Common and the depot, with the venerable Hitchcock tavern between. The major commercial establishments of the town nearly surrounded the site, with stores adjacent to the south and west and across Main Street.

The site had a history of industrial use through the 19th century. Wigwam Brook, a small stream but one possessing some waterpower potential, entered the Quaboag alongside the property. Both waterways had been dammed nearby to provide industrial power. Iron had been manufactured at a furnace on the Quaboag just behind the town hall site, perhaps as early as 1746. This was succeeded by a fulling mill and in 1803 by a scythe factory, owned by Daniel and David Batchellor. Later, Rufus Bacon's satinet factory occupied the site. These operations were apparently conducted on the land later occupied by the town hall.

The factory was washed away in a flood caused by the breaking of the dam on Wigwam Brook in 1837. The property then came into possession of Horatio Nichols, who erected a sawmill on it. Nichols sold it to Jephtha Bacon, who subsequently sold it to Asahel Fairbank, a prominent Warren entrepreneur. In addition to the sawmill, a blacksmith shop and a carriage shop also stood on the site. Though the sawmill, at least, had been abandoned, some of these structures probably remained standing until the construction of the town hall began.

Asahel Fairbank conveyed a portion of the property extending from Main Street to Wigwam Brook and between Maple Street and property belonging to W.B. Ramsdell to the town of Warren on March 20, 1878, for \$2,500. (The transfer was signed only a few days after the town meeting had somewhat grudgingly approved the project.) This real estate was part of the \$16,000 total cost of the town hall. The largest component was the \$10,350 paid to the general contractor, E.W. Shattuck. A special town meeting approved paying for the project with a \$14,000 loan, thereby avoiding further dispute over a dramatic increase in the annual tax assessment. The laying of the first foundation stone took place on May 29, 1878, and construction proceeded rapidly, with the building being dedicated February 5, 1879. Local stone was used in the foundation, as George C. Bridges donated the material in return for having his quarry opened.

The new building performed several important functions. Town meetings were held in a large hall on the upper floor, while town offices occupied the lower floor. The public library, chartered in 1876, also occupied space on the first floor. In addition to the commercial establishments adjacent to Town Hall, some businesses were located in the building itself.

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 6

Warren Town Hall
Warren (Worcester), MA

V. Early Modern Period: A Rebuilt Town Hall

Renting commercial space in the Town Hall probably helped defray the cost of municipal maintenance, but may also have added an element of risk. A fire began on Sunday morning, October 31, 1897, in a paint and wallpaper store in the Fairbanks block across Main Street. The fire also destroyed the Quaboag block directly behind the Town Hall. The town building, though severely damaged, with the roof falling in and the basement flooded, remained standing.

The building was repaired, probably in short order, as a meat and provisions market was located in it in April 1898. On June 13, 1900 another fire broke out, this time beginning in a millinery shop in Town Hall. Although it lasted only about an hour, this blaze damaged the Town Hall more severely. The extent of the damage necessitated major rebuilding, but the insurance coverage was inadequate.

The outlook for the building remained uncertain until, at a town meeting on September 11, 1900, Henry Hyde Dwight, a Boston architect and a descendant of an early Warren family, made a compelling proposal. Dwight, who expressed severe and detailed criticisms of the building's original design, offered to make certain contributions to the rebuilding if the town accepted his plans for remodeling. The citizens responded enthusiastically, agreeing to pay \$15,000 above the insurance settlement, and the Town Hall was reopened in 1902. Additional land on the site of the destroyed Quaboag Block was granted to the town for a nominal fee by prominent industrialists William A. Jenks and Wilson H. Fairbank. This acquisition permitted the enlargement of the original town hall to accommodate an auditorium, as Dwight had requested. The remodeled hall restored Warren's pride and testified to the town's confidence at the start of the 20th century.

The district around the Common in the center village had become even more conspicuously the civic and monumental heart of the town, as evidenced by the construction of a Civil War soldiers' monument, the Public Library (NRIND 2000) and a new railroad depot, designed by the noted firm Shepley, Rutan & Coolidge. These imposing structures, all dedicated within the space of one year (1890-91), create an impressive and harmonious unity. Another contributing element, the Hitchcock Memorial Fountain, had been added several years earlier. Collectively, these structures, emblematic of Warren's late 19th century climax of prosperity, defined the character of the center. Warren had become by that time an urban place, with three-quarters of the town population living in the two villages in 1896.

Despite changes, the core of the village today still retains an overall late-19th century appearance. Insofar as it is a 19th century building, Town Hall contributes to this aggregation. Somewhat paradoxically, however, the modifications, with the resulting simplified and eclectic style, make the building seem less

(continued)

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8 Page 7

**Warren Town Hall
Warren (Worcester), MA**

dated. Its distinctive appearance allows it to adapt to changes in its surroundings while maintaining an impression of functionality.

In the nearly 100 years since the remodeling was completed, the Town Hall has served an astonishing variety of functions. It retained its primary municipal function as the setting for regular and special town meetings, voting, and town offices until 1991-92. Beyond this, the number and diversity of activities conducted there make it apparent that the building served in effect as a community center. It was used for high school graduation ceremonies, proms and receptions until 1969 and also for alumni dinners and reunions. Civic or charitable activities such as blood drives, first aid training, health clinics, parties for children or seniors sponsored by the police and firemen, and free clothing distribution have been held there at one time or another. The building also housed the local telephone exchange during an earlier phase of telephone technology.

As Henry Hyde Dwight intended when he insisted on incorporating a stage in his proposal, Town Hall has served as a cultural center of the community at various levels ranging from elementary school plays to Shakespeare festivals. Traditional entertainments such as minstrel shows, grange fairs, and Chautauquas have been held there over the years, as well as charitable bazaars and rummage sales.

Wartime, with its heightened emphasis on community cohesion, brought a variety of unusual activities to Town Hall. Among the most notable were a Bundles for Britain ball during World War II, USO dances, and rallies during both world wars. Airplane spotters took advantage of the hall's tower to conduct their mission.

Much of the history of the present building has been played out against a background of gradual decline in Warren. The population of the town peaked in 1890. Thereafter, although some new industries arrived, they were overbalanced by the departures. The region-wide migration of the textile industry to the South was a severe blow. As a result, the population of the town declined significantly from its 1890 peak, although it never fell below 3000. Only in recent years, due to the general expansion of suburban development throughout the region, has the population of Warren recovered to its 1890 level.

Town Hall retained its original function until 1991-92, when most municipal offices and meetings were moved. The only major physical change to the building took place in 1937, when an apparent structural weakness was corrected by shortening the tower by 17 feet. This alteration does not seem to have had a harmful effect on the overall proportions. At present the building is mostly vacant and its future use is under active discussion.

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 8

Warren Town Hall
Warren (Worcester), MA

Archaeological Significance

Historic archaeological resources described above have the potential to provide detailed information on Warren's growth in the 18th and 19th centuries as it evolved from a dispersed agricultural town to an industrial town with a commercial center. Additional documentary research combined with archaeological survey and testing can contribute important information on the industrial past of the town that no longer survives today. Any archaeological resources that survive from the various industries on the town hall site may contribute significant information relating to the importance of that industry to the town's economy during the mill's period of operation. Important information might also survive that contributes technological information relating to textile and iron manufacture and sawmill operations. Historical and archaeological studies may also contribute information indicating the extent to which waterpower facilities were present with the various industries at the site. Most of the industries on and near the town hall property were powered by waterpower from Wigwam Brook and/or the Quaboag River. No waterpower features (mill canals, wheel pits, sluiceways etc.) have currently been identified for the property. Archaeological resources might also contribute information relating to patterns of reuse on the town hall property. Industrial operations may have reused or adapted buildings and waterpower systems from earlier industries on the property. While much of the earlier town hall (1879) was incorporated into the existing and enlarged building, archaeological resources could exist that can contribute architectural and construction details for the original structure. This information and artifactual evidence may contribute further details related to the political and community life of Warren.

(end)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 9 Page 1

Warren Town Hall
Warren (Worcester), MA

Section 9: Bibliography

Buck, Sylvia G. Warren: A Town in the Making 1741-1991. Warren: Warren Arts Council, 1994.
Cutter, Eunice P. "Warren" chapter in History of Worcester County Boston: C.F. Jewett & Co., 1879.

Darling, Rev. Olney I. History of Warren, Massachusetts. West Brookfield, MA: Thomas Morey, 1874.

Larkin, Jack. "Three Layers of Warren's Past, 1741-1900" (A Companion to the Historic Preservation Survey). Warren Historical Commission, 1981.

Stebbins, Solomon B. An Account of the One Hundred Fiftieth Anniversary of the Town of Warren. Ware, MA: Charles W. Eddy, 1891.

Warren Historical Commission. Newspaper clippings and historical files in Warren Public Library.

(end)

Warren Town Hall
Name of Property

Worcester, MA
County, State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property less than one acre

UTM References See continuation sheet.

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

1. 18 Zone	731520 Easting	467700 Northing	3. Zone	Easting	Northing
2. Zone	Easting	Northing	4. Zone	Easting	Northing
See continuation sheet					

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Larry Lowenthal/Gregory Farmer, consultants with Betsy Friedberg, NR Director, MHC
organization Massachusetts Historical Commission date April 2001
street & number 220 Morrissey Boulevard telephone 617-727-8470
city or town Boston state MA zip code 02125

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name Town of Warren, MA
street & number P.O. Box 609 telephone 413-436-5701
city or town Warren state MA zip code 01083

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 10 Page 1

Warren Town Hall
Warren (Worcester), MA

Section 10: Verbal Boundary Description

The building occupies a lot of about 0.32 acre on the southwest corner of Main and Maple streets in downtown Warren. The lot comprises an irregular rectangle, extending about 170 feet on Main Street, 80 feet on Maple, and 160 feet on the southern border, formerly defined by Wigwam Brook. The western dimension of about 90 feet parallels the Quaboag River but does not border it.

Boundary Justification

The property encompasses the entire lot on which Town Hall stands and which is owned by the Town of Warren.

(end)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places

Continuation Sheet

Section number _____ Page _____

Warren Town Hall
Warren (Worcester), MA

Photographs

Taken by Lawrence Lowenthal
August 1999

1. Front façade, looking NW from Common
2. Portico, facing N
3. Front façade, facing N
4. Main Street façade, rear elevation, facing S
5. Base of tower, Main Street façade, facing SE

(end)



(1270) TOWN HALL, WARREN, MASS.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY Warren Town Hall
NAME:

MULTIPLE
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: MASSACHUSETTS, Worcester

DATE RECEIVED: 5/07/01 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 5/23/01
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 6/08/01 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 6/22/01
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 01000650

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 6.14.01 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

Entered in the
National Register

RECOM./CRITERIA _____

REVIEWER _____ DISCIPLINE _____

TELEPHONE _____ DATE _____

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

Recommendation: SLR Return

Action: SLR Return None

DOCUMENTATION ISSUES—DISCUSSION SHEET

STATE NAME: MA COUNTY NAME Worcester RESOURCE NAME Warren Town Hall

REFERENCE NO. 01-650 MULTIPLE NAME

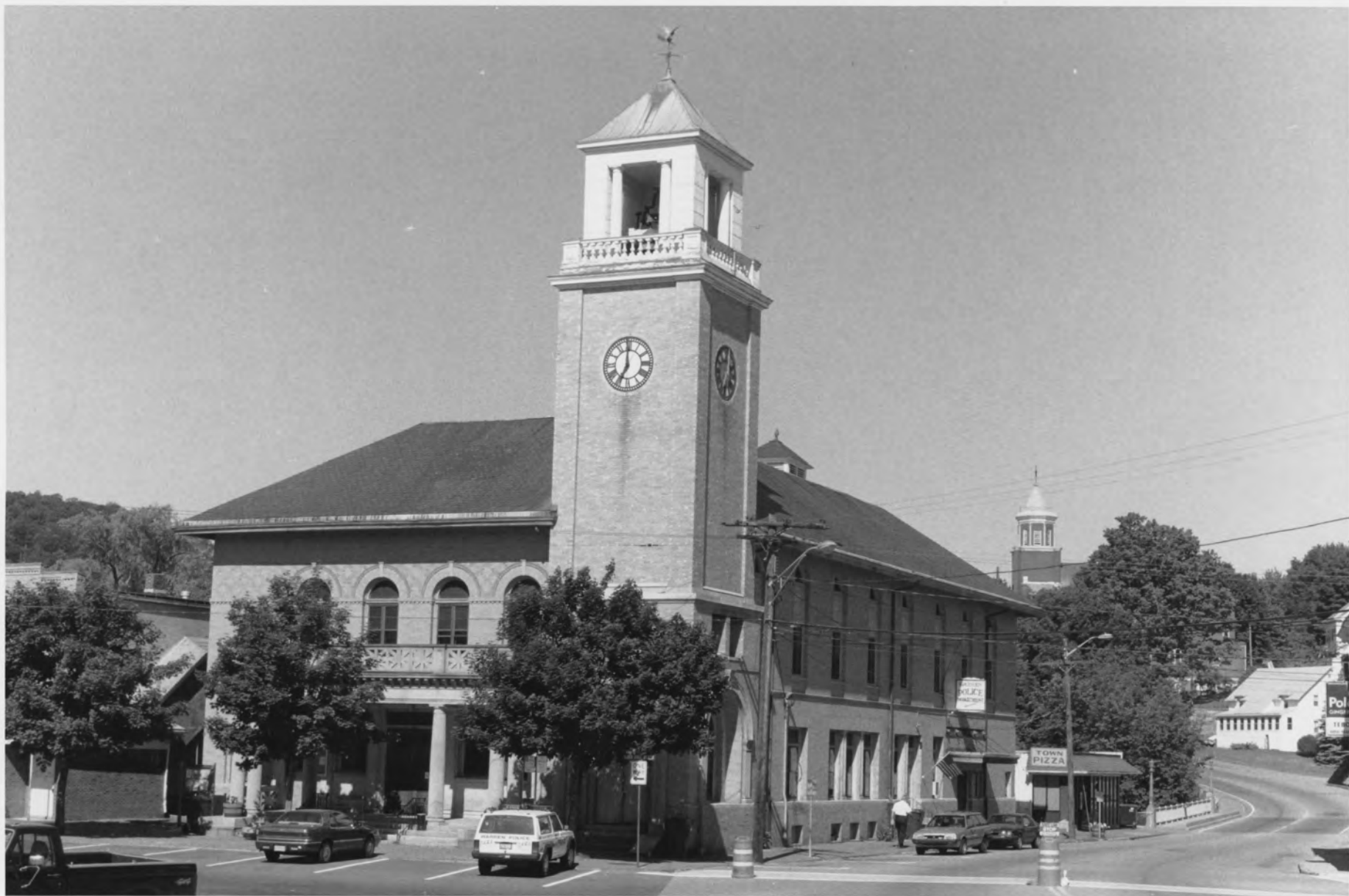
Solution: Spoke w/ Phil Berger. He's checking into the zone boundaries. Since USGS map has zone 19 and state relied on Map NO SLR Needed EB 6/15/01

PROBLEM: Patrick. The ~~map~~ zone for the UTM is incorrect. The USGS map says 19 but the zone changes over to 18 just west of Spencer. SLR need to correct zone to Road 18. (we have checked this) code 18

RESOLUTION:

SLR: Yes No

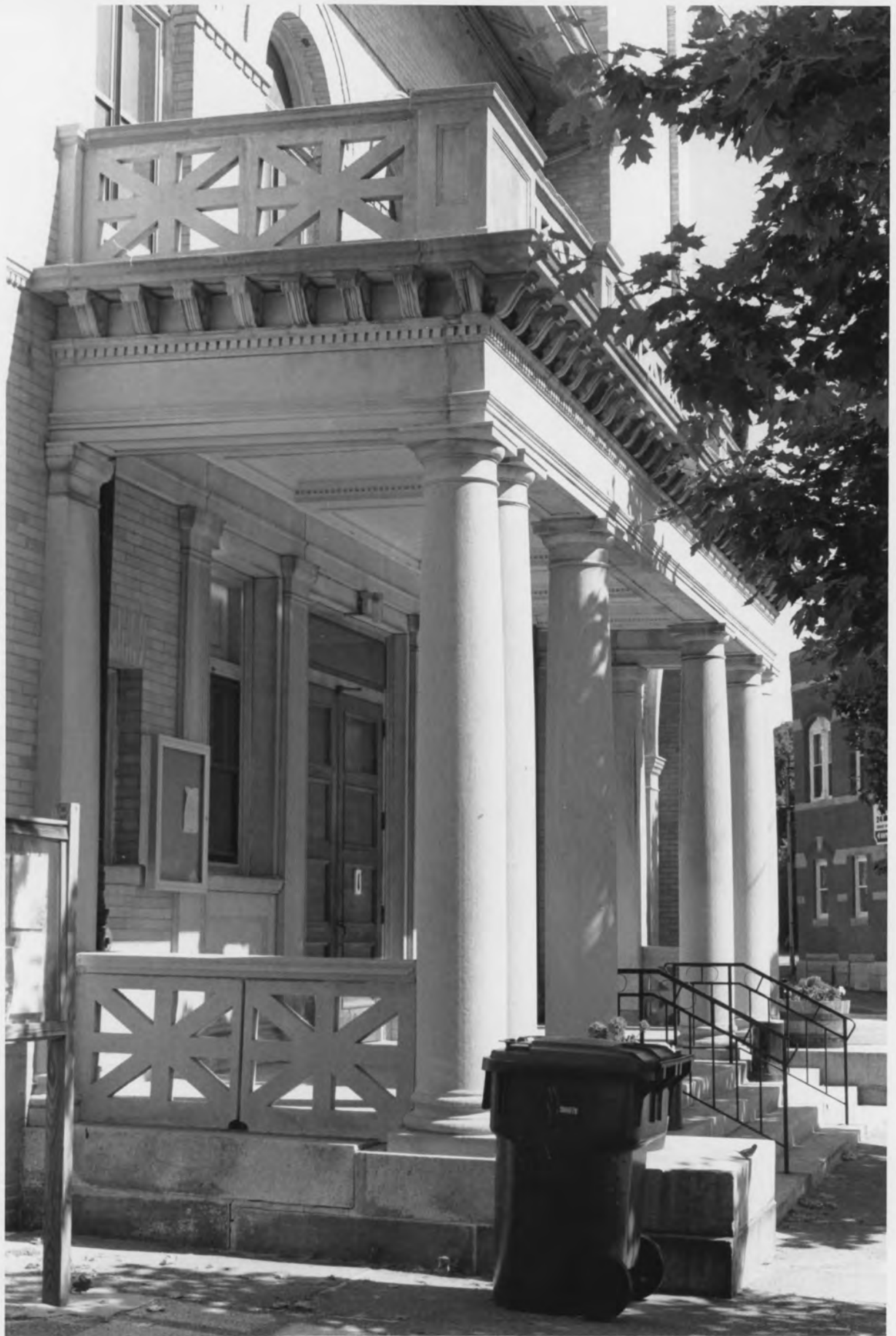
DATABASE CHANGE:



#1

Warren, MA
Town Hall
from East

Aug 1999



#2

Warren MA
Town Hall
front Portico

Aug 1999



3

Warren, MA
Town Hall
from SE

Aug 1999



4

Warren, MA
Town Hall
NW Corner

Aug 1999



#5

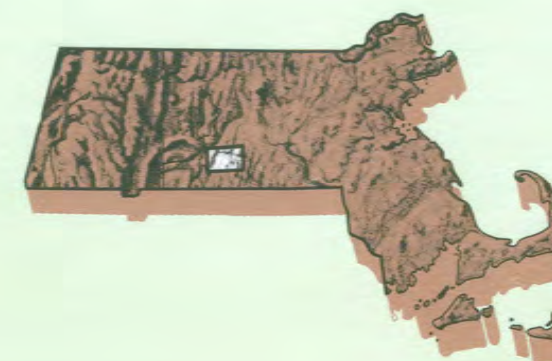
Warren, MA
Town Hall
NE Corner

Aug 1999

Warren

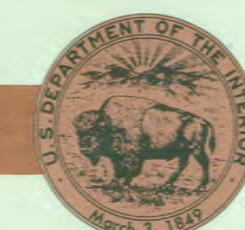
MASSACHUSETTS

1:25 000-scale metric
topographic map



7.5 X 15 MINUTE QUADRANGLE
SHOWING

- Contours and elevations in meters
- Highways, roads and other manmade structures
- Water features
- Woodland areas
- Geographic names



GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

1982

Produced by the United States Geological Survey in cooperation with Massachusetts Department of Public Works

Control by USGS, NOS/NOAA, and Massachusetts Geodetic Survey
Compiled by photogrammetric methods from aerial photographs taken 1980. Field checked 1981. Map edited 1982
Supersedes Warren and East Brookfield 1:25,000-scale maps dated 1969

Projection and 1000-meter grid, zone 19: Universal Transverse Mercator

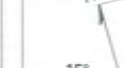
10,000-foot grid ticks based on Massachusetts coordinate system, maintained since 1927 North American Datum
To place on the predicted North American Datum 1983 move the projection lines 6 meters south and 39 meters west as shown by dashed corner ticks

There may be private inholdings within the boundaries of the National or State reservations shown on this map

CONTOUR INTERVAL 3 METERS
NATIONAL GEODETIC VERTICAL DATUM OF 1929
CONTROL ELEVATIONS SHOWN TO THE NEAREST 0.1 METER
OTHER ELEVATIONS SHOWN TO THE NEAREST 0.5 METER

THIS MAP COMPLES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS

FOR SALE BY U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY
DENVER, COLORADO 80225, OR RESTON, VIRGINIA 22092

CONVERSION TABLE		DECLINATION DIAGRAM		ADJOINING MAPS			
Meters	Feet			1	2	3	
1	3.2808						
2	6.5617						
3	9.8425						
4	13.1234						
5	16.4042						
6	19.6850						
7	22.9659						
8	26.2467						
9	29.5275						
10	32.8084						
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To convert feet to meters multiply by 0.3048		Diagram is approximate					

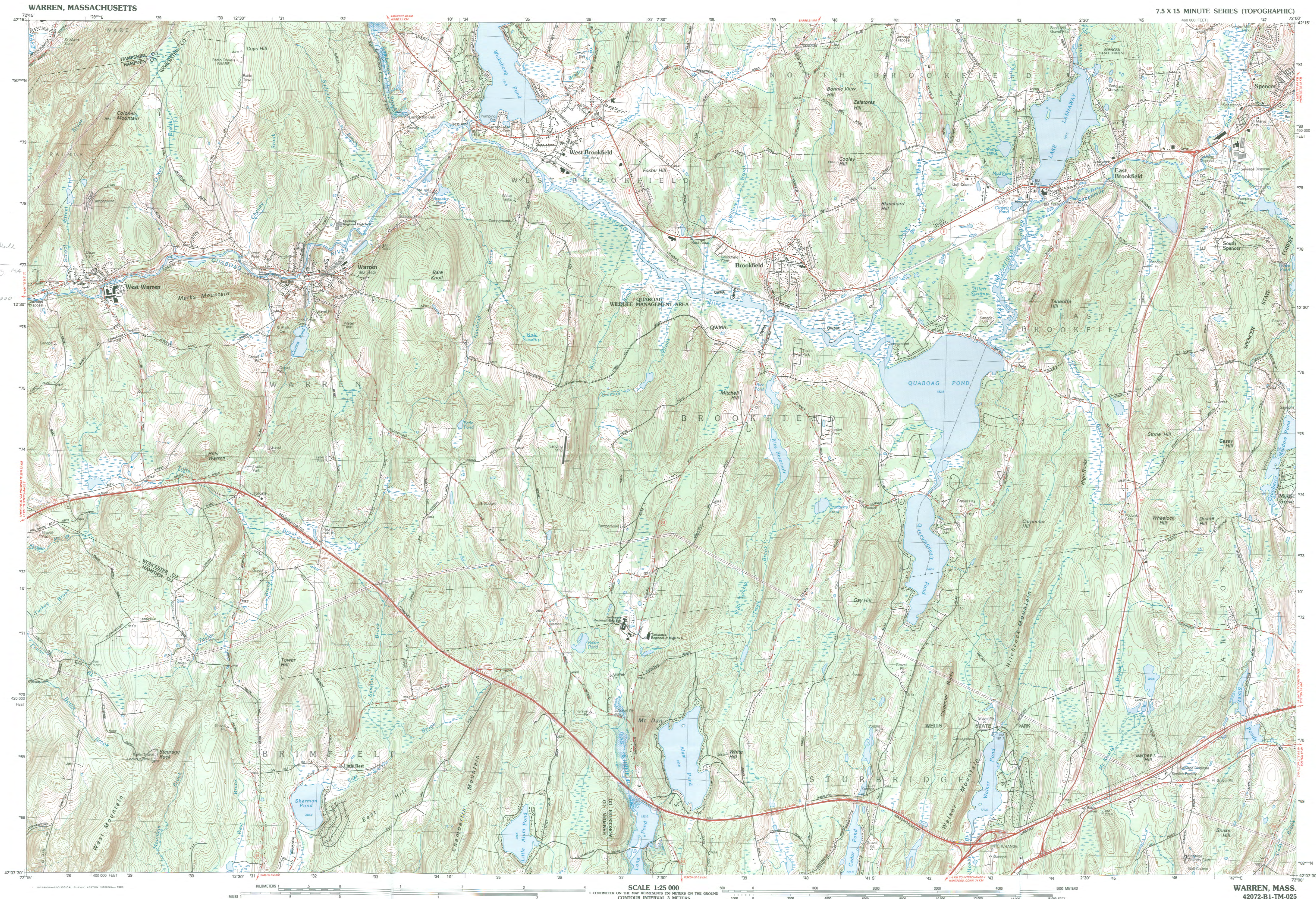
ISBN 0-607-23427-X



Topographic Map Symbols

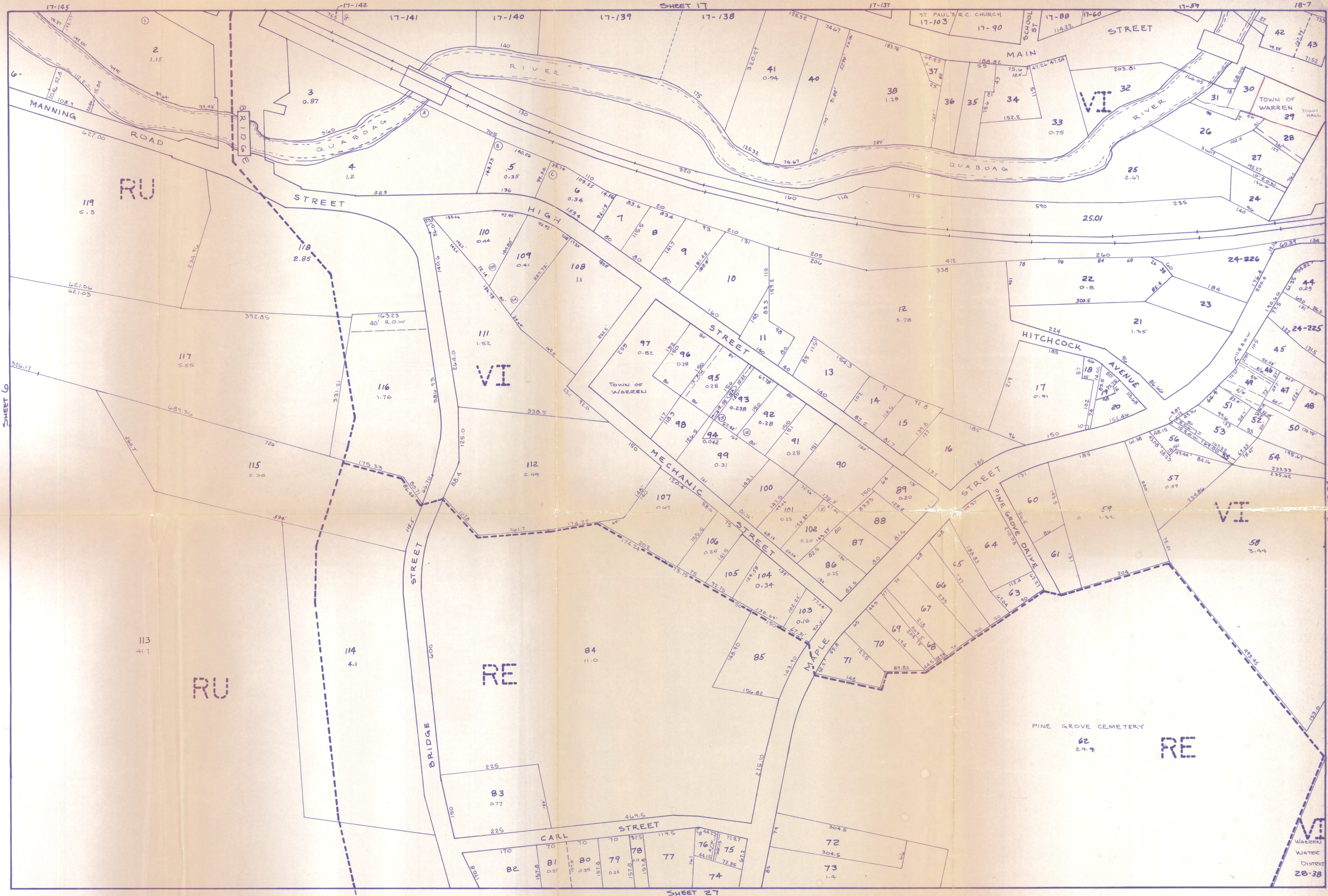
Primary highway, hard surface	
Secondary highway, hard surface	
Light-duty road, hard or improved surface	
Unimproved road, trail	
Route marker: Interstate, U. S. State	
Railroad: standard gage; narrow gage	
Bridge: drawbridge	
Footbridge; overpass; underpass	
Build-up area: only selected landmark buildings shown	
Fence or field line	
Power transmission line, located tower	
Dam; dam with lock	
Cemetery; grave	
Campground; picnic area; U. S. National monument	
Windmill; water well; spring	
Mine shaft; prospect; adit or cave	
Control: horizontal station; vertical station; spot elevation	
Contours: index; intermediate; supplementary; depression	
Disturbed surface: strip mine, levee, sand	
Perennial lake and stream; intermittent lake and stream	
Rapids, large and small; falls, large and small	
Submerged marsh; marsh, swamp	
Land subject to controlled inundation; woodland	
Scrub; mangrove	
Orchard; vineyard	

A pamphlet describing topographic maps is available on request



WARREN, MASS.
42072-B1-TM-025

1982



NOTICE:
 THESE MAPS WERE DERIVED
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 OCCUPATION FOR THE SOLE
 PURPOSE OF TAX ASSESS-
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 DELINEATION.

scale: 1"=100'
 0 1 2 3
 inches
 REVISED AND REPRINTED BY:
 CARTOGRAPHIC ASSOCIATES, INC.
 LITTLETON, NEW HAMPSHIRE 03561

BOARD OF ASSESSORS WARREN Massachusetts

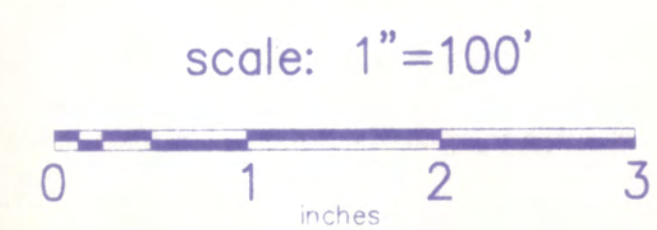
ZONING LINE ---
 RU _____ RURAL
 RE _____ RESIDENTIAL
 VI _____ VILLAGE

TAX MAP
 prepared by
 CONLON ASSOCIATES
 Westfield, Massachusetts
 1982

Revised To
 January 1, 1995



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RE. _____ RESIDENTIAL
VI. _____ VILLAGE

TAX MAP
prepared by
CONLON ASSOCIATES
Westfield, Massachusetts
1982

Revised To
January 1, 1995



BOARD OF SELECTMEN
CHARLES E. SHEPARD MUNICIPAL BUILDING
48 HIGH STREET
WARREN, MASSACHUSETTS 01083

November 15, 1999

RECEIVED

NOV 18 1999

MASS. HIST. COMM

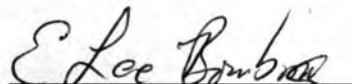
Betsy Friedberg, National Register Director
Massachusetts Historical Commission
220 Morrissey Blvd
Boston, Massachusetts 02125

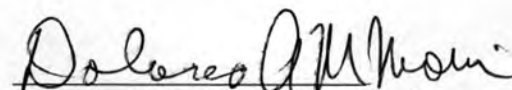
Dear Ms. Friedberg:

The Board of Selectmen was pleased to learn that the nomination for the Warren Town Hall to the National Register will soon be considered by the Massachusetts Historical Commission.

Our Town Hall has a rich history, and has continued to be a landmark in the community. Recently the townspeople have shown considerable support for instituting major repairs to the structure and developing new uses for its interior spaces for community wide programs. Thanks to a matching grant from the Commission's Preservation Projects Fund, as well as an appropriation by Town Meeting, we will soon replace the one hundred year old slate roof on the structure. The interest and support that residents have shown for allocating these funds and for authorizing a permanent preservation restriction on the property are an indication of their desire to preserve this historic property. As the chief elected officials of the community, we wish to voice the support of our community for the listing. Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,


E. Lee Bombria, Chairman


Dolores A.M. Morin, Vice Chairman


David Delanski, Clerk

Cc: Warren Historical Commission



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
William Francis Galvin, Secretary of the Commonwealth
Massachusetts Historical Commission

May 1, 2001

Ms. Carol Shull
National Register of Historic Places
Department of the Interior
National Park Service
Mail Stop 2280, Suite 400
1849 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Ms. Shull:

Enclosed please find the following nomination form:

Warren Town Hall, Warren (Worcester), MA

The nomination has been voted eligible by the State Review Board and has been signed by the State Historic Preservation Officer. The owners of the property were notified of pending State Review Board consideration 30 to 45 days before the meeting and were afforded the opportunity to comment.

One letter of support has been received.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Betsy Friedberg".

Betsy Friedberg
National Register Director
Massachusetts Historical Commission

Enclosure

Cc: Sylvia Buck, Warren Historical Commission
Larry Lowenthal, consultant
Gregory Farmer
E. Lee Bombria, Chair, Warren Board of Selectmen
Warren Planning Board