

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 Ashland Town House

other names/site number Ashland Town Hall (preferred)

2. Location

street & number 101 Main Street

☐ not for publication

city or town Ashland

☐ vicinity

state Massachusetts

code MA

county Middlesex

code 017

zip code 01721

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.)

Betsy Friedberg, National Register Director

1/13/04

Signature of certifying official/Title Carla H. Metz, Executive Director
Massachusetts Historical Commission, State Historic Preservation Officer

Date

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 of the Keeper

Edson H. Beall

Date of Action

3/13/04

Ashland Town Hall
Name of Property

Middlesex County, 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

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

SOCIAL: meeting hall
GOVERNMENT: city hall, jail, firehouse
EDUCATION: school, library
RECREATION AND CULTURE: auditorium, movie
theatre, hall, music facility

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

GOVERNMENT: town hall

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

MID 19th CENTURY: Greek Revival transitional to
Italianate

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation GRANITE (check porch foundation)

walls WOOD – clapboards

roof ASPHALT

other

Narrative Description

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

SEE ATTACHED

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Ashland Town Hall

Ashland (Middlesex), MA

7. DESCRIPTION

The 1855 Ashland Town Hall is located in the center of the Town of Ashland, a small community approximately 22 miles west of Boston. The Town Hall rests on the center of a rectangular parcel of Town owned land that is less than one acre. This rectangular parcel fronts on the west side of Main Street and is part of an irregular triangular street block that is roughly bounded by Main Street on the east, Cherry Street on the north and west, and Park Road on the south. Presently, the Town Hall is the only building on the parcel. The adjacent lot, Sheet 8, Parcel 109, which fronts Cherry Street is also less than one acre and was acquired by the town around 2000; it is currently used for parking and is not included in this nomination.

Ashland, which is located mid-way between Boston and Worcester, is bordered by Sherborn on the east, Framingham on the north, Southborough on the west and northwest, and Hopkinton and Holliston on the south. Ashland was formed from parts of Framingham, Holliston, and Hopkinton when it was incorporated in 1846. Today this formerly industrial town is predominantly a residential community of about 15,000.

The Ashland Town Hall is located opposite the Congregational Church and is surrounded by several 20th century commercial buildings along this flat stretch of Main Street. The Sudbury River flows behind several of the properties on the eastern side of Main Street, including several mill buildings at the northern end of Main Street. Mill Pond lies to the north of these buildings, and there is a tract of housing that once accommodated the town's mill workers on the east side of the river.

Late 19th century photographs show several large trees and at least one outbuilding on the Ashland Town Hall parcel. Today, the bulk of the parcel surrounding the building is paved for parking. Ashland Town Hall is set back approximately 30 feet from Main Street and there is a sidewalk in front of the building. There are square plots of plantings flanking the entrance porch, with low shrubs, small evergreens, and white flagpoles.

The 2½ story Ashland Town Hall has a rectangular plan and a three-bay center entrance gable front façade. It was originally five bays deep but two additional bays were added in 1905. The addition was twenty-five feet deep and was the same width as the main block so the overall rectangular form remained intact. The building is presently 52' wide and 105' feet deep. The original building rests on a foundation of square-cut dressed local granite laid in regular courses; the addition's foundation of the same material was seamlessly integrated into that of the original building. Most of the irregularly spaced basement window openings in the granite foundation have been filled with cement. Ashland Town Hall is sheathed in wood clapboards that replaced the original

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clapboards in 1981. The roof, once wood shingles, is now made of asphalt shingles. While there were originally four brick chimneys, one on each roof slope in the front and rear, by 1978 there were two chimneys, one on each slope in the front. The one on the northern slope was removed in 1981, and today a single brick chimney remains near the front of the southern slope.

Ashland Town Hall has a symmetrical design that is articulated with features that are characteristic of the transitional period from the end of the Greek Revival to the early years of the Italianate style. The orderly fenestration pattern remains intact despite several alterations, with first and second story rectangular windows that are generally in line with one another articulating the bays. All window frames along the facade and sides are defined by slightly projecting wood frames with tabs under the sills and projecting crown molding lintels; these surround double hung wood sash of varying sizes, many of which are original. The building's ornamentation and trim contribute to the transitional style of the structure. The wide fascia board wrapping around the two-story block is adorned with evenly spaced paired brackets and dentils at the cornice line. The broad, unornamented corner pilasters are also topped with paired brackets, mimicking columns that carry returns in the gable ends.

The main façade with a later entrance porch covering the original main entrance faces east onto Main Street. The single-story Colonial Revival style porch with a projecting vestibule was added in 1905 to the center of the symmetrical three-bay façade. This entire entrance was altered to its current neo-colonial appearance in 1981. The porch's foundation is covered with latticework, and it features square unfluted pilasters at the corners. Like the main block, it is sheathed in wood clapboards. A pair of modern six-panel entrance doors is centered on the façade of the porch; they are flanked by sidelights with five rectangular panes. The door surround is unadorned and narrow. An exterior portico that spans the width of the porch extends eastward. Drawings for the 1905 alteration show a pair of two-panel doors at the entrance with eight lights over each door, three clustered columns on each end of the porch and a flat porch roof enclosed by a low balustrade. The porch has since been altered to a gently pitched gable-front roof that is supported by two Doric columns. Seven cement steps edged in brick across the full width of the portico rise up to the front entrance. Wrought iron rails on the ends and in the middle of the stairs lead up to the porch. A handicapped-access ramp that was added in 1981 begins on the south elevation and wraps around to the Main Street elevation, leading to a modern door with nine lights on the south elevation of the porch. In 1905, there was an eight-over-eight window here and on the north side of the porch. Today there is a six-over-six window centered on the north elevation of the porch. 1905 drawings show an eight-light basement window on each side of the porch; these openings have since been filled. Twelve-over-eight first floor windows on the façade flank the front entrance on the first floor. On the second floor twelve-

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over-twelve windows flank the center window, which is comprised of a pair of narrow six-over-six sash set beneath an enclosed pediment. Nineteenth century photographs and 1905 drawings show a flagpole and a small six-light round-headed window in the center of the gable peak. In 1981 the flagpole was removed and the window was covered over; apparently the window is extant beneath the clapboards.

On the north elevation there are two modern windows at the basement level. A handicapped entrance ramp to the basement level that was added in 1981 is accessed from the front of the building. The modern basement entrance door at the bottom of the ramp is covered by a shed roof extending off a first floor porch. A wood and metal fence and a guardrail run along the ramp at the parking lot level. There are six window bays and one door on the first story and six window bays on the second floor. The three bays at the east end of the elevation are symmetrical but they become asymmetrical at the west end. On the first floor the two eastern most windows have twelve-over-eight lights, as did all of the side first floor windows in 1905. The third bay features a modern entrance door on the first floor level that is accessed by six steps leading to an open wood porch. Square posts support the shed roof that covers the entrance. The porch and doorway replaced a 1905 entrance that consisted of a four-panel door with four sidelights flanking, covered by a porch supported by columns. To the west of the current doorway are two nine-over-six paired windows, with two closely spaced twelve-over-eight windows on the west end. All of the second floor windows are twelve-over-twelve.

The south elevation has seven window bays on the first and second stories; like the north elevation it also has a slightly asymmetrical fenestration pattern. Along the exterior south wall of this area, the large opening that once served as the entry ramp for the fire engine has been filled with cement. A smaller foundation opening was access to a coal bin that was removed after 1981. The handicapped-access ramp that wraps to the facade of the building runs in front of these former openings in the foundation. Six concrete steps, which lead down to a modern door, providing access to the basement at the west end of this elevation, are covered with a gable front porch. There are two modern windows on the basement level. Drawings from 1905 show that the first floor's fenestration has been substantially altered since that time; there were once first-floor doors into the building on the front and rear ends of this elevation, both of which had Colonial Revival doorways matching that of the northern side entrance. Today, there are seven first-floor windows, all of which are twelve-over-eight; there are seven twelve-over-twelve windows on the second floor.

The west elevation overlooks the Town Hall's rear parking lot. While this section of the building was constructed in 1905 as the end of the twenty-five foot addition, it matches the gable-end form and detailing of the front facade. Drawings for the addition show that there were initially two projecting bulkheads at the ground level, each with a four-horizontal panel door providing basement access. On the first floor there was a

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six-over-six window adjacent to the north cornerboard, next to steps that led alongside the building and up one of the bulkheads to a pair of doors, and one twelve-over-eight window on the south end. Today, the bulkheads, doors and windows have since been removed. All that remain are two modern basement level windows, and three modern first floor windows; while the basement windows are in openings that previously existed in the foundation, the first floor window openings are new and were likely made in the 1981 renovation. The three nine-over-nine windows on the second floor appear to be original to the addition; two are symmetrically centered and the slightly lower third one is located on the north end of the elevation to light a stairwell that once existed inside. Drawings from 1905 show that there was once a small six-light round-headed window in the center of the gable peak matching the one that existed on the façade. This was likely removed or covered over in 1981 as well.

Despite several renovations, the most recent being in 1981, some evidence remains of 19th and early 20th century interior elements. The plan of the first floor that originally housed two classrooms on either side of a central passage has been altered with an off-center corridor, particleboard walls and dropped ceilings. What remains are some blackboards, the original hardwood floors beneath the carpeting, and a fireproof vault that was installed in 1894 and remains in the first floor town clerk's office. Gold lettering and designs that are still visible on the black vault entrance identify the manufacturer as the Diebold Safe & Lock Company. A pair of diagonally fluted round columns resting on square bases carries an architrave that reads "ASHLAND" in gold lettering. A decorative enclosed pediment tops the safe entrance. A second modern vault that extends to the basement level was installed next to the original one in 1981.

Immediately inside the first floor front entrance is pair of modern doors that open to a wide oak staircase. These stairs, which lead to the second floor, retain Colonial Revival detailing and date to 1905. Horizontal wainscoting covers the lower part of the stair wall. At the top of the stairs, pilasters topped with a broken triangular pediment surround double four-panel doors into a large meeting room. On both sides of the double doors are four-panel doors leading to two corner anterooms that once served as water closets. These doors are surrounded by projecting crown molding lintels with supporting pilasters. The meeting room has a vaulted ceiling and extends to the west end of the building. Varying types of wood trim top horizontal bead board along the base of all four walls. A decorative plaster medallion remains at the center of the ceiling. There are four small openings clustered together along the southern end of the eastern wall behind which there is a movie projector. A raised stage at the west end of the room was added in 1905 at the time of the rear addition, replacing the original stage that was built in 1882. A proscenium arch with paneled woodwork surrounds the current stage. An asbestos curtain with an intricate hand painted mural remains in place. There are doors on

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each side of the stage leading to anterooms with stage access. A single five horizontal panel door to the left of the stage leads to two dressing rooms with stage access on the southwest corner of the building. Swinging double doors on the right of the stage lead to a single room on the northwest corner of the building with stage access; this room provided access to a staircase to the first floor until it was removed in 1981.

Ashland Town Hall has a full basement that spans the entire width and depth of the building. The basement was also renovated in 1981, with the rear or west two-thirds of this level retrofitted for offices using the same materials described for the first floor. The front or east part of the basement appears to not have been altered since the early 20th century; this section is divided into three areas by two longitudinal (east-west) interior brick walls. Drawings show that this brickwork was new in 1905. Circulation through the area is limited to one door leading from a room in that part of the basement that has been retrofitted for office use and is currently used for storage. This door leads to the first area or room that is on the south side of the front section, an area that once housed the town's hand operated fire engine. This area once was once accessed by the large opening in the south exterior wall that now is filled with concrete and blocked by the handicapped-access ramp on the exterior. Segmental arched doorways are cut into the two interior brick walls noted above, and lead to the other two areas of the front part of the basement. Remnants of an inactive well or cistern remain in the center area and the town lock-up is in the far northern section of the front basement area. Two of the four brick jail cells were removed when the new vault on the first floor was added in 1981. The two remaining cells are small and narrow, with wrought iron gates, barrel ceilings, and wood benches. There is no exterior access from this front part of the basement, so that one must circulate back through the segmental arched openings in the brick walls to return to the corridor in the retrofitted rear two-thirds of the basement.

Archaeological Description

While no ancient Native American sites are recorded on the town hall property, sites may be present. Sixteen sites are recorded in the general area (within one mile). The town hall is also located within the Sudbury River drainage, a region that has been recognized as a documented corridor of Native settlement. Environmental characteristics of the town hall locale support the presence of ancient sites in this area. The town hall sits on a well drained, level to moderately sloping terrace in close proximity to wetlands. The Sudbury River is located less than 1,000 feet north of the town hall. The Sudbury River converges with the Assabet and Concord Rivers, forming a major tributary of the Merrimack River. Given the above information, the size of the parcel (1.48 acres), and impacts related to construction of the earlier Chapel Hall and existing Town Hall, a moderate potential exists for locating significant ancient Native American resources on the property.

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A moderate potential also exists for locating historic archaeological resources on the Town Hall property. Additional documentary research combined with archaeological survey and testing may locate structural evidence of Chapel Hall (ca. 1830), a small building that stood on the site prior to construction of the Town Hall. Chapel Hall was used as a school and for religious and town meetings. Structural evidence from two of four chimneys removed from the present Town Hall may also survive. Structural evidence may also exist from barns, carriage houses, and other outbuildings associated with both the Chapel Hall and existing Town Hall. Archaeological evidence of occupational-related features (trash pits, privies, wells) may also be present in similar areas. Grading in the vicinity of the Town Hall has adversely affected any ancient Native American and historic cultural resources to an unknown extent.

(end)

Ashland 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 #

Middlesex County, MA

County and State

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE

EDUCATION

POLITICS/GOVERNMENT

COMMUNITY PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT

Period of Significance

1855-1954

Significant Dates

1855, construction

1905, alteration

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

n/a

Cultural Affiliation

n/a

Architect/Builder

Builder - A.W. Johnson of Hopkinton, MA

Architects - Edwin Payson (1855)

Eugene L. Clark (1905)

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8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Ashland Town Hall retains its setting on Main Street in the center of the town of Ashland. The building displays the Greek Revival style, a popular form for civic buildings from the 1820s to the 1850s, as well as elements of the Italianate style, which was beginning to proliferate at the time that the Town Hall was built in 1855. The Ashland Town Hall, also known historically as the Ashland Town House, is reflective of the social, educational and civic life of the community. The property retains architectural and historical integrity and is significant for the period beginning in 1855 when it was constructed to 1954 during which time the building was in continued use as a municipal meeting house and center for Town related activities. Retaining integrity of location, setting, design, association, materials, workmanship, and feeling, the Ashland Town Hall meets Criteria A and C of the National Register of Historic Places and is significant at the local level.

The Town of Ashland was incorporated in 1846 from parts of neighboring Framingham, Holliston and Hopkinton. Prior to incorporation, it was known as Unionville because it was centrally located between these three towns. Due to the area's proximity to the Sudbury River and a transportation route from South Framingham to Sherborn, it is likely that there were small, temporary settlement sites in this region in the late 16th and early 17th centuries where visitors would have subsisted on fishing in the Sudbury River and hunting and gathering in the riverine lowlands and adjacent hills. By the mid 17th century, Magunkaguag, a Native American "Praying Town," had been established and residents employed European agriculture methods, grazing, and some lumbering.

During the century leading up to the American Revolution, the main road through Ashland shifted to run along the Sudbury River and through what is today's town center; several secondary routes were also established at this time. Colonists replaced Native Americans as the primary residents of the area, and two grist mills along the Sudbury began to contribute to the economy. The Praying Town became a rural colonial district during the 18th century.

Most development and industrial growth in this area occurred in the mid-19th century during which time the railroad was built through Ashland Center. While a large grain business, sash and blind factory, shoe and boot factories, and a large stone importer also contributed to the Town's manufacturing boom, it was the anticipated opening of the Hugh Dwight Printing Co. ca. 1870 which had the greatest impact on Ashland's commercial and residential growth and prosperity. While the Dwight buildings were under construction, however, the condemnation of Sudbury River waters for Boston's water supply brought this boom to a sudden

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halt. The town never regained its former prosperity and the large number of buildings surviving from the late 1850s without subsequent residential development is testimony to this economic tragedy.

In the years surrounding the turn of the last century, Ashland's population hovered around 2,000 with mills and shoe factories providing the primary economic stimulus. The early- to mid-20th century saw the arrival of two new industries: New England Aniline Works, a dye manufacturer, and Warren Telechron Company, a maker of electric clocks, but still there was little new residential or commercial development.

Prior to the construction of Ashland Town Hall, a small frame building known as Chapel Hall stood on the site. It was built ca. 1830 by local mill owners; the lower floor of the building was used as a school, and a hall on the second floor was used for meetings and to hold the town's first religious services. This congregation organized as the Unionville Evangelical Society in 1834, and the following year the group built a meetinghouse in which to worship. Chapel Hall continued to be used as a school and meeting place. After Ashland was incorporated in 1846, Chapel Hall was also used for town meetings. The only other community meeting places in Ashland at that time were the Evangelical Society's temple-front meetinghouse built in 1835 which still stands across Main Street from Ashland Town Hall and houses the Congregation Church (MHC #6), and a small Baptist chapel built in 1845 on Summer Street that burned around 1900.

At a town meeting in 1851, the Town of Ashland considered purchasing Chapel Hall, but after some debate, the town voted to investigate purchasing a piece of property to build a new structure instead. However, the town did vote to pay James Jackson \$500 for his equity in Chapel Hall at that time. The decision to build a new town hall reflects the overall prosperity of Ashland in the mid-19th century. Over the next few years, debate ensued as to the specifics for a new town house. A proposal to remove Chapel Hall and erect a new building to serve as a combined town hall, lock-up, and fire station on the site was finally approved in 1854 with a projected budget of \$10,000. In 1854, Edwin Payson was paid \$60 for "drawing and specifications from Town House." The following year Payson was paid an additional \$52.50 for more specifications and A. W. Johnson of Hopkinton was contracted to erect the building for about \$8,000. The cost of purchasing Chapel Hall was \$254 and the expenses for erecting the new building totaled \$9,984.34. The basement of the new building, which was completed in 1855, consisted of an engine room, a lock-up with four jail cells, a furnace room, and two playrooms for school children. On the first floor there were four schoolrooms, and on the second floor there was a large meeting hall and two small anterooms that were used by the town officers. The first town meeting convened in the new town house on December 29, 1855, and as was intended, the building served multiple functions.

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When Ashland was incorporated in 1846, seven school districts or wards were formed. Five new one-room schoolhouses were built ca. 1846-50 in order to accommodate the town's growing population. By 1855, however, the number of districts was reduced to six. Chapel Hall, which was referred to as the Center or District One after Ashland's incorporation, was the largest school. When this building was replaced with the new town house in 1855 it retained the District One designation. At the same time, Ashland began to experiment with the creation of a high school program; these classes, which functioned alongside the other programs, commenced in the new town house on May 12, 1856. After two years, the town declined to provide further funding for this trial, and students interested in a high school program went to Framingham. In 1867, the town decided to make another attempt at establishing a high school and united the program with the grammar school in the town house. While enrollment was initially limited, by 1874 the high school had grown enough to become a separate educational unit. In 1871, a new centrally located school known as the South School was built on Main Street to accommodate Grades IV, V and VI. South School is no longer extant. In 1880, the closing of two mills led to the elimination of District Five; most of the remaining students were sent to District One. This marked the beginning of a movement to gradually discontinue the use of outlying districts, and to establish a centralized graded school system in District One at the center of town. By 1884, school officials began proposing the building of a new high school, citing that lack of space, poor light, and proximity to the lock-up in the town house were distractions to the students. A new building was finally completed in 1890 on the corner of Alden and Central Streets to house the high school and Grades VII and VIII. This school building has also been lost. With the 1905 addition to the town hall, the first floor was remodeled to have three schoolrooms along the south side of the first floor; Grades I, II and III used these rooms until 1918. Overcrowding eventually led to the removal of Grade III to another location in 1920; in 1928 a new elementary school known as the Central Street School was erected at 75 Central Street (MHC #19) and Ashland Town Hall ceased to operate as a school. The Central Street School remains in use today, but its name has since been changed to the William Pittaway School.

Prior to 1846, the town's fire department consisted of a fifty-eight member volunteer organization named Union Fire Engine Company Number Four. The group held meetings in Chapel Hall and functioned as an active social group in the community. Company Number Four's single piece of equipment, a hand tub that had been purchased in 1846, was stored in the Town Hall's basement engine room that was located in the southeast corner. The ramp and doors that once provided access to this room have since been removed. Even after incorporation and the appointment of fire wardens, Ashland exercised little jurisdiction over the independent organization until 1873 when the Board of Fire Engineers was formed and a Chief Engineer was named. In

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1871, the town authorized the purchase of a steam fire engine and the building of a new engine house. The fire department relocated to a small frame building on Main Street known as Engine Hall. Engine Hall, which housed the Fire Department until a new Central Fire Station (MHC #20) was built at 151 Main Street around 1928, is no longer standing. The hand tub remained in storage in the Town Hall basement until it was sold by the Selectmen.

Ashland selected its first town constable in 1846, and the four cells in the Town House basement served as the town lock-up upon the opening of the building in 1855. The first police officers were appointed in 1879. The lock-up was used into the first half of the 20th century although not without complaints about noise from and problems due to water in the basement area.

In 1880, Ashland voted to establish a Free Public Library; it opened to the public April 9, 1881 and operated out of the southeasterly anteroom on the second floor of Town Hall. By the mid 1880s when the high school was faced with overcrowding issues, some of the classes met upstairs in the library. It was also used as a meeting place for various town boards. At the same time, the library's collection continued to grow and it was faced with space restrictions. When the new high school was finally built in 1890, the library was moved downstairs to one of the old primary school rooms along the north side of the building. By 1900, the library was becoming crowded again and appealed to the town for additional space. Funds were donated by Andrew Carnegie to build a new town library (MHC #18) on 66 Front Street; it was designed by Eugene L. Clark, a local architect, and opened in May 1904. This library is still in use as such.

In early 1905, the Selectmen were notified by the State Inspector that the Town Hall did not meet fire regulations, and that in order for the hall to continue to be used for amusement purposes, significant renovations were necessary. The town retained the services of Eugene L. Clark to design a rear addition for the building that would create a new first floor schoolroom, banquet room and kitchen, as well as a new stage, anterooms and fireproof entrance and exit from the second floor hall. An asbestos curtain that remains in place was purchased from Nightingale & Childs for \$82 to serve as a fireproof barrier between the stage and the auditorium, and it was hand-painted by O. L. Story for \$25. There is no information available about where Story lived or practiced his trade.

The northeasterly room on the first floor served as the Selectman's Office after it was vacated by the high school in 1890, and a fireproof vault by Diebold Safe & Lock Company was installed here in 1894. A second modern two-story vault that extends to the basement level was installed next to the original one in 1981. This

(continued)

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8

Page 5

**Ashland Town Hall
Ashland (Middlesex), MA**

addition necessitated the demolition of two of the four cells in the basement lock-up. Today, this former Selectman's Office is the Town Clerk's Office.

Since Ashland Town Hall was built, the second story hall has served a variety of purposes. It housed Town Meetings from 1855 until 1954, when the Concord Street School, now known as the Mindess Middle School, was built. Town Meetings are held at the school to this day. The large second-story meeting room at Town Hall also provided a source of income for the town by being rented over the years for dances, plays, concerts, temperance meetings, lectures, high school graduation, political conventions and rallies, and movies. A movie projector remains in place behind the eastern wall of the hall. The Grand Army of the Republic was among the groups that used the hall for various functions over the years including banquets, meetings and funerals. The hall has been used as a storage area since around 1970. The town boards and offices temporarily relocated to the high school and trailers while the first floor of the Town Hall was modernized; they returned in 1981 following the completion of the renovation.

The Ashland Town Hall has played a significant role in the municipal, educational and social evolution of the town. Today, it continues to be used for municipal business on a regular basis and portions of the original structure remain in tact. On behalf of the Town, Ashland's Selectmen voted to support this National Register nomination.

In early 2001, the Town of Ashland announced plans to demolish Ashland Town Hall and build a new structure to provide much needed office space for town offices. By February of that year, a group of concerned citizens had organized to form a group called Save Ashland Town Hall (SATH). SATH circulated a petition to oppose the demolition and campaigned to preserve it over the next few months. Later in the spring, a ballot to approve the demolition and build a new structure was voted down. In July, a Town Hall Study Committee (THSC) was formed to investigate alternatives. The Town of Ashland was committed to keeping town hall downtown, but there were no other sites available that would be appropriate for a new structure. The THSC commenced working with the Town Manager on the renovation plans for Ashland Town Hall. In the fall of 2002, the town approved plans to use \$4 million to renovate the interior and exterior of the building. Community Preservation Act funds will be used to finance a portion of this renovation. Design development plans were finalized in the fall of 2003, calling for significant renovations to the first floor of the interior of the building, and for the restoration of the second floor hall. The plans also include repairing the vaulted ceiling, restoring and maintaining the stage, and removing plaster to add insulation to the walls, and re-siding the exterior.

(continued)

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8

Page 6

**Ashland Town Hall
Ashland (Middlesex), MA**

The town expects to begin the renovation in early 2004.

Archeological Significance

Since patterns of ancient Native American settlement in Ashland are poorly understood, any surviving sites could be significant. Native American sites in this area may contribute information that documents the importance of coastal versus riverine subsistence patterns at interior sites along the border of the Coastal Plain and Central Massachusetts uplands. Specifically, the Sudbury River drains north via the Concord River to the Merrimack River, while immediately south of Ashland, the Charles River drains easterly through Boston to the ocean. Ancient Native American sites in Ashland may have closer social, cultural, and economic ties with Native groups in riverine locals, coastal groups to the east, or adaptations from both. Ancient Native American sites and communities in Ashland may contain evidence of a more specialized subsistence and settlement system adapted to the environment of the Central Massachusetts uplands.

Historic archaeological resources described above have the potential to contribute important information reflective of the social, educational, and civic life in Ashland throughout most of the 19th century. Archaeological survey and testing may locate structural evidence of Chapel Hall (ca. 1830), a small building, no longer extant, that stood on the property prior to the construction of the present Town Hall (1855). Structural evidence associated with Chapel Hall may contribute important architectural details of the building including its orientation, exact location, and plan. Archaeological testing around the existing Town Hall may also contribute important information on structural features of the Town Hall that no longer exist. Structural evidence may survive from two of the original four chimneys that have been removed. Structural evidence may also exist from barns, carriage sheds, and other outbuildings associated with many of the functions and activities that occurred at both the Chapel Hall and Town Hall. Information may exist related to 19th century transportation and maintenance of the structures. Detailed analysis of the contents from occupational related features (trash pits, privies, wells) may also contribute important information on aspects of the social, cultural, and economic life of the community through archaeological evidence of social, educational, and civic events.

(end)

**United States Department of the Interior
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**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

**Ashland Town Hall
Ashland (Middlesex), Massachusetts**

Section number 9 Page 1

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Ashland Historical Society. Papers of Frank J. Metcalf. Ashland, MA. Published Nov. 1916 in The Evening News, Framingham, Mass.

Diebold, Incorporated. "History – The Early Years." Available online:
<http://www.diebold.com/aboutus/history/history02.htm>. Viewed: February 16, 2003.

History of the Town of Ashland, prepared by The U.S. Historical Records Survey, Mass., Division of Community Service Programs, Works Project Administration. Lakeview Press, Framingham, Mass., 1942.

Interview with Richard Fannon, member, Ashland Historical Society, 2003.

Interview with Ed McGuire, Chair, Ashland Historical Society, 2003.

Interview with Dale Morris, Assistant to Ashland Town Manager, 2003.

Interview with Julie Nardone, member, Save Ashland Town Hall and Town Hall Study Committee, 2003.

Massachusetts Division of Inspection. Card file index to Building Inspection Plans [also know as Public Safety plans], 1889-1987. Massachusetts Archives.

Massachusetts Historical Commission. Inventory for the Town of Ashland. Boston. 1978 (includes inventory form for Ashland Town Hall).

Massachusetts Historical Commission. Maker Index information on buildings designed by E. L. Clark, A. W. Johnson, Edwin Payson and O.L. Story. Boston.

Town of Ashland: Annual Reports: 1846-1928

Town of Ashland: Directories: 1850-1860, 1900-1910.

(continued)

Ashland Town Hall
Name of Property

Middlesex County, MA

County, State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 1.48 acres

UTM References See continuation sheet.

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1. 19	296540	4681510	Zone	Easting	Northing
Zone	Easting	Northing			
2.			4.		
Zone	Easting	Northing	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 Katherine Mittelbush (editor) Betsy Friedberg

organization Massachusetts Historical Commission date January 2004

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 Ashland

street & number 101 Main Street telephone 508-881-0100

city or town Ashland state MA zip code 01721

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**

**Ashland Town Hall
Ashland (Middlesex), Massachusetts**

Section number 9 Page 2

Town of Ashland. Official Town of Ashland Website. Available online. <http://www.ashlandmass.com>.
Viewed February 16, 2003.

Maps:

1927-1955 Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps

(end)

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Verbal Boundary Description

The Ashland Town Hall stands on the West side of Main Street near the center of Ashland. The boundary of the property is defined by the enclosed Town of Ashland assessor's map (revised April, 2001), Sheet 8, Parcel 115. This rectangular parcel of land is 1.48 acres.

Boundary Justification

The boundary of the nominated property is confined to Parcel 115. This parcel was acquired by the Town of Ashland in 1854 for the purpose of erecting the Town House and historically been associated with this building.

(end)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY Asland Town House
NAME:

MULTIPLE
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: MASSACHUSETTS, Middlesex

DATE RECEIVED: 1/20/04 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 2/11/04
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 2/26/04 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 3/04/04
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 04000120

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 3/3/04 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

If a nomination is returned to the nominating authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the NPS.



Ashland Town Hall

101 Main Street

Ashland, MA, Middlesex County

Photo by J. Nardone/Fall 2001

Negative property of J. Nardone, Ashland, MA

View of Main facade looking west



Ashland Town Hall

101 Main Street

Ashland, Middlesex County, MA

Photo by J. Nardone / Fall 2001

Negative property of J. Nardone, Ashland, MA

View of East and North elevations

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



1987

CONTROL ELEVATIONS SHOWN TO THE NEAREST 0.1 METER
OTHER ELEVATIONS SHOWN TO THE NEAREST 0.5 METER

[illegible]

9 780607 234558

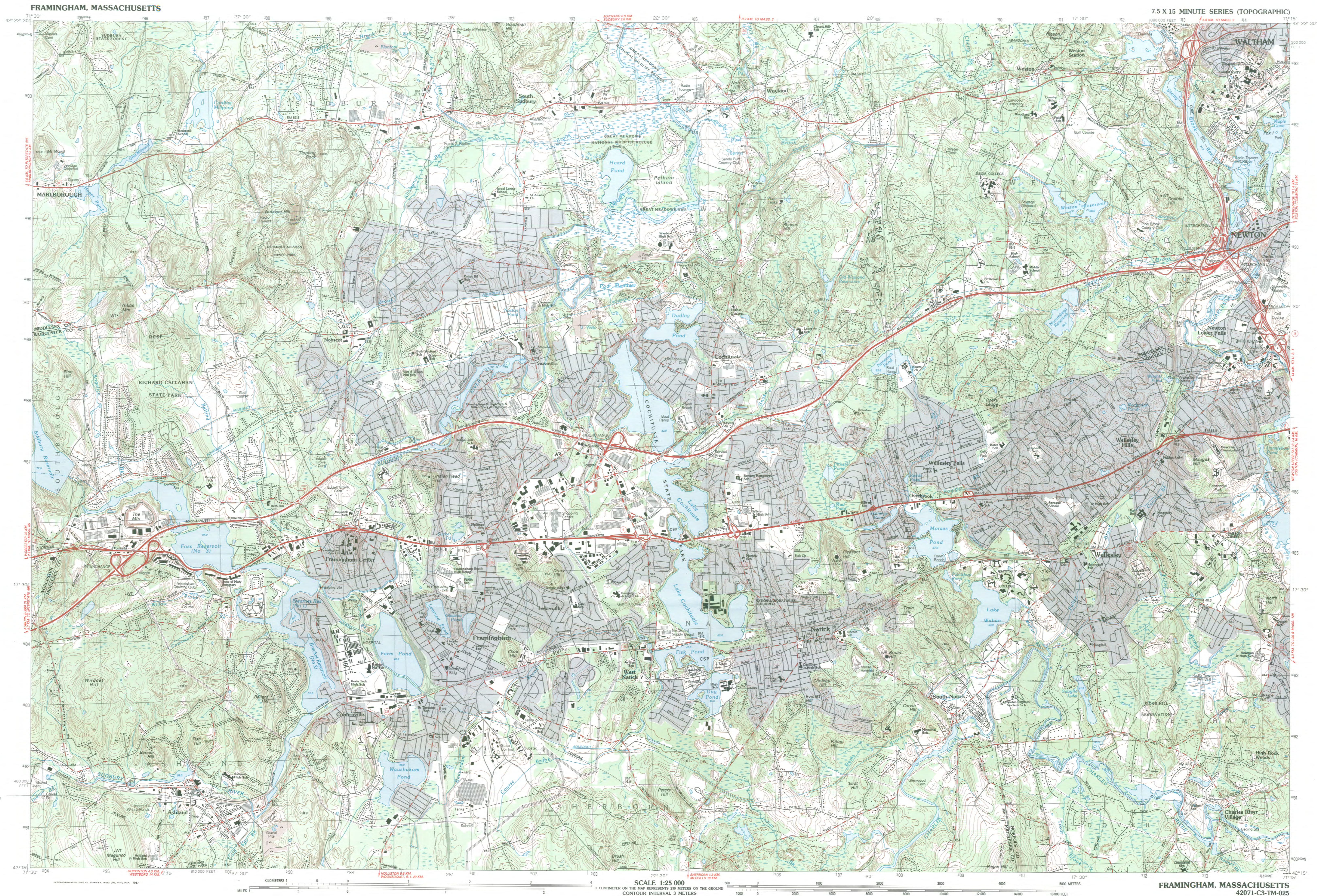
Primary highway, hard surface	
Secondary highway, hard surface	
Light-duty road, hard or improved surface	
Unimproved road, road	
Route marker: Interstate; U. S. State	
Railroad: standard gauge; narrow gauge	
Grades: drawbridge	
Fortillage; overpass; underpass	
Ball-field; open space; enclosed buildings above	
House; barn; church; school; large structure	
Boundary:	
National, with monument	
State	
County, parish	
Civil township, precinct, district	
Incorporated city, village, town	
National or State reservation; small park	
Land grant with monument; land section corner	
U. S. public lands survey: range, township; section	
Range, township; section line: location approximate	
Fence or field line	
Power transmission line; located tower	
Dam; with lock	
Cemetery; grave	
Campground; picnic area; U. S. location monument	
Well; water well; spring	
Mine shaft; prospect; adit or vein	
Contour: horizontal station; vertical station; spot elevation	
Contours: intermediate; supplementary; depression	
Settlement: urban; strip; mile; sand	
Benches; terrace; terrace; ridge; intermedial	
Penitential lake and stream; intermittent lake and stream	
Recessed lake and small; falls; large and small	
Submerged marsh; marsh; swamp	
Land subject to controlled inundation: wooded	
Salt; mangrove	

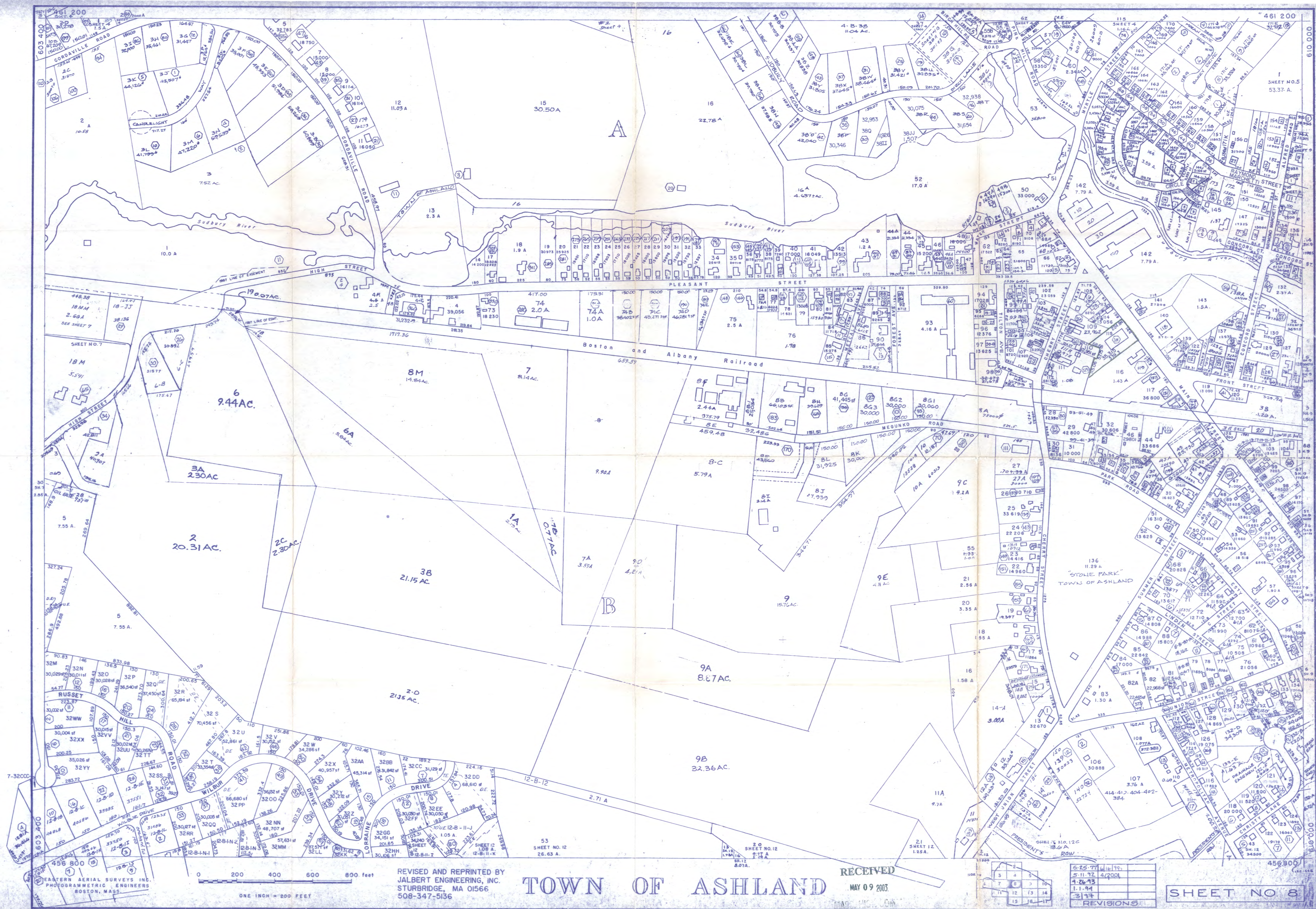
A pamphlet describing topographic maps is available on request.

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TOWN OF ASHLAND

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5-25-77 4/16/79
5-11-72 4/20/01
4-26-73
1-1-94
3-17

SHEET NO. 8

NR p2
BF



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MAY 20 2002

MASS. HIST. COMM

Office of the Board of Selectmen
101 MAIN STREET
01721-1191

Phone: 508.881.0100

Fax: 508.881.0102

13 March 2002

Ref #417a

Secretary William F. Galvin, Chmn.
Mass. Historical Commission
Mass. Archives Building
220 Morrissey Blvd.
Boston, MA 02125

Re: Ashland Town Hall

Dear Secretary Galvin:

I am writing to inform you that the Board of Selectmen, at its regular meeting held February 27, 2002, duly noticed and posted, voted to support the application of the Ashland Historical Commission to the MHC regarding the Ashland Town Hall.

That application seeks to have the Ashland Town Hall listed in the National Register of Historic Places. We are proud of our town hall building and wish to have its place noted in history.

Please contact our office should you have any questions regarding this matter.

For the Board, I remain,

Very truly yours,

John Ellsworth, Chairman

e-mail: selectmenoffice@ashlandmass.com

web site: www.ashlandmass.com



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

January 16, 2004

Ms. Carol Shull
National Register of Historic Places
Department of the Interior
National Park Service
1201 Eye Street, NW 8th floor
Washington, DC 20005



Dear Ms. Shull:

Enclosed please find the following nomination form:

Ashland Town Hall, 101 Main St., Ashland (Middlesex), 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: Gretchen Schuler, Katherine Mittelbush, preservation consultants
Edward Maguire, Ashland Historical Commission
Richard Desmarais, Board of Selectmen
Steve Kerlin, Town Planner