



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Office of the Secretary of State
Michael Joseph Connolly, Secretary

Massachusetts Historical Commission

Valerie A. Talmage

Executive Director

State Historic Preservation Officer

July 21, 1987

Ms. Carol Shull, Keeper
National Register of Historic Places
Department of the Interior
National Park Service
P.O. Box 37127
Washington, DC 20013-7127

Dear Ms. ^{Carol} Shull,

I am writing to correct an error made in the preferred name of a recent listing to the National Register of Historic Places. The preferred name for 1307 Main Street, Athol, Massachusetts (Worcester County), should be Old Town Hall not Athol Historical Society Museum. Your attention to this matter is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Valerie

Valerie A. Talmage
Executive Director
State Historic Preservation Officer
Massachusetts Historical Commission

VAT/AET/dr

JUL 24 1987

7/24/07

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number _____ Page _____

Name change from Athol Historical Society Museum
to Old Town Hall

NAME CHANGE APPROVAL

for Keeper Patrick Andrus 9/4/87
Attest Patricia Savage 9/4/87

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Old Town Hall (new name)
Worcester County
MASSACHUSETTS

Working No. 7/24/87
Fed. Reg. Date: 2/2/88
Date Due: 9/2/87
Action: ☒ ACCEPT 9-4-87
☐ RETURN
☐ REJECT
Federal Agency: _____

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

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

Reviewer's comments:

*Technical error in property
name when listed.
Correction more appropriately
recognizes property's*

Recom./Criteria Approve
Reviewer S. J. Lee
Discipline Architectural History
Date 9/3/87
_____ see continuation sheet

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

historic importance.

1. Name

2. Location

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
	Public Acquisition	Accessible	

4. Owner of Property

5. Location of Legal Description

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

Has this property been determined eligible? ☐ yes ☐ no

7. Description

Condition

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

Check one

- ☐ unaltered
☐ altered

Check one

- ☐ original site
☐ moved date _____

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

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

8. Significance

Period Areas of Significance—Check and justify below

Specific dates Builder/Architect

Statement of Significance (*in one paragraph*)

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

9. Major Bibliographical References

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property _____

Quadrangle name _____

UTM References _____

Verbal boundary description and justification _____

11. Form Prepared By

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

____ national ____ state ____ local

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

title

date

13. Other

- ☐ Maps
- ☐ Photographs
- ☐ Other

Questions concerning this nomination may be directed to _____

Signed _____ Date _____ Phone: _____

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only

received

MAY 4 1987

date entered

JUN 1 1987

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Athol Historical Society Museum (Preferred)

and or common Old Town Hall

2. Location

street & number 1307 Main Street N/A not for publication

city, town Athol N/A vicinity of

state Massachusetts code 025 county Worcester code 027

3. Classification

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

4. Owner of Property

name Athol Historical Society Inc.

street & number 1307 Main Street

city, town Athol N/A vicinity of state Massachusetts

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Worcester County

street & number Main Street

city, town Worcester state Massachusetts

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Inventory of the Historic Assets of the Commonwealth #1
has this property been determined eligible? ☐ yes ☒ nodate 1974 ☐ federal ☒ state ☐ county ☐ local

depository for survey records Massachusetts Historical Commission

city, town 80 Boylston Street, Boston state Massachusetts

7. Description

Old Town Hall

, Athol, Massachusetts

Condition

☒ excellent
☐ good
☐ fair

☐ deteriorated
☐ ruins
☐ unexposed

Check one

☒ unaltered
☐ altered

Check one

☒ original site
☐ moved date _____

N/A

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Athol Historical Society Museum, also known as Old Town Hall, occupies a prominent site overlooking Main Street south of the present center of this industrial city 72 miles northwest of Boston. The building faces east on a low rise and is set back approximately 60 feet from Main Street. Two flights of granite steps lead from Main Street to the building's front entrance. Liberty Street bounds the 3/4-acre property to the south, while a residential neighborhood of single-and two-family dwellings, most built in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, abuts the property to the north and west. The building is surrounded by lawn and some low shrubbery; a paved drive circles the property on three sides.

Erected in 1828 to serve as the First Parish's fourth place of worship, the building is a remarkably intact example of a Federal-style meetinghouse, despite a history of multiple uses. The building is essentially rectangular in plan, five bays wide and six bays deep, with a gable-front orientation and three-stage tower. The entry facade is dominated by a projecting three-bay frontispiece with enclosed pediment. The wood-frame building is sheathed in clapboards; it rests on a foundation of fieldstone (original) and concrete block (the result of 1960 repairs). There is a partial basement.

The symmetrical five-bay main (east) facade is dominated by the slightly advanced 2 1/2-story pedimented vestibule. Its three bays are defined by simple pilasters. At entry level there are three rounded-arch openings headed by simple keys, containing doorways with fanlights. The central entry opening is slightly broader than the two that flank it. The second story retains fully enframed 12/12 sash. Centered in the vestibule's flushboarded pediment is a hinged oval light. A broad entablature unifies the vestibule with the main block; it is not carried around to the building's secondary elevations.

Flanking the vestibule are single bays, also defined by pilasters, containing 12/12 sash on both first and second stories. The main block's facade repeats the vestibule's enclosed pediment. It is sheathed in clapboard rather than flushboard; its cornice is broken at the peak by its intersection with the building's three-stage bell tower, which consists of a square base, a cupola whose round-headed openings echo those of the entryway, an eight-sided dome, and a weathervane. Low balustrades enclose the belfry deck and dome.

The building's northern and southern facades are virtually identical. Both are six bays deep, with two ranks of 12/12 sash symmetrically arranged. The foundation (granite on the north side, concrete replacement on the south) steps back to the rear, reflecting the building's siting on a low rise.

continued

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

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

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received

date entered

Continuation sheet Old Town Hall

Athol, Massachusetts
Item number

7 Page 1

The main block's rear facade is partially obscured by a shallow projection, a later addition, which encloses a rear staircase and bathroom. The projection's sloping roofline reflects the function of its interior. Of the main block's fenestration, only two 12/12 sash survive on the second story, those on the first story now being blocked by the staircase. A single doorway in the main block's northwest corner provides access to the first-story auditorium, while a second doorway leads to the stairway. The rear elevation is framed by plain cornerboards and the gable roof's narrow cornice and shallow returns.

Despite its history of changing use, the building retains its auditorium (65 by 48 feet) with two aisles and original pews. A spiral staircase just inside the front door provides access to the belfry. A small pipe organ, built by E. & G. G. Hook in 1847, survives beside the pulpit. When first constructed, the building's meeting space was completely rimmed by a gallery on the second-story level. In 1846, however, this was replaced by a full second story, supported by eight fluted cast-iron columns rising from the main hall's aisles. There is no attic; the roofing members are clearly visible from the second story.

A carriage shed that formerly stood near the rear, western edge of the property was demolished at some time in the early 20th century.

continued

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

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

Old Town Hall, Athol, Massachusetts

Continuation sheet

Item number

7

Page

2

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received

date entered

Archaeology

No prehistoric archaeological sites are currently recorded on the property. Sites have been reported at several nearby locations along the Millers River and may be present on this property as well. Any surviving sites would be significant as the patterns of prehistoric occupation in Athol are poorly understood.

There is also potential for historical archaeological sites. Controlled testing could help to document the location and configuration of non-extant carriage sheds and other structures. Occupation-related features, particularly trash pits and privies, may also survive. Analysis of these data would help to detail the ways in which this public building was used during the first half of the 19th century.

8. Significance

Old Town Hall

, Athol, Massachusetts

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
☐ prehistoric	☐ archeology-prehistoric	☐ community planning	☐ landscape architecture	☒ religion
☐ 1400–1499	☐ archeology-historic	☐ conservation	☐ law	☐ science
☐ 1500–1599	☐ agriculture	☐ economics	☐ literature	☐ sculpture
☐ 1600–1699	☒ architecture	☐ education	☐ military	☐ social/
☐ 1700–1799	☐ art	☐ engineering	☐ music	☐ humanitarian
☒ 1800–1899	☐ commerce	☐ exploration/settlement	☐ philosophy	☐ theater
☒ 1900–	☐ communications	☐ industry	☒ politics/government	☐ transportation
		☐ invention		☒ other (specify)
				community development
Specific dates	1828	Builder/Architect		

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Athol Historical Society Museum, also known as Old Town Hall, retains integrity of location, design, materials, workmanship, and feeling, and holds historical associations with the historical development of Athol. Built in 1828 as the First Parish's fourth meetinghouse, the building remains intact despite a history of changing uses (Unitarian church 1828-1901, town hall 1846-1922, women's club 1922-1955, and Athol Historical Society Museum, 1955-present). The property thus fulfills Criteria A and C of the National Register of Historic Places on the local level.

The nominated property was Athol's fourth meetinghouse. Built on Main Street in 1828, it replaced a 1772 house located on the common in Athol's "Upper Village," a short distance to the south, that had been destroyed by fire. Neither the first nor the second meetinghouse survive (the first, a log structure completed ca. 1741, also burned; the second, construction date unknown, is of uncertain history but is presumed to have been gone by the eve of the Revolution).

Originally part of the six-mile-square Payquage plantation (granted in 1733, first settlement 1735), Athol was established as a town in 1762. Initial settlement developed south of the location of the nominated property, by Mill Brook, but gradually moved northward toward the Millers River. By the eve of the Revolution, the community, like many in northern Worcester County, could be characterized as "poor agrarian" (historian Bettye Pruitt), with dispersed settlement and moderate agricultural production (primarily corn). In the opening decades of the 19th century, however, a linear turnpike village was beginning to develop over the hill where the meetinghouse center had been established, linking waterpower sites on the Millers River to the north and Mill Brook to the south. The meetinghouse center would remain Athol's primary focus until the mid 19th century, when railroad connections along the Millers River corridor would open the town's textile, paper, wood, and iron industries to outside markets and make the growing Depot Center the town's business and manufacturing focus. With the shift of the community's center north to the Millers River, the meetinghouse area several hundred feet above the river would, by the late 19th century, become an attractive site for residential development.

Like many towns in central Massachusetts, Athol experienced a religious split in the third decade of the 19th century. In Athol, the rift began as early as 1782, with internal disagreements over the seemingly mundane matter of the minister's salary. After his dismissal in that year (and the formation of the

continued

9. Major Bibliographical References

Lord, William G. A. History of Athol, Massachusetts
Somerville, Mass: Somerville Printing Co., 1953.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property less than one acre

Quadrangle name Athol

Quadrangle scale 1:25,000

UTM References

A 18 728260 4719090
Zone Easting Northing

B
Zone Easting Northing

C

D

E

F

G

H

Verbal boundary description and justification

See assessor's map

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

state N/A code county code

state code county code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title J. R. Greene, Athol Historical Commission with Betsy Friedberg, Director,
National Register

organization Mass. Historical Commission date March 1, 1987

street & number 80 Boylston Street telephone 517-727-8470

city or town Boston state Massachusetts

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

 national state X local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature Valerie Talmage

title Executive Director
State Historic Preservation Officer date April 28, 1987

For NPS use only

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

Peter Andrews date 6/17/87
Keeper of the National Register

Attest: Betty A. Sarge date 6/17/87

Chief of Registration

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

Old Town Hall

, Athol, Massachusetts

For NPS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number

8

Page

1

adjoining town of Orange, directly related to these disagreements), Athol's First Parish went without a minister for five years. In 1787, a liberal was called as the parish's second minister. Dissension grew steadily, and by the late 1820s, the difficulty of securing a minister who would satisfy all contributed to the formal withdrawal of a minority to form the Evangelical Congregational Church. Shortly before the split, the church's third meetinghouse had burned, and within the next several years, splinter societies would erect two houses of worship. The nominated property was built in 1828 by subscription on land donated to the church by a local citizen, Col. Samuel Sweetzer, to house the church's liberal Unitarian faction. By 1833, the minority Orthodox group, the Evangelical Congregationalists, had erected their own church nearby. The latter, raised and altered to the Italianate style in 1859, continues to serve the Congregational Church.

The town offices were moved to the nominated property in 1846. In that year, the church signed over partial interest in the property to the town. Prior to the 1827 destruction of the parish's third meetinghouse, the church had provided space for town business. Between 1827 and 1847, this function was served by the second district school (located on the common at Main and Grove Streets and apparently no longer extant), whose second floor was the site for occasional town meetings. In 1847, the school building was sold by arrangement with the church, and in that same year, the second floor of the nominated property was altered to accommodate the town hall. Its original interior had consisted of a two-story open space ringed by a gallery--a spatial arrangement common to meetinghouses of the period. In 1847, however, cast-iron columns were installed to support a full second story. The church's first floor interior retained its two aisles and end-wall orientation.

The building continued to serve as both a church and a municipal facility until 1901, when church services were disbanded (the congregation was consolidated with the Second Unitarian Church in 1922). Rail service arrived in the Millers River corridor in 1848, and even as the town's center of development shifted northward to the Depot Village, the nominated property continued to be used as a town hall. By 1922, however, agitation by war veterans for a memorial building coupled with intense commercial, industrial, and civic development north of the nominated property led to the construction of a new town hall at the intersection of Main and Exchange Streets (closer to the Millers River). The building remained in municipal hands, with the lower floor rented to the Athol Women's Club. The upstairs hall served as a polling place and meeting hall. In 1957, the town deeded the property to the Athol Historical Society, which uses the space today for museum displays and archival storage.

continued

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

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

For NPS use only

received

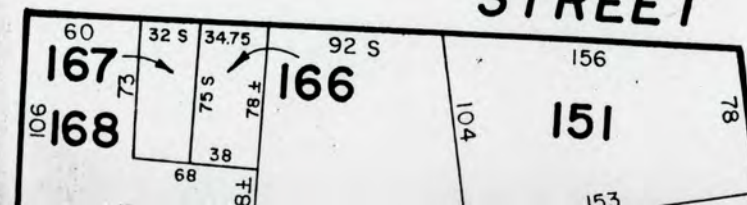
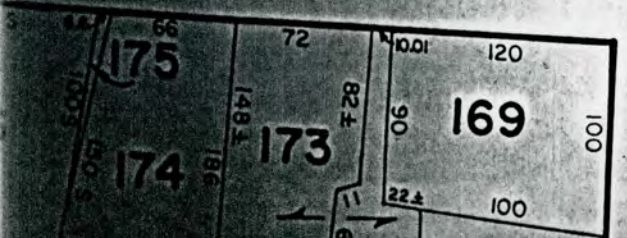
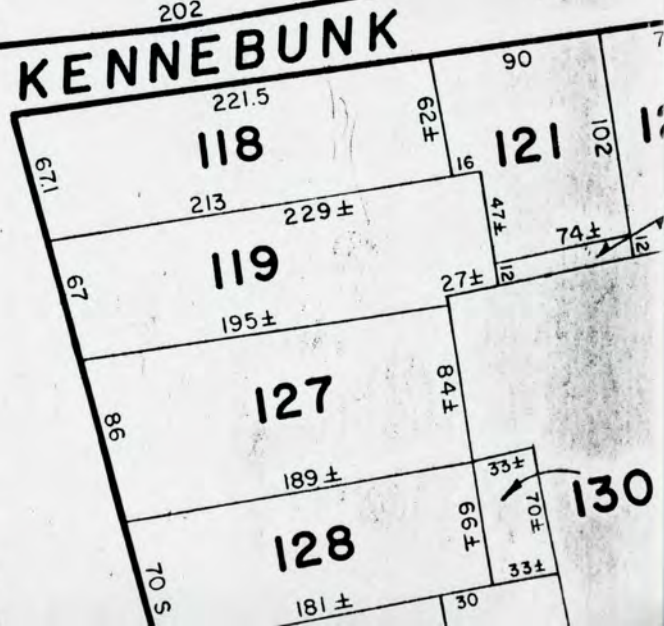
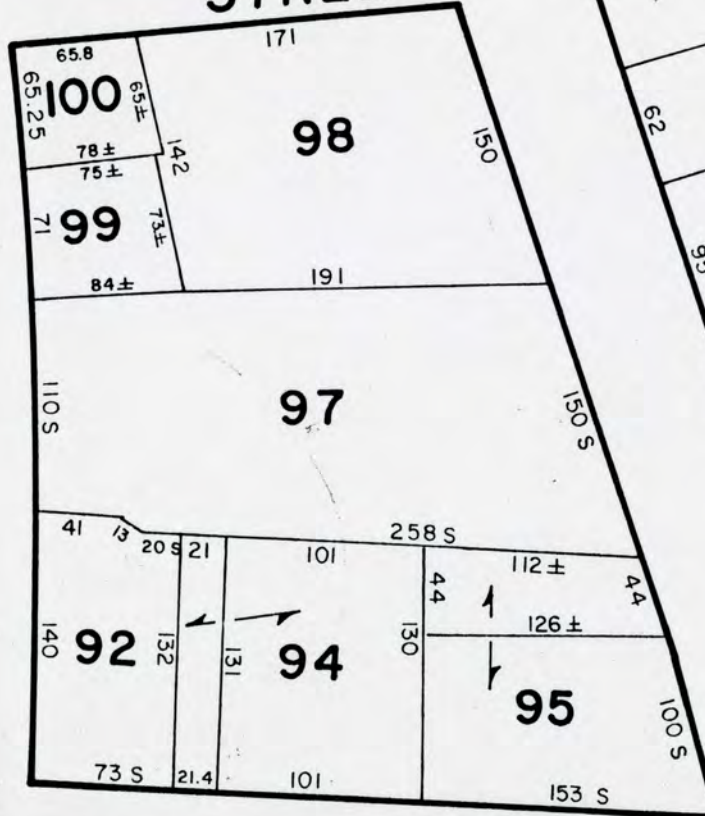
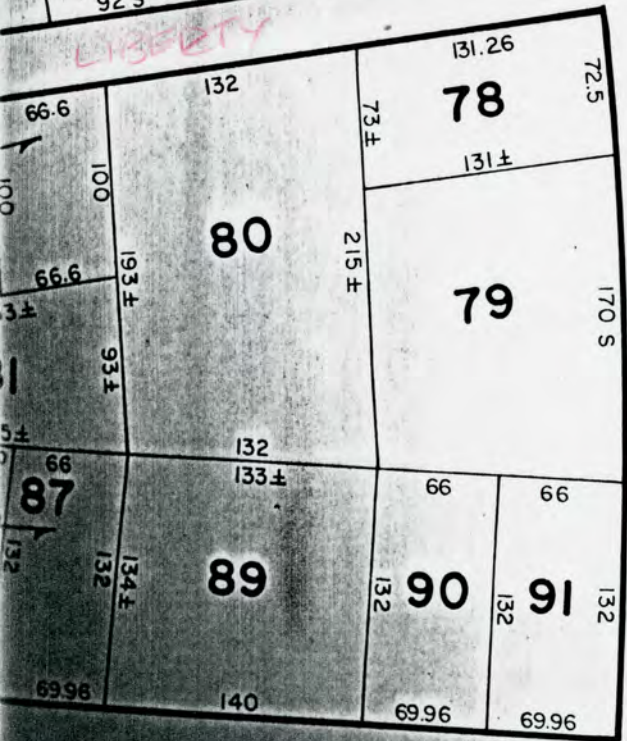
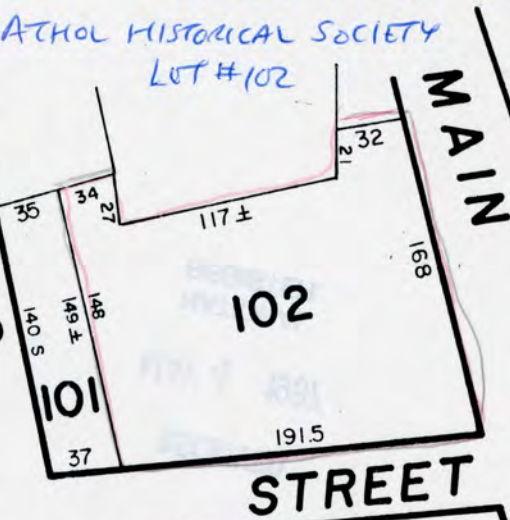
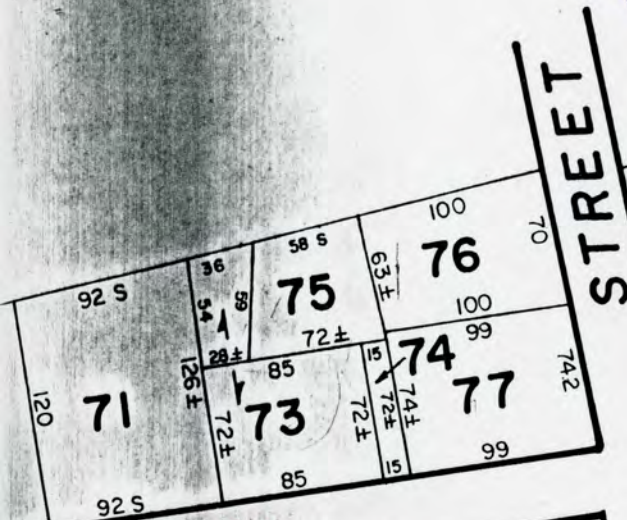
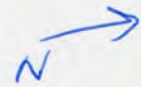
date entered

Continuation sheet Old Town Hall , Athol, Massachusetts Item number 8 Page 2

The nominated property is architecturally significant as a well-preserved example of the Federal-period ecclesiastical building form. Its gable-end plan with slightly advanced three-bay pilastered vestibule and square bell tower is typical of church buildings of the period. In its design, the building reflects the gradual reorientation in ecclesiastical building practices after 1800 from meetinghouse (with entrance on the long side and pulpit opposite) to church plan (with end-wall entrance and nave). The use of Federal stylistic features at a relatively late date of construction is not unusual for a peripheral community such as Athol.

FROM ASSESSOR'S MAP #32
ATHOL HISTORICAL SOCIETY
LOT #102

SCALE
1" = 100'



RECEIVED
MAY 4 1987
NATIONAL
REGISTER

87000876

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEETAthol Historical Society Museum
Worcester County
MASSACHUSETTS

Substantive Review

Working No. MAY - 4 1987
Fed. Reg. Date: 2/2/88
Date Due: 6/4/87 - 6/18/87
Action: ☒ ACCEPT 6-17-87
☐ RETURN
☐ REJECT
Federal Agency: _____

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

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

Reviewer's comments:

Important for local architectural
significance and as representative
of well-preserved Federal-era
ecclesiastical structure, for
associations w/ town's religious
development, and as a town hall

Recom./Criteria Accept A+C
Reviewer Savage
Discipline Architectural History
Date 6/16/87

see continuation sheet

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

Period of time from
1846-1922.

1. Name

2. Location

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
	Public Acquisition	Accessible	

4. Owner of Property

5. Location of Legal Description

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

Has this property been determined eligible? ☐ yes ☐ no

7. Description

Condition

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

Check one

- ☐
- unaltered
-
- ☐
- altered

Check one

- ☐
- original site
-
- ☐
- moved date _____

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

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

8. Significance

Period Areas of Significance—Check and justify below

Specific dates Builder/Architect

Statement of Significance (*in one paragraph*)

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

9. Major Bibliographical References

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property _____

Quadrangle name _____

UTM References _____

Verbal boundary description and justification _____

11. Form Prepared By

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

____ national ____ state ____ local

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

title

date

13. Other

- ☐ Maps
- ☐ Photographs
- ☐ Other

Questions concerning this nomination may be directed to _____

Signed _____ Date _____ Phone: _____



Property name: Athol Historical
Society building
Street Address: 1307 Main Street
Community: Athol

Photographer: Roderick McColl
Date: March 1985

Location of negative: Athol
Historical Commission file

Photo number 1 of 1

Description of view: Front of
building from street.

RECEIVED

MAY 4 1987

NATIONAL
REGISTER

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

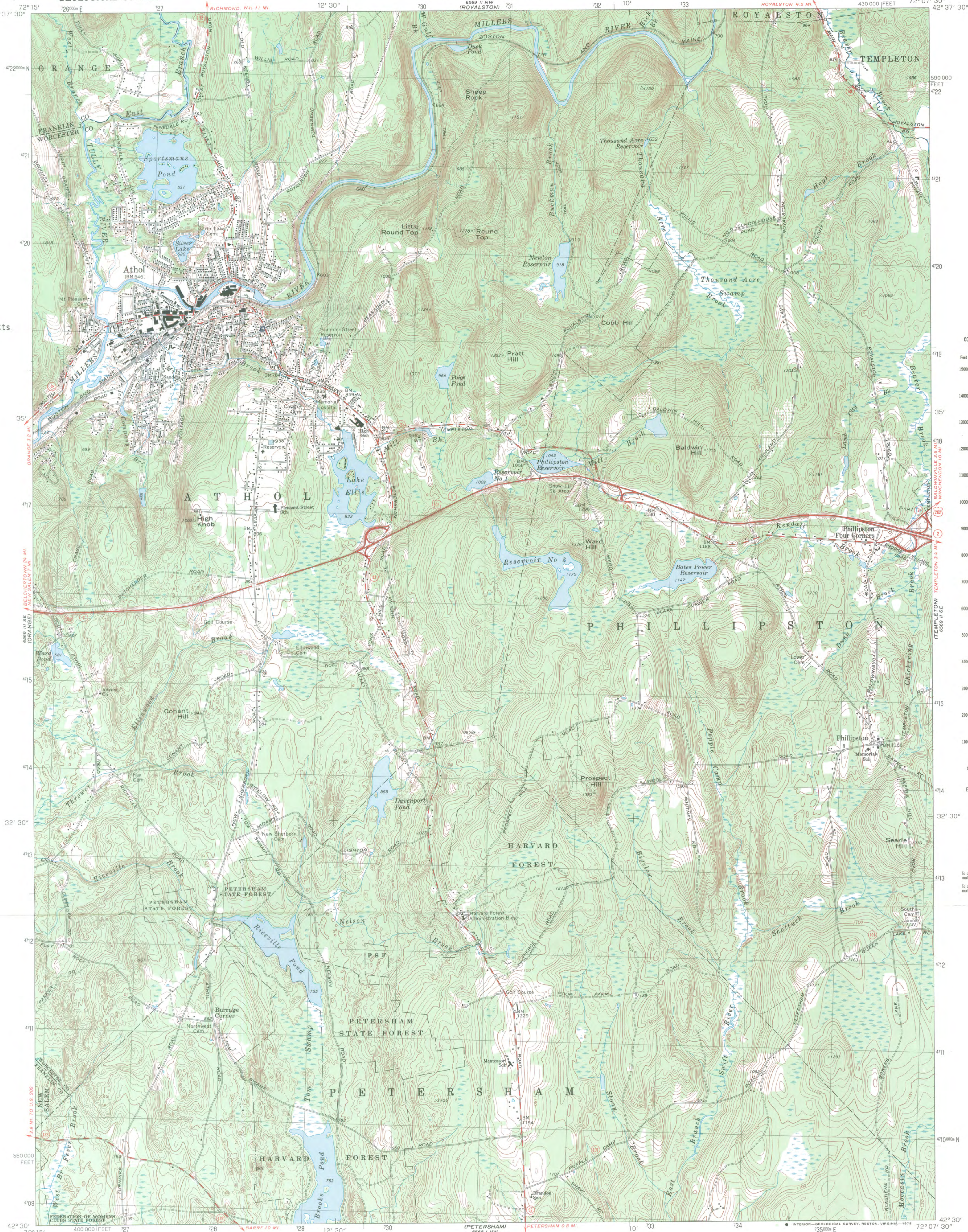
ATHOL QUADRANGLE
MASSACHUSETTS
7.5 MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC)

RECEIVED

MAY 4 1987

NATIONAL
REGISTER

Old Town Hall
1307 Main Street
Athol, MA
Quad: Athol, Massachusetts
Scale = 1:25,000
Ref 18/728/260/4719/090



CONVERSION
SCALES

Feet Meters

15000 4500

14000 4000

13000 3500

12000 3000

11000 2500

10000 2000

9000 1500

8000 1000

7000 900

6000 800

5000 700

4000 600

3000 500

2000 400

1000 300

0 200

0 100

0 0

Feet Meters

1 3048

2 6096

3 9144

4 12192

5 15240

6 18288

7 21336

8 24384

9 27432

10 30480

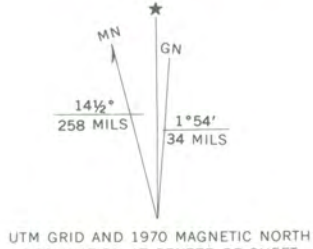
To convert feet to meters

multiply by 3.048

To convert meters to feet

multiply by 3.2808

Maped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey
Control by USGS, USC&GS, and Massachusetts Geodetic Survey
Planimetry by photogrammetric methods from aerial photographs
taken 1939. Topography by planimetric surveys 1943 and 1944
Revised from aerial photographs taken 1968. Field checked 1970
Polyconic projection. 1927 North American datum
10,000-foot grid based on Massachusetts coordinate system,
mainland zone
1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid,
zone 18



THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS
FOR SALE BY U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, RESTON, VIRGINIA 22092
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

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



ATHOL, MASS.
N4230—W7207.5/7.5

1970

AMS 6569 II SW—SERIES V814



P 685 348 121

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Office of the Secretary of State
Michael Joseph Connolly, Secretary

Massachusetts Historical Commission

Valerie A. Talmage

Executive Director

State Historic Preservation Officer

April 27, 1987

Ms. Carol Shull
Chief
National Register of Historic Places
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
P.O. Box 37127
Washington, DC 20013-7127

Dear Ms. Shull,

Enclosed you will find the following nomination forms:

Athol, Athol Historical Society Museum, 1307 Main Street.

Boston(Roxbury), Abbotsford, 300 Walnut Avenue.

Brockton, Brockton Edison Electric Illuminating Power Station, 70 School Street.

Cambridge(Cambridge MRA Amendment), Harvard Graduate Center, 10-26 Everett Street. This is a resubmission. Corrections have been made.

Westborough, West Main Street Historic District, Blake, Church, Fay, Grove, Heath, West Main, Milk Parkman, Phillips, South, West and Whitney Streets (233). Park Building, 32 Main Street, HPCA #10305MA and Henry Block Building, 9-17 South Street, HPCA #10409MA.

Winchendon, Old Center Historic District, roughly bounded by Old County, Baldwinsville, Hale and Teel Roads.

All have been voted eligible by the State Review Board and have been signed by the State Historic Preservation Officer. Owners were notified of pending State Review Board consideration 30-75 days before the meeting and were afforded the opportunity to comment. Comments received to date are attached to the nomination forms.

RECEIVED

MAY 4 1987

NATIONAL
REGISTER

Sincerely,

Betsy Friedberg

Betsy Friedberg

National Register Director

Massachusetts Historical Commission

BF/aet

80 Boylston Street, Boston, Massachusetts 02116 (617) 727-8470