

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED JUN 16 1976

DATE ENTERED AUG 13 1976

DB #76000265

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORMSEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS**1 NAME** * * *
HISTORIC Old Town House

AND/OR COMMON Town House

Town Hall

2 LOCATION
STREET & NUMBER Town House Square

CITY, TOWN Marblehead

VICINITY OF

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT
6th

STATE Massachusetts

CODE 025

COUNTY Essex

CODE 009

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

☐ DISTRICT☒ BUILDING(S)☐ STRUCTURE☐ SITE☐ OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

☐ PUBLIC☒ PRIVATE☐ BOTH

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

☐ IN PROCESS☐ BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

☒ OCCUPIED☐ UNOCCUPIED☐ WORK IN PROGRESS

ACCESSIBLE

☒ YES: RESTRICTED☐ YES: UNRESTRICTED☐ NO

PRESENT USE

☐ AGRICULTURE☐ MUSEUM☐ COMMERCIAL☐ PARK☒ EDUCATIONAL☐ PRIVATE RESIDENCE☐ ENTERTAINMENT☐ RELIGIOUS☒ GOVERNMENT☐ SCIENTIFIC☐ INDUSTRIAL☐ TRANSPORTATION☐ MILITARY☐ OTHER:**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME Town of Marblehead

STREET & NUMBER
Abbot Hall

CITY, TOWN Marblehead

VICINITY OF

STATE Massachusetts 01945

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTIONCOURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Office of the Town Counsel

Town of Marblehead

STREET & NUMBER

Abbott Hall

CITY, TOWN

Marblehead

STATE Massachusetts 01945

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYSTITLE Inventory of the Historic Assets of the Commonwealth
Historic American Buildings Survey (MASS-2-6)

DATE 1967, 1934

☒ FEDERAL ☒ STATE ☐ COUNTY ☐ LOCALDEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS Massachusetts Historical Commission
Library of Congress

CITY, TOWN

Boston

Washington, D.C.

STATE

Massachusetts

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

☒ EXCELLENT
☐ GOOD
☐ FAIR

☐ DETERIORATED
☐ RUINS
☐ UNEXPOSED

CHECK ONE

☐ UNALTERED
☒ ALTERED

CHECK ONE

☒ ORIGINAL SITE
☐ MOVED DATE _____

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Marblehead Town House is located in the actual center of Market Square, the square formed by the intersection of Mugford, State, and Washington Streets. Market Square is in the southeastern part of Marblehead, the site of the original settlement, and also known as Old Marblehead.

The Town Meeting of Marblehead voted, in 1727, to build a Town House, 30' x 50' in the center of the "Square." The Committee established for this purpose was directed to "deal with some workmen. . ." The handsome Georgian design is the product of the skills of local Master Carpenters, and an assumed influence of Nathan Bowen, a member of the building committee, and a noted teacher and author of almanacs.

The two-story gabled structure is three bays wide and five bays deep. It is sheathed in four inch clapboards, and the corners are quoined. Fenestration is six-over-six sash, framed by an architrave, and capped by a projecting, flat, molded pediment. At the attic level of the narrow ends are round windows on center line.

The entrances are in the center bay of the narrow gabled sides, (north and south elevations), and are framed by single fluted pilasters and topped by a triangular pediment.

The original interior consisted of a half basement, a meeting hall on the first floor, and one or two meeting rooms on the second floor. The first floor was occasionally temporarily partitioned for a constable's office, clerk of the Market, or a schoolroom.

In 1755 the chimney at the northwest corner was added for a stove. The building was raised 5'4" in 1836 to create a new ground floor which was built with granite from Rockport. This new space was used to house the police and cells.

The second floor was assigned to the John Goodwin Post 82 of the Grand Army of the Republic as a permanent meeting hall in 1898. This room, with all its GAR accoutrements (flags, furniture, Civil War artifacts, etc.), has been faithfully preserved.

When the Police Department moved to new quarters in 1966, the Town appropriated \$6,000 for the restoration of the Old Town House. The work was supervised by the architect, Charles Strickland, and conducted between 1966 and 1968. On the ground floor, the work consisted of installing granite supports and removal of the cells, which were replaced by a branch library and the office of the Harbor Master. A small vestibule on the first floor was removed and the large meeting hall restored. A new ceiling and staircase were installed along with six wooden reproductions of the original candelabras. The second floor was re-painted. In addition the entire structure was treated with an anti-termite protection and fitted with heat detectors.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

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/HUMANITARIAN
☒ 1700-1799	☐ ART	☐ ENGINEERING	☐ MUSIC	☐ THEATER
☐ 1800-1899	☒ COMMERCE	☐ EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	☐ PHILOSOPHY	☐ TRANSPORTATION
☐ 1900-	☐ COMMUNICATIONS	☐ INDUSTRY	☒ POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	☐ OTHER (SPECIFY)
		☐ INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Marblehead Town House is significant as the first government building in the town and as the scene of a number of important events in local history.

By the early 18th century, Marblehead had grown from a backwater fishing village to one of the most affluent and influential seaports in the colonies. This new wealth and the increasing secularization of government led to the decision of the Town Meeting of 1728: "...That Thare Shall Be a Town Hous Beultt in Said Town This Year . . . on Ye Land Whare the Gale and Cagge Now Stand..." Located at the intersection of the three major "hyways": Main Hyway (Washington Street), Way to Ferry (Mugford Street), and Wharf Street (State Street), it was the center of activity in the town and in close proximity to the Salem Ferry, the Wharfs, and the Boston Road.

As the first government building in the Town, it was here that "... the freeholders and other inhabitants of this Town qualified to vote in Town affairs as the Law directs: are hereby notified to assemble and convene..." Town matters, such as elections, appointments of Fish Cullers or Jury members, setting the rate, or providing for widows of lost seamen, were settled here. The Town House was later the gathering place to protest the Stamp Act and the Boston Port Bill, and where the citizens signed the anti-tea and non-importation agreements. The Committees of Grievances, Correspondence, and Safety were organized here. The Sons of Liberty also met in the Town House. Delegates were selected here for the Ipswich Convention, and Provincial Congress. Later townspeople met in this building to approve the Articles of Confederation, Massachusetts Constitution and later the United States Constitution. When the Declaration of Independence was read aloud at the Town House there was a spontaneous celebration, a free oxen dinner and rum punch. After the Battle of Yorktown, the townspeople met here to prepare a circular letter on the need to protect fishing rights in the Peace Treaty.

Local notables, such as Elbridge Gerry, General John H. Glover, Col. William Lee and James Mugford spoke here. In addition the Town House was host to such dignitaries as Presidents Washington, Adams, Jackson and Munroe, Samuel Adams, John Hancock and the Marquis de Lafayette.

As the center for the affairs of the Town, Old Town House, at various times, served as a school, public market, Constable's office and court.

When the Town government was moved to Abbot Hall in 1876, the Old Town House continued to be used for recruitments, protests, celebrations, orations, plays and an election poll. Presently it is used as the headquarters for the Bicentennial celebrations, the Arts Festival and as a polling place.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Lord & Gamage; Marblehead-The Spirit of '76 Lives Here, Chilton:1972.
Records of the Marblehead Historical Society
Archives of the Town of Marblehead
Roads, Samuel; History and Traditions of Marblehead, Marblehead:1879.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY .04 acre

UTM REFERENCES

A 19 347980 47107320
ZONE EASTING NORTHING
C

B
ZONE EASTING NORTHING
D

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE Joseph R. Orfant, National Register Editor and Virginia Gamage, Chairperson
Bicentennial Commission

ORGANIZATION

Massachusetts Historical Commission

STREET & NUMBER

294 Washington Street

CITY OR TOWN

Boston

DATE

June 3, 1976

TELEPHONE

617-727-8470

STATE

Massachusetts 02108

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

Elizabeth Reed Aradon

TITLE

Executive Director, Massachusetts Historical Commission

DATE

June 6, 1976

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

Acting DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST:

Acting KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

8/13/76

DATE

8-12-76

Property Old Town House

State Mass.

Working Number 6.16.76.3589

Essex

TECHNICAL

Photos 4
Maps 1

CONTROL

OK pl
6.23.76

HISTORIAN

accept
B. Grosvenor
7/9/76

ARCHITECTURAL HISTORIAN

Accept
Soldham
7/20/76

ARCHEOLOGIST

OTHER

HAER

Inventory _____
Review _____

REVIEW UNIT CHIEF

BRANCH CHIEF

Accept
Cole
8-11-76

KEEPER

Hung
8.12.76

National Register Write-up _____
Federal Register Entry 9-7-76

Send-back _____
Re-submit _____

Entered AUG 13 1976

INT:2106-74



Old Town House
Marblehead, MA

Bob Sinclair, Town Photographer
1975

Town of Marblehead, Abbot Hall, Marble-
head, MA 01945

Facing west.

Photograph #1 *44*

Essex Co., Mass.

JUN 16 1976

Doc AUG 13 1976

Bob Sinclair

OFFICIAL PHOTOGRAPHER
TOWN OF MARBLEHEAD

DATE TAKEN

1975

~~No. 3~~ Northeast corner

PROPERTY OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER



Old Town House
Marblehead, MA.

Bob Sinclair, Town Photographer
1975

Town of Marblehead, Abbott Hall, Marblehead,
MA. 01945
Facing east.

Photograph #2 *44*

JUN 16 1976

Doc AUG 13 1976

Bob Sinclair
OFFICIAL PHOTOGRAPHER
TOWN OF MARBLEHEAD
DATE TAKEN

1975

No. 2 - Southwest corner

PROPERTY OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER



Old Town House
Marblehead, MA.

Essex Co. Mass.

Bob Sinclair, Town Photographer
1975

Town of Marblehead, Abbott Hall, Marblehead,
MA. 01945

Facing Southwest

Photograph #3 *44*

JUN 16 1976

205 AUG 13 1976

Bob Sinclair

OFFICIAL PHOTOGRAPHER
TOWN OF MARBLEHEAD

DATE TAKEN

1975

No. 1 - Southeast corner

PROPERTY OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER



Old Town House
Marblehead, Ma.
Samuel Chamberlain
1962

Essex Co. Mass.

Town of Marblehead, Abbott Hall, Marblehead,
MA. 01945
Facing southwest

Photograph #4 *44*

JUN 16 1976

AUG 13 1976 *Doc*

Photograph by
Samuel Chamberlain
of Marblehead
c. 1962

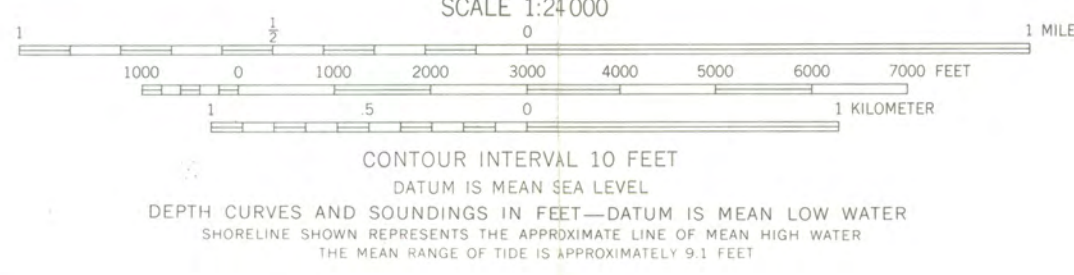
PROPERTY OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

Old Town House
Marblehead, MA.
UTM References:
19/347980/470320

4707-320



Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey
Control by USGS, USC&GS, and Massachusetts Geodetic Survey
Planimetry by photogrammetric methods from aerial photographs
taken 1938. Topography by planetable surveys 1942. Revised
from aerial photographs taken 1969. Field checked 1970
Selected hydrographic data compiled from USC&GS Charts 240 and
241 (1970). This information is not intended for navigational purposes
Polyconic projection. 1927 North American datum
10,000-foot grid based on Massachusetts coordinate system,
mainland zone
1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks,
zone 19, shown in blue
Boundaries in tidewater areas from information supplied
by Massachusetts Department of Public Works
Red tint indicates areas in which only landmark buildings are shown



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



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

MARBLEHEAD NORTH, MASS.
N4230—W7045/7.5

1970

AMS 6869 III SE—SERIES V814



ENTRIES IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

STATE **MASSACHUSETTS**

Date Entered **AUG 13 1976**

Name

Location

Old Town House

**Marblehead
Essex County**

**Lowell Locks and Canals Historic
District**

**Lowell
Middlesex County**

Also Notified

**Hon. Edward M. Kennedy
Hon. Edward W. Brooke
Hon. Michael J. Harrington
Hon. Paul Tsongas
Regional Director, North
Atlantic Region**

**State Historic Preservation Officer
Mrs. Elizabeth R. Amadon
Executive Director
Massachusetts Historical Commission
294 Washington Street
Boston, Massachusetts 02108**

4
MICHAEL J. HARRINGTON
6TH DISTRICT, MASSACHUSETTS

COMMITTEE ON
INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

COMMITTEE ON
GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS

CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20515

WASHINGTON OFFICE:
(202) 225-8020

DISTRICT OFFICES:
POST OFFICE BUILDING
SALEM, MASSACHUSETTS 01970
(617) 745-5800

POST OFFICE BUILDING
LYNN, MASSACHUSETTS 01901
(617) 599-7105

August 16, 1976

Department of the Interior
National Park Service
Dr. William Murtagh
Keeper of the National Register
11 L Street N.W.
Washington, D. C.

Dear Dr. Murtagh,

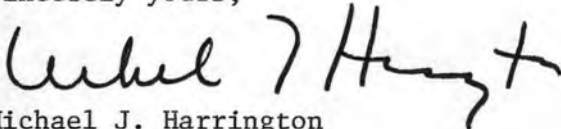
I am writing in response to a constituent request concerning the placement of the Old Town House in Marblehead, Massachusetts, on the National Register of Historic Landmarks. A member of my staff has been in touch with your office in Washington and was informed that the matter was in review having been received for consideration on June 16th.

I urge you to hasten the final decision on this matter. The 1727 Marblehead Town House dates back even earlier than Boston's Faneuil Hall. It was here that the Sons of Liberty met and here where our men gathered for the Boston Tea Party and Bunker Hill. The top floor houses a Civil War Museum.

The history associated with this extraordinary building is great and makes it a significant historical landmark, especially in light of our nation's Bicentennial. I feel it more than qualifies to be on the National Register listing. Any effort to accelerate such a move would be greatly appreciated.

Thank you for your cooperation on this matter.

Sincerely yours,



Michael J. Harrington

MJH:pmc

AUG 23 1976

Honorable Michael J. Harrington
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C.

Dear Mr. Harrington:

I am pleased to acknowledge your inquiry on behalf of one of your constituents concerning the nomination of the Old Town House in Marblehead, Massachusetts, to the National Register of Historic Places.

We appreciate your interest in this matter and will provide you a reply at the earliest opportunity.

Sincerely yours,

(Sgd.) Gary Everhardt

Gary Everhardt
Director

bcc:
LS (2)) w/c of inc.

FNP:EDezendorf:for CRB:pjw:8/23/76

1134-PR

Essex

Branton 8/30
Skinner
Harrington
for
Murtegh
Pages
✓ 8/30
Whelan 8/31

AUG 31 1976

Honorable Michael J. Harrington
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C.

Dear Mr. Harrington:

In response to your August 16 letter, we are pleased to inform you that the Old Towne House in Marblehead, Massachusetts, was entered in the National Register of Historic Places on August 9, 1976.

If we can be of any further service, please let us know. We appreciate your interest in historic preservation.

Sincerely yours,

/Sgd/ Jerry L. Rogers
Acting Associate
Director

bcc:
Mrs. Elizabeth R. Amadon
Executive Director
Massachusetts Historical Commission
294 Washington Street
Boston, Massachusetts 02108) w/c of inc.

Regional Director, North Atlantic)

Director's Reading File P PH L-Curry) IS) IS-D's Chron.

FNP:JSkinner:cbj:8-30-76

(BASIC FILE RETAINED IN PR)

ARCHITECTURAL STYLE: *Georgian*

architect/m.builder:

landscape/garden designer:

interior decorator:

engineer:

artist/artisan:

builder/contractor:

ETHNIC GROUP:

NAMES:

(label role

&

appropriate date)

personal

events

*George Washington, John Adams, Andrew Jackson,
James Monroe, Samuel Adams, John Hancock,
Lafayette - visitors*

institutional

DATES: DATE OF CONSTRUCTION (Specific date or 1/4 of century): *1728*

DATE(S) OF "MAJOR" ALTERATIONS: *1836*

HISTORICALLY SIGNIFICANT DATE(S): *1728-present*

SOURCE:

(OF NOMINATION)

PRIVATE

STATE

LOCAL GOV'T

MUNICIPAL

COUNTY

OTHER

FEDERAL AGENCY:

ACREAGE: (to nearest tenth of an acre)

.1

COMMENTS: (include architectural information here)

#1135 (mass-26), 1934

*description: frame, clapboarded, 2 1/2 stories, rectangular, gabled
roof, identical north and south entrances, each with flanking
pediment; gable end circular windows on each gable end; quoins, modillioned cornice;
Building raised 5' 4" in 1836 to create a new ground floor; ~~which was built of~~
~~granite~~; restored, 1926 - 1968. Georgian.*

Town's
SIGNIFICANCE: (maximum two sentences)

*Marblehead's first
As the first government building in Marblehead, the Old Town House
was the principal meeting place for those involved in Revolutionary activities; and the
site of ratification of the Articles of Confederation, the Massachusetts Constitution, and the
U.S. Constitution; located in the physical center of town, the Old Town Hall has housed
a variety of activities and has continued to the present as an important and active
community center.*

NR Data Sheet

DATE: 7/9/76
 Reviewer: INITIALS: B6
 (NR) DOE AUG 13 1976

NAME AS IT APPEARS IN FEDERAL REGISTER: Old Town House

OTHER NAMES: Town House ; Town Hall (HABS) (sec)

LOCATION:

STREET & NUMBER: Town House Square

CITY, TOWN: Marblehead

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT: 6th

STATE: Massachusetts 025

VICINITY OF

COUNTY: Essex code 009

OWNER OF PROPERTY: (Circle) PRIVATE STATE LOCAL GOV'T MUNICIPAL COUNTY OTHER HABS

ADMINISTRATOR (underline)

FEDERAL (AGENCY NAME):

NPS REGION: (CIRCLE) N. ATLANTIC MID ATLANTIC SOUTHEAST MIDWEST

SOUTHWEST ROCKY MOUNTAIN WEST PACIFIC NORTHWEST

FEATURES:

INTERIOR

Substantially intact-1
 unknown - 4
 not applicable - 7

EXTERIOR

Substantially intact-2
 unknown - 5
 not applicable - 8

ENVIRONS

Substantially intact-3
 unknown - 6
 Not applicable-9

Interior, exterior, environs not intact-0

CONDITION -

EXCELLENT
 GOOD
 FAIR

DETERIORATED
 RUINS
 UNEXPOSED
 Unexcavated

UNALTERED
 ALTERED
 Reconstructed
 Excavated

ORIGINAL SITE
 MOVED
 Unknown

ACCESS -

Yes-restricted

Yes-unrestricted

No access

Unknown

historic district?

YES

NO

WITHIN NATIONAL REGISTER HISTORIC DISTRICT?

YES

NO

IF YES, NAME:

WITHIN NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK?

YES

NO

IF YES, NAME:

ADAPTIVE USE:

YES

NO

Saved?

YES

NO

FUNCTION(S): (use vocabulary words)

then- town meeting; police station; school; market

now- community center; polling place

SIGNIFICANCE:

ARCHAEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC

ARCHAEOLOGY-HISTORIC

AGRICULTURE

ARCHITECTURE

ART

COMMERCE

COMMUNICATIONS

CONSERVATION

ECONOMICS

EDUCATION

ENGINEERING

EXPLORATION

INDUSTRY

INVENTION

LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE

LAW/Gov't/politics

LITERATURE

MILITARY

MUSIC

PHILOSOPHY

POETRY/GOVERNMENT

RELIGION

SCIENCE

SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN

TRANSPORTATION

OTHER (SPECIFY)

entertainment

health

recreation

settlement

socio/cultural

urban & commun

planning

Claims

"first"

YES

NO

"oldest"

YES

NO

"only"

YES

NO

first gov't building in town

DAILY EVENING ITEM
LYNN, MA.
D. 01903

Class.
Hist.

AUG 31

New

Essex

Town House in register

MARBLEHEAD— The Old Town House has been accepted for inclusion in the National Register of Historical Places by the Massachusetts Historical Commission, according to State Secretary Paul Guzzi, who chairs the commission.

Located in Town House Square, it was the first government building in the town and the scene of many important events in local history.

The building was voted for construction at the Town Meeting of 1728. Through the years, the Town House was host to such dignitaries as Presidents George Washington, John Adams, Andrew Jackson and James Munroe and Samuel Adams,

John Hancock and Marquis de Lafayette. It served variously as a school, public market, constable's office and court. When the town government was moved to Abbot Hall in 1876, the Old Town House continued to be used for recruitments, protests, celebrations, orations, plays and as an election polling place.

In 1966, the town appropriated \$8,000 for its restoration. The work was subsequently supervised by architect Charles Strickland, was transformed into a branch library and office for the harbor master. The entire structure was treated with antitermite protection and fitted with heat detectors.