

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

915

JUL 16 2001

NATIONAL HISTORIC PRESERVATION
NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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 GEORGETOWN CENTRAL SCHOOL
other names/site number MEMORIAL TOWN HALL (preferred)

2. Location

street & number 1 LIBRARY STREET N/A not for publication
city or town GEORGETOWN N/A vicinity
state MASSACHUSETTS code MA county ESSEX code 009 zip code 01833

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

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

Brona Simon
Signature of certifying official/Title Brona Simon
Massachusetts Historical Commission, Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

July 9, 2001
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

ENTERED AUG 30 2001 Date of Action

MEMORIAL TOWN HALL

Name of Property

ESSEX COUNTY, MASS.

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 1 building
sites
structures
objects
1 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)

EDUCATION/School

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

GOVERNMENT/town hall

7. Description**Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions)

LATE 19th and EARLY 20th CENTURY REVIVALS/

Colonial Revival

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation BRICK

walls WOOD

roof STONE/slate

other

Narrative Description

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

SEE ATTACHED CONTINUATION SHEET #7

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National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 1

MEMORIAL TOWN HALL
GEORGETOWN (ESSEX), MA

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

The Georgetown Central School, now known as the Memorial Town Hall, stands near the historic commercial center of Georgetown (pop. 6,400), a rural community of about 13 square miles located approximately 28 miles north of Boston near the New Hampshire border. The Town Hall stands on the northeastern half of a 2.1-acre lot at the southwest corner of Central and Library Streets, facing north onto Library Street. This lot overlooks the junction of two state highways, Route 97 (Central Street) and Route 133 (Andover Street), linking Georgetown to the neighboring towns of Rowley, Boxford, and Groveland. Built in 1905 and designed in the Colonial Revival style by the Boston architectural firm of Cooper and Bailey, the building underwent a substantial rehabilitation in 1999-2000. Major character-defining features (including roof, windows and doors, clapboard walls, trim elements, front porch and rear porte cochere) were repaired or replaced, using historic photographs and other documentation to guide the work, so the building retains considerable integrity of design, if not all of its original materials. The highly visible and well-preserved Town Hall appears to be one of the few examples of Colonial Revival design in all of Georgetown.

The intersection of Central and Andover Streets has long been associated with Georgetown's civic life, dating back to the late 18th century when a one-room schoolhouse was built there. The Memorial Town Hall, originally constructed as a grammar school, was in fact the third educational building (and the second town hall) to be erected at or near the juncture of Central and Andover. The area north and west of the present Town Hall retains enough of its 19th century character to offer a good sense of what it looked like when the grammar school building was constructed in 1905. Adjacent surviving historic structures include: the Gothic Revival style First Congregational Church (built 1874) on Andover Street; its neighbor, a Greek Revival house at 1 Andover Street; and six residential structures exhibiting Greek Revival and Italianate elements on either side of Central Street. (Some of these buildings have been considerably altered.) Within the triangle formed by Central, Andover and Library Streets stands a Soldier's Monument, erected in 1874 and dedicated to Georgetown's Civil War veterans. The Town Hall's immediate neighbor to the west is a Gothic-style cottage, one of a series of mostly 19th century residences lining this end of Andover Street.

The area to the east and south of the present Town Hall, however, has changed considerably since 1905. Where once was a large open space on the east side of Central Street is now a gas station and the mid-20th century Georgetown Shopping Center. Directly south of the Town Hall on Central Street is a Greek Revival residence, with only its doorway still intact, and another, more recent, commercial strip mall. Southwest of the Town Hall is the municipal public safety building, completed in 1988. Although this building shares the Town Hall's lot, it is a non-contributing resource to this nomination.

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**MEMORIAL TOWN HALL
GEORGETOWN (ESSEX), MA**

The Town Hall occupies a prominent site and can be seen from some distance away, especially when approached from the north. Perched on a small rise, the building is set back approximately 100 feet from Library Street and about 80 feet from Central Street. The eastern side of the lot rises above the public sidewalk along Central Street: a fieldstone retaining wall (ranging from about 2.5 to 4 feet tall), topped with a 3-foot chain link fence, runs along this eastern boundary line and curves around the northeast and southeast corners. The chain link fence continues around the southern and western boundaries of the lot, also enclosing the adjacent town public safety building (which shares the lot with the Town Hall). Deciduous trees and shrubs line the east, south and west property lines.

Two driveways lead uphill from Library Street, flanking the building directly along its east and west sides. A walkway runs perpendicularly between Library Street and the building's main entrance. To the west of the walkway are a small paved parking lot, holding about seven cars, and a narrow strip of lawn. East of the walkway is an expanse of sloping lawn that stretches around the side of the building and down to the retaining wall. A third driveway on Central Street provides access to the rear of the Town Hall and to the adjacent public safety building. Directly behind the Town Hall is another, larger parking lot. All paving on the site is asphalt; however, the accessible rear entrance has a new skirt of red brick pavers outlined with granite.

A flagpole bearing the American flag stands at the foot of the walkway near Library Street, along with a wooden bench and a small granite marker. The granite marker is inscribed: "Rene Gagnon Post #211, American Legion, Georgetown, Mass., in Memory of Paul Meader 1914-1998." (Paul Meader, a local historian, was actively involved in civic affairs as well as the American Legion; he was known as "Mr. Georgetown." Gagnon was one of the five Marines photographed raising the flag atop Iwo Jima's Mount Suribachi.) Also in the front lawn, on the east side of the walkway, stands the only exterior signage on the property: a wooden sign approximately 5 feet tall, containing the words "Georgetown Town Offices," and the names of 17 specific municipal departments. At the bottom of the sign are the words, "Home of Old Nancy," a reference to a historic cannon displayed in the Town Hall lobby (currently in storage), and "Gift of the Rene Gagnon Post #211 American Legion."

Elements of the early Colonial Revival style found in Georgetown's Town Hall include: the two-story, nearly square massing (9 bays of windows across its north and south facades, 8 bays across the east and west); the hipped roof; the symmetrical fenestration, with a centered door in both north and south elevations, and windows aligning both horizontally and vertically; the accentuation of the front door with a porch supported by slender columns; and the wood, true-divided-light, double-hung sash windows with multi-pane glazing in the upper sash (8 lights of translucent "waffle" glass over 2 lights of clear glass). The pedimented dormer over the main entrance was also favored in the early Colonial Revival period (before 1910). The use of symmetry extends to the building's interior plan, as well: both front (north) and

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MEMORIAL TOWN HALL
GEORGETOWN (ESSEX), MA

rear (south) entrances are aligned on axis in the ground floor plan, and four former classrooms (two on each side) flank the central hallway on both the first and second floors.

(Note: The Town Hall has undergone an extensive rehabilitation since 1999, and some of the interior work is still being completed. The work was partially funded through a Massachusetts Preservation Projects Fund grant, and supervised by the Massachusetts Historical Commission. During this project all inappropriate late 20th century alterations were removed from the exterior, which was then restored and repaired, with some original features replaced in kind. Historic photos, physical evidence and other documentation guided this work. Aside from some alterations enhancing accessibility at the rear of the building, the exterior today closely resembles its original historic appearance. Inside, classrooms have been altered for office use, and mechanical and circulation systems have been upgraded, but many original interior elements remain. In describing architectural features herein, all repairs, replacements in kind, painting, and alterations date from 1999-2000 unless otherwise noted.)

The hipped roof is covered in new dark gray slate, matching the original color; copper downspouts are also new, and the original wooden gutters and roof drains were repaired or replaced in kind. Two tall, broad, rectangular red brick chimneys rise on the east and west roof slopes, perpendicular to Library Street; these have been repaired and repointed. A square-shaped elevator headhouse, also clad in brick, has recently been added to the south roof slope just east of center.

The exterior walls are sheathed in clapboards, painted yellow, with wooden trim elements painted a deeper yellow. (These historic paint colors were determined through paint analysis.) The building is very simply trimmed with pairs of Tuscan pilasters at each of the building's four corners and a plain, projecting cornice. What little other ornament exists on the building accentuates the front entrance, and a porte cochere marks the rear entrance (see below). Two louvered metal vents (painted out to match the walls) have been punched through the center right and center left of the north and south walls, between the first and second floor windows. A substantial but simple belt course wraps around the building just above the raised red brick foundation, recently repaired and repointed; the sills are granite. The basement windows (previously wood and vinyl), are vinyl replacements; applied flat muntins divide the frosted glass into four panes.

The primary façade (north), facing Library Street, is arranged into nine bays of windows, grouped in threes on both the first and second floors. On the left and right sides of the façade, all the windows (original, recently repaired) are 8/2 wood double hung sash with translucent "waffle" glass in the upper sashes and clear glass in the lower sashes. Each window is surrounded with simple wood moldings, and a continuous sill connects each triplet. (All of the 8/2 windows on the building have triple-track aluminum

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GEORGETOWN (ESSEX), MA

storm/screen windows, painted white, mounted in front of them.) The middle 3 bays project slightly from the main block, framed by pairs of slender Tuscan pilasters and topped by a projecting pediment. All of the windows therein are also original, and have recently been repaired. In the pediment itself, above the cornice, is a round "oeil-de-boeuf (ox-eye)" window with elliptical tracery. At the second floor level is a triplet of wood double hung windows; the center window matches the other 8/2 windows on the building, while the two slim side windows are 4/1. These three windows are framed with Tuscan pilasters on each side and simple lintels above; a wood sill connects them. On the ground floor, on either side of the doorway, are two more ox-eye windows, shaped as narrow ovals, with elliptical tracery.

An ornamental porch with a flat roof covers the main entrance. This porch was recently rebuilt with a curved granite stoop, a brick floor, and four granite steps; a new, simple wrought-iron railing curves up along both sides of the porch steps. The denticulated porch cornice is supported at its front corners by Tuscan columns and by Tuscan pilasters where the porch roof meets the building. A pair of new mahogany doors is recessed within the entryway; each door has a single recessed panel in its bottom half, topped with a window of clear glass divided with exterior muntins into a pattern of three "X"s, one atop another (this configuration was determined from historic photographs). An original triple-light transom with frosted glass is mounted over the doors (recently repaired and reglazed); the transom lights are each detailed with exterior muntin bars forming an "X."

The east elevation, facing Central Street, and the west elevation are identical. The windows on both the ground and second floors are grouped in fours on either side of a blank expanse in the wall. The window configurations and surrounds are the same as on the main façade, with each group of four connected by a continuous sill. Other than the plain Tuscan corner pilasters, cornice and beltcourse, no other ornamentation exists on either side. Several copper gutters stretch down both elevations, and a simple iron fire escape covers the right-hand bay of windows on the west side, near the rear of the building.

The south elevation faces the rear parking lot; like the north elevation, it is divided into nine bays of three windows each. The window configurations and surrounds are the same as elsewhere on the building, with groups of three (connected by continuous sills) at the first and second floor levels placed to the right and left of a projecting center bay marking the rear entrance. This center bay projects approximately four feet from the plane of the wall. In its center, between the first and second floors (illuminating public restrooms on the landing of the rear stairwell) is a 6/2 wood double hung window, matched by similar windows in the wall on either side of the projecting bay. (All three of these 6/2 windows have the same translucent and clear glass found in the 8/2 windows elsewhere in the building.) No other windows appear in the projecting bay.

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At grade, a handicap-accessible entrance sits underneath the projecting bay, sheltered by a porte-cochere extending approximately 10 feet from the building. (Note the porte-cochere is flanked by parking spaces and thus is no longer available to vehicles driving underneath it.) The porte-cochere has four Tuscan columns (wood with granite bases) marking its corners, and a new flat asphalt roof. The new single-leaf accessible rear door is mahogany and detailed to match the front doors. Wheelchair access is provided at grade by means of a paved brick skirt with granite trim, pitched to meet the threshold of the door; a new elevator is available just inside the door. A previous, massive wheelchair ramp has been removed.

Although the interior of the building has been altered to accommodate municipal office uses, the original architectural drawings by Cooper & Bailey indicate that the building's floor plan remains largely intact on the first and second floors. The basement level housed the children's playrooms and toilets, (one each for boys and girls), along with a boiler room, two furnace rooms, and a fuel room. On the first floor were four classrooms, each with its own cloakroom and closet, arranged two by two on either side of a central hallway. Stairwells were provided at both the front and rear of the building; off the rear stairwell, between the first and second floors, was the principal's office. The second floor layout was identical to that of the first floor.

The large chimneys accommodated an extensive heating and ventilation system that provided both fresh and warm air throughout the entire building. Four heaters and a boiler were installed in the basement; nine separate flues were built into the base of each of the massive chimney stacks to distribute air and heat to the classrooms and hallways above, and to ventilate the toilets and furnaces. (Only five of these flues actually reach to the top of each chimney). Nothing in the original drawings indicates that this system was particularly innovative, but prior to 1905 Georgetown schools routinely lacked adequate light, heat, and fresh air (see Section 8), so the fact that such a system was provided in this building was something of an innovation in the town.

Today, upon entering the front door of the Town Hall, one comes into a small entrance hall facing a stairwell. On the left side of the stairwell, a flight of stairs leads down to the basement which contains storage rooms, public restrooms and a safe; on the right, a few steps lead up to the main lobby. Flanking the lobby are four former classrooms, now subdivided for office use. Each classroom appears to have had two doors, and at least four of the original doors (dark varnished wood with a square panel underneath a large clear glass light) remain, although all the doors have been fitted with accessible hardware. All of the offices have had wood-framed customer-service windows cut into their lobby walls. At the back of the building is a new enclosure for the rear stairwell (including an accessible door), with the new elevator to its left.

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GEORGETOWN (ESSEX), MA

Continuing up the front stairwell to the second floor, the configuration of rooms is nearly identical to that on the ground floor, except that some office space continues behind the stairwell, at the front of the building. At least four of the original classroom doors have been retained, and customer service windows have been cut into the hallway walls of the two former classrooms at the front of the building. At the back of the building, again, is a new enclosure for the rear stairwell and the new elevator. In the rear stairwell at this level, a rebuilt flight of stairs leads up to the unfinished attic (fitted with a new accessible door, although the elevator does not reach the attic). Also in the rear stairwell, public restrooms are situated off the landing between floors (overlooking the porte-cochere and parking lot).

Many original details survive inside, including door surrounds, several classroom doors, wainscoting, picture rails, and ceiling moldings.

Archaeological Description

While no prehistoric sites are located on the Town Hall property, it is possible that sites are present. Two sites are recorded in the general area (within one mile). Environmental characteristics of the property represent several locational criteria (slope, soil drainage, proximity to wetlands), that are favorable indicators for prehistoric sites. The property is located within 1000 feet of wetlands including a small pond and swampland within the Parker River drainage. Land surfaces on the property range from relatively level to sloping, creating the small rise on which the Town Hall is located. Well drained soils are also present, however, ledge, which may inhibit drainage, was also common prior to leveling of the lot for construction of the Central High School and Town Hall in 1855-56. The presence of ledge might also indicate the potential for lithic source areas and rock shelter sites on the property prior to blasting of the ledge and building construction. Given the above information, the potential for the recovery of prehistoric resources on the nominated property is low. Blasting of ledge on the property and subsequent construction of the 1856 High School and Town Hall and present structure have impacted any prehistoric resources that may have been present on the property.

A moderate to high potential exists for locating historic archaeological resources on the nominated property. A meetinghouse was present on the parcel prior to preparation of the site for construction of the Central High School and Town Hall. Structural evidence of the meetinghouse foundation, outbuildings and evidence of occupational related features may have survived after the meetinghouse was moved, however, blasting and grading of the site prior to construction of the High School and Town Hall would have impacted any historic resources that predated 1855. Structural evidence may survive from the High School and Town Hall that burned to the ground in 1898.

(end)

MEMORIAL 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.) SEE ATTACHED CONTINUATION SHEET #9

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 # _____

ESSEX COUNTY, MASS.

County and State

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

EDUCATION**ARCHITECTURE****Period of Significance**

1905- 1951

Significant Dates

1905

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

COOPER AND BAILEY

Primary location of additional data:

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

Name of repository:

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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MEMORIAL TOWN HALL
GEORGETOWN (ESSEX), MA

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Memorial Town Hall, originally constructed as the Georgetown Central School in 1905, is a well preserved Colonial Revival structure designed by the Boston architectural firm of Cooper and Bailey. Prominently situated on Library Street, on a rise overlooking the intersection of two major thoroughfares, Andover and Central Streets, the Central School was the third educational and civic structure to be built at this intersection since the late 18th century. Converted to municipal office use in 1974, and fully rehabilitated in 1999-2000, it retains most of its exterior and many of its interior historic architectural elements. As a leading public building that has played an integral role in Georgetown's social, educational and political history for nearly a century, and a well-preserved example of a Colonial Revival institutional property, Memorial Town Hall retains integrity of location, design, setting, materials, feeling and association, and fulfills the National Register criteria A and C on the local level.

Georgetown is a rural community located in Essex County in northeastern Massachusetts. The first English settlers arrived in this area in 1639, after purchasing a large land grant north of Ipswich. (Today five towns occupy this land grant: Rowley, Georgetown, Byfield, Groveland and Boxford.) The settlers established a small community in the eastern portion of this land grant, and dedicated the western areas to common grazing land. They named their new settlement Rowley, after their hometown in Yorkshire. In 1669, one John Spofford moved westward several miles away from the village of Rowley; other families followed Spofford, and together they established a community called New Rowley. By 1731, New Rowley was recognized as a separate parish within the town of Rowley.

The first New Rowley schoolhouse was built in 1739; two other schoolhouses had opened by 1753, by which time a curriculum was available to both boys and girls (although girls were only taught reading, spelling and sewing). Sometime before 1795, a schoolhouse was constructed at what is now the junction of Central and Andover Streets. Known as the Centre Schoolhouse, it appears on an 1830 map of the Town of Rowley, along with six other schoolhouses serving various parts of the New Rowley Parish. All of these schoolhouses had only one room, and most were approximately 20 feet long and 16 feet wide. (Today, only one still survives: School #3 was relocated in 1984 to the site of the Captain Samuel Brocklebank House, a museum operated by the Georgetown Historical Society. School #3 has been preserved and maintained by the town's Historical Commission.)

The 1830 map also indicates that of Rowley's 312 dwelling houses, over 100 of them stood in New Rowley, which was growing into a center of the tanning and shoe manufacturing industries. By 1838, about 1,500 people (representing approximately two-thirds of Rowley's total population) lived in New Rowley. That year, New Rowley successfully petitioned the Massachusetts General Assembly to

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MEMORIAL TOWN HALL
GEORGETOWN (ESSEX), MA

incorporate as a separate town, and was shortly renamed Georgetown. Its form of government, the town meeting and an elected Board of Selectmen, persists to this day.

Over the next decade, Georgetown continued to grow: the shoe industry prospered, and other new businesses were introduced, including ice cutting and the manufacture of wooden furniture, crates, and caskets. Town meetings, initially conducted at a local hotel or in the upper portion of a residential dwelling, soon outgrew the capacity of these small facilities. Meanwhile, in 1840 the Centre Schoolhouse had been demolished. Although seven other one-room schools continued to operate, they too were increasingly unable to cope with a burgeoning school-age population, or with a growing national trend toward teaching more advanced subjects to older students. By the early 1850s, some residents had begun to advocate for Georgetown to establish its first high school.

A proposal to construct a suitable building for both town government and high school purposes was introduced at the Annual Town Meetings of 1852, 1853 and 1854, and defeated each time (apparently by residents in outlying areas unwilling to bear the expense). Finally, the project was approved in 1855. A site was chosen on top of a rise at the corner of Library and Central Streets, perhaps 200 feet south of where the previous Centre Schoolhouse had stood. (The new site was already occupied by a meetinghouse, which was relocated elsewhere on Central Street and turned it into a residence; it still stands today.) After the granite ledge on the hilltop was blasted to the proper level for new construction, building commenced in August 1855 and, in September 1856, the new Central High School and Town Hall (also called Town House) was completed. The high school occupied the first floor, and town offices the second.

An 1887 map of Georgetown shows the High School and Town Hall at the base of "Central Square," a triangle formed by the intersection of Central, Andover and Library Streets. In the middle of this triangle, on the site of the original Centre Schoolhouse, stood a Civil War memorial (erected 1874, still standing). On Library Street, perhaps 200 feet east of Central Street, was the town's public library (erected 1866); two churches stood on the Andover Street side of the triangle. Central Square was only one block south of the heart of Georgetown's central business district, and clearly functioned as a civic center of town.

On the night of December 14, 1898, the High School and Town Hall burned to the ground. The fire, sparked by a faulty chimney, was fortunately contained to the one building, and no human losses were sustained. The weekly *Georgetown Advocate*, reporting the fire two days later, mourned a true loss to the community:

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MEMORIAL TOWN HALL
GEORGETOWN (ESSEX), MA

The Town Hall of Georgetown, to this town what the Forum was to the ancient Romans; the place where her sons have met year after year to discuss the questions which have from time to time been before the public; where hundreds have assembled to listen to the famous speakers of half a century; where many received their diplomas at the annual commencement of the Georgetown High School; in short, the focus of all the varied interests of the town, is no more.

Like all public property in Georgetown at the time, the building was not insured, and its loss was valued at \$12,000, a devastating blow to the town's finances. High school classes (about 50 students in grades 9 through 12) were temporarily relocated to the Central Fire Station on Middle Street, while the town offices moved into an East Main Street location.

At the Annual Town Meeting of March 1899, voters established a committee "to investigate the whole matter of erecting a new Town House, as to the needs of the town and the approximate cost of plans that may be proposed." But Georgetown faced not only the need to rebuild its high school and town hall, but also two other problems that could potentially place significant financial demands on the town: the deteriorated and unhygienic condition of Georgetown's one-room schoolhouses, which were overcrowded, poorly ventilated, poorly heated, and poorly lit; and the need for a new home for the Peabody Library, which had far outgrown its original structure on Library Street. (Building conditions in the town's seven school districts were already a serious problem by 1898, when a new state law required all Massachusetts children aged 7-14 to attend school during the entire school year.) Public debate about how to resolve these four problems (the town hall, the high school, the other schools, and the library) continued over the next ten years.

The high school situation was the first to be resolved, through the generosity of a long deceased local businessman, John Perley (died 1860). Perley's will had established a trust for the purposes of constructing a "free school" in Georgetown. By the time of the high school fire, the Perley trust had grown sufficiently to endow the free school and pay for its construction. In early 1899 the *Georgetown Advocate* suggested, as cost-saving measures, that the Perley Free School should take in the public high school, and that the Peabody Library should be moved to the site of the former Town House, where it might be expanded to also function as a town hall. The Trustees of the Perley Free School agreed to "adopt" the public high school, and at the Annual Town Meeting of March 1899 voters approved the proposal. At that same meeting, they also tabled the suggestion about moving the library, and instead requested a feasibility study for building a new town hall. Town meetings, meanwhile, were held in Library Hall (the original Peabody Library building).

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MEMORIAL TOWN HALL
GEORGETOWN (ESSEX), MA

At the Annual Town Meeting of March 1900, voters decided that a new town hall should be built at a cost not to exceed \$15,000. (The question of the library was not discussed.) Two months later, at a Special Town Meeting, the Building Committee reported that it had asked two architectural firms to submit proposals for a town hall. The proposal by Cooper & Bailey of Boston found favor with a majority of the committee, but voters deferred any further action on the project to the next year's town meeting.

By September 1900 the Perley Free School had opened, enrolling along with its own pupils Georgetown's public school students in grades 10-12. Ninth graders were squeezed into the back room of one of the grammar schools, making a bad situation there even worse. (Ten schoolhouses, nine of which still had only one room, enrolled a total of 359 students in 1900.) The Superintendent of Schools' annual report of 1900 lamented that "the 9th grade is now located in a room 20 feet by 17 feet by 10 feet. This room was built originally for little children and was never suitable even for them." He observed with further alarm that in all the schools, the students' health as well as their ability and willingness to learn had noticeably declined, as had their teachers' welfare and morale. The Superintendent strongly urged that the money saved by privatization of the high school should be put toward the construction of a single, central school building to serve all the town's children.

At the Annual Town Meeting in March 1901 voters decided to indefinitely postpone a decision about a new Town Hall. No reason was noted in the meeting minutes, but clearly the situation with the schools had become a greater priority, because the voters also established a committee to investigate the condition of all the school buildings and to ascertain the needs of all seven school districts. The following year's meeting in March 1902 established another committee "to consider the question of abandonment of the present schoolhouses, the erection of a new building near the center of the population, and the transportation of the children from the outskirts to the center of the town." At the next year's meeting in March 1903, this committee's request for another year to complete its work was granted.

Between March 1904 and January 1905, Georgetown held nine town meetings relative to the questions of building a new central school and library. (This is especially notable given the relatively slow pace at which the issues had progressed to date.) At the March 7 Annual Town Meeting, voters approved the consolidation of the town's seven school districts, and the construction of "a suitable eight-room building for the use of the consolidated schools on the old Town House lot, at a cost not to exceed \$20,000." Voters apparently concerned about the cost of both the new school and library subsequently called three Special Town Meetings in March, May and August 1904 in an attempt to rescind the approval of the projects; these efforts all failed. Finally, on September 22, 1904, the cornerstone of the new Central School Building was laid on the old Town House lot. (Town records noted, without explanation, that no public ceremony was held, perhaps due to the controversy surrounding the project.) Construction

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8

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MEMORIAL TOWN HALL
GEORGETOWN (ESSEX), MA

proceeded into the fall and winter of 1904, but the controversy continued, fueled by new allegations of financial misconduct relative to the awarding of building contracts. Five more Special Town Meetings held between October and December revealed some townspeople's ongoing suspicions of both the school and library projects. Architect E.S. Bailey spoke briefly at a meeting on December 27, but no details of his testimony were recorded.

After nine public meetings in ten months, local residents had apparently resolved all of their concerns about the Central School construction. At the next Annual Town Meeting on March 6, 1905, voters authorized the Building Committee to take from the existing schoolhouses all desks and furnishings that could be reused in the new school. At a Special Town Meeting on June 6, 1905, voters accepted the Central School as built, and authorized the purchase of insurance for it in the amount of \$15,000. The Central School opened its doors for the school year that fall.

Meanwhile, the issue of a new town hall, dormant for several years, came to light again in 1905 when, at a Special Town Meeting on June 6, voters approved the construction of a vault for town records in the "Brick Schoolhouse," one of the recently abandoned old schools. (It was subsequently discovered that this would be too costly, so town records were instead sent to the Georgetown National Bank for storage.) At the Annual Town Meeting of March 1906, the town set up a committee to investigate the possibility of converting either the Brick Schoolhouse or the original Library Hall into a town hall. At Town Meeting the following year, voters approved the adaptation of the old library building for town hall purposes. Library Hall hosted town meetings until it was demolished in the 1930s; after that, other spaces served the town's needs until the early 1970s.

The architectural firm of Cooper & Bailey practiced in Boston from 1899 to 1914. Frank Irving Cooper joined the partnership of Elmer Smith Bailey and William George Kerr in 1898; Kerr apparently left the partnership shortly thereafter. The Mass. Historical Commission's statewide index of architects lists Elmer S. Bailey as the architect of the Horace Mann Primary School in Amesbury, and also lists Cooper & Bailey as architects of the Peabody Library (1907) in Georgetown. Curiously, very little other information about Bailey was found: his name is listed in two other indices of local architects at the Boston Public Library, but only in connection with Kerr, and later Cooper & Bailey. Furthermore, no further information about the firm's work was discovered outside of Georgetown town records, which indicate that Cooper & Bailey were initially hired in 1900 to design the Central School, and served as its architects through at least the end of 1904. Stranger still, Frank Irving Cooper's entry in Withey's *Biographical Dictionary of American Architects (Deceased)* does not even mention his partnership with Bailey: Withey states that Cooper practiced independently in Boston from 1892 to 1914.

(continued)

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Continuation Sheet

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MEMORIAL TOWN HALL
GEORGETOWN (ESSEX), MA

Frank Irving Cooper made his reputation as a school architect. Born in Taunton, Mass. in 1867, Cooper began studying architecture at the age of 19 under H.H. Richardson in Boston. He also trained with Boston architects Henry Van Brunt and Shepley, Ruttan and Coolidge. In 1890 he went to Pittsburgh to design a number of industrial buildings for George Westinghouse, including the Standard Underground Cable Company and the Central Electric Lighting Company Works. A commission to design the Bristol County Courthouse in Taunton brought Cooper back to Massachusetts in 1892. After his partnership with Bailey dissolved in 1914, he formed the Frank I. Cooper Corporation, and during the next two decades he specialized in designing public and educational buildings, including over 200 schools. In addition to the Central School in Georgetown, among his other works are the Medford, Mass. Public Library, the Ashburnham, Mass. Town Hall, Clark Pathological Laboratory at Amherst College, and high schools in Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island, Vermont, and New Hampshire. With his expertise in school design, Cooper served on Boards of Education in various cities, and also served as a member of the Boston City Planning Commission. He died in October 1933.

In both its exterior design and its interior plan, the Town Hall exhibits many elements of the Colonial Revival style, which was just coming into vogue in America when Frank Irving Cooper began to study and practice architecture in 1886. After the United States celebrated its centennial in 1876 and Americans became increasingly fascinated with their own history, a growing trend in architecture was to seek inspiration in European design traditions as adapted in Colonial America. Between 1880 and 1940, the term "Colonial Revival" came to refer to architectural forms and details taken from English and Dutch precedents. Cooper's 15-year partnership with Elmer S. Bailey coincided with the early period of Colonial Revival, when 18th century precedents were rather freely interpreted. The popularity of the style for both residential and public buildings likely influenced Cooper & Bailey's design choice for Georgetown's Central School, but that choice may also have consciously acknowledged the building's place in Georgetown's history of public education, which stretched back to the Colonial era. The school building's 2-story massing, interior layout of eight classrooms (all with numerous windows to provide light and fresh air), and central heating, also symbolized the modernization of Georgetown's educational system: the consolidation of many one-room neighborhood schoolhouses into a single school serving all the elementary and middle grades.

The Central School housed grades 1-9 until 1919, when the junior high school relocated to the Perley Free School. Ironically, in 1935 that school also suffered a fire, and during the time of its reconstruction all classes for grades 1-12 were held in the Central School. The Town took back the management of the junior high and high schools in 1936 when the renamed Perley High School reopened. As the 20th century progressed, Georgetown's school-age population eventually outgrew the Central School. In 1951, a new grade school was constructed near the Perley High School; ten years later, a new Georgetown junior and

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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Section number 8 Page 7

MEMORIAL TOWN HALL
GEORGETOWN (ESSEX), MA

senior High School was built on Winter Street; and finally in 1972, the Penn Brook Middle School opened, as did the town's first public kindergarten.

The Central School, no longer needed as an educational facility, was converted to municipal offices in 1974. Renamed Memorial Town Hall in honor of the late Fred True, a local resident who gave many decades of volunteer service to the town, it has remained in public use ever since. (Mr. True's name, along with the names of other dedicated town servants, is inscribed in a plaque mounted inside the building.) Despite some alterations, the interior layout has survived largely intact, and original details such as interior doors, wainscotting, and moldings are still visible.

The Police Department occupied the Town Hall basement from 1975-1988, and during that time built holding cells at the front of the building, blocked up some windows, and added a side entrance; these changes have since been removed. (A new public safety building for both the Police and Fire Departments was completed behind the Town Hall in 1988.) The basement is currently being renovated. An historic cannon, dubbed "Old Nancy," formerly displayed on a replica of a sailing ship's deck in the Town Hall lobby, is currently in storage, but is expected to be put back on display in the basement once renovations there are finished.

In 1999 the Town received a Massachusetts Preservation Projects Fund grant to help finance a major rehabilitation project for the Town Hall, now nearly completed. The Massachusetts Historical Commission has approved all work done on the building to date under the MPPF grant. By means of a preservation restriction recorded in August 1999 by the Town of Georgetown in the Essex County Registry of Deeds, the Town has agreed to maintain and preserve the historic architectural features of the building.

Archaeological Significance

Historic archaeological resources described above have the potential to contribute information on educational and civic patterns of land use that characterized the juncture of Andover and Central Streets during the 19th century. At least three educational buildings and two town halls have been constructed in that area. Additional historical research and archaeological testing can help document the date of construction and techniques used in building the earlier meetinghouse. Similar research may also contribute information relating to architectural details for the meetinghouse and later Central High School and Town Hall (1856) that burned in 1898. Detailed analysis of the contents from any occupational related features (trash pits, privies, wells) associated with the meetinghouse may also contribute important social, cultural and economic information on the inhabitants of Georgetown.

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Continuation Sheet

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MEMORIAL TOWN HALL
GEORGETOWN (ESSEX), MA

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(end)

MEMORIAL TOWN HALL

Name of Property

ESSEX COUNTY, MASS.

County, State

10. Geographical DataAcreage of Property 2.1 ACRES**UTM References See continuation sheet.**

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

1. 19 336750 4731720
Zone Easting Northing

2. Zone Easting Northing

3. Zone Easting Northing

4. Zone Easting Northing

See continuation sheet**Verbal Boundary Description**

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.) SEE CONTINUATION SHEET #10

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.) SEE CONTINUATION SHEET #10

11. Form Prepared Byname/title Kathryn J. Cavanaugh, Preservation Consultant, with Betsy Friedberg, NR Director, MHCorganization Massachusetts Historical Commission date July 2001street & number 220 Morrissey Boulevard telephone 617-727-8470city 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. SEE CONTINUATION SHEET #10**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 GEORGETOWNstreet & number 1 LIBRARY STREET telephone 978-352-5755city or town GEORGETOWN state MA zip code 01833**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 Reduction Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 10 Page 1

MEMORIAL TOWN HALL
GEORGETOWN (ESSEX), MA

GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Verbal Boundary Description:

The Central School/Memorial Town Hall occupies the northeastern half of Lot 58, at the southwest corner of Library and Central Streets, as shown on the Town of Georgetown Assessor's Map numbered 11A (see copy attached, with the property outlined).

Boundary Justification:

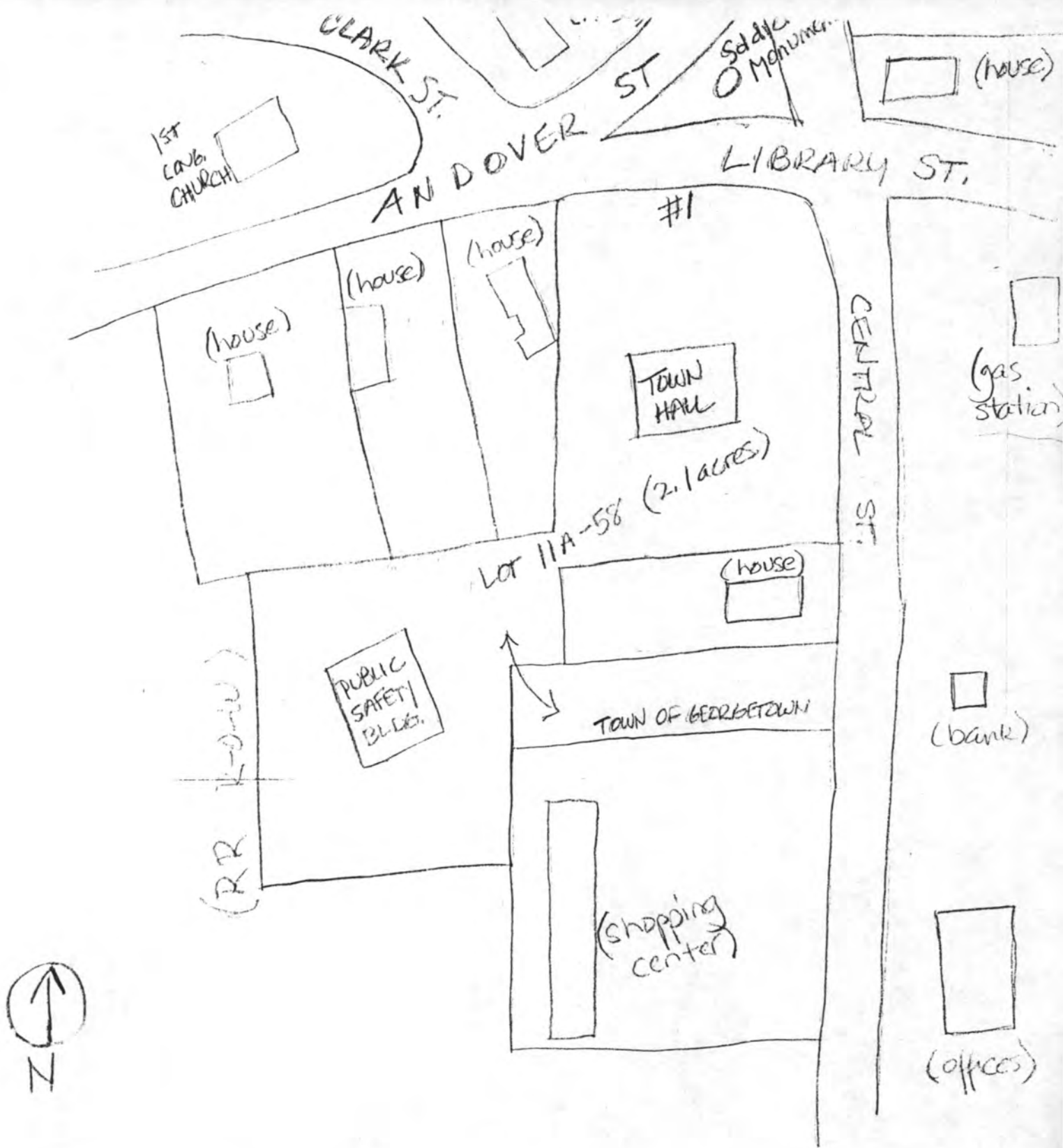
The boundaries of Lot 58 are shown on the Town of Georgetown Assessor's Maps numbered 5A, 10B and 11A, surveyed in 1965. The boundary includes the entire parcel of land on which the building now stands.

(end)

LIST OF PHOTOGRAPHS

Photographs taken in February 2001 by Kathryn J. Cavanaugh, consultant to the Mass. Historical Commission. Negatives in possession of M.H.C.

1. Exterior, north and east elevations; camera facing southwest.
2. Exterior, east and south elevations; camera facing northwest.
3. Exterior, south and west elevations; camera facing northeast.
4. Exterior, public safety building (non-contributing), north and east elevations; camera facing southwest.

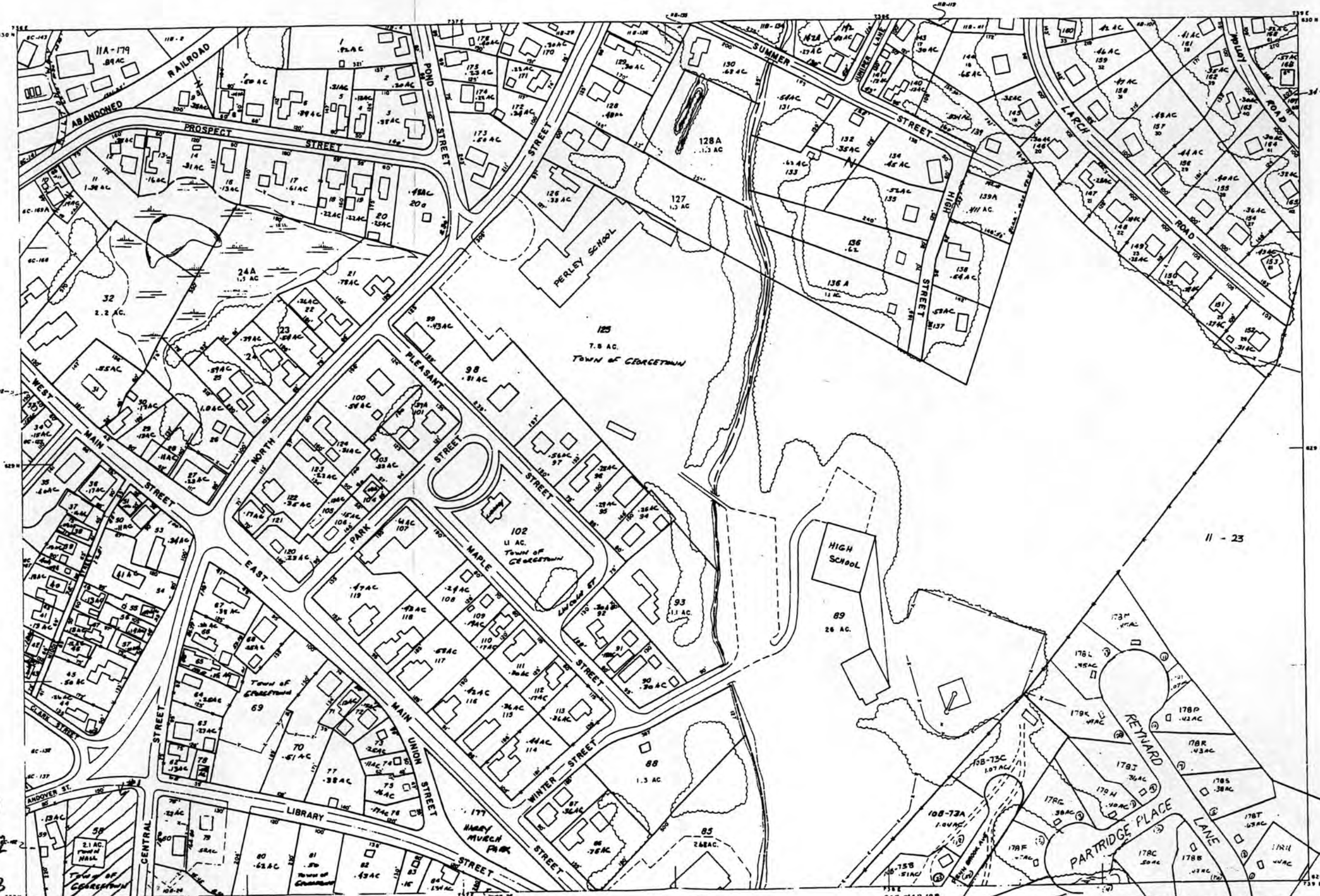


MEMORIAL TOWN HALL

1 LIBRARY ST. GEORGETOWN, ESSEX CITY, MASS.

SKETCH MAP OF SITE - NOT TO SCALE

5/01



#1-PHOTO 1
#2-PHOTO 2
#3-PHOTO 3

Prepared under the direction of the State Board of Assessors
Photography and Photogrammetry by Aerial Survey Corp.
Property Lines by New England Survey Service, Inc.

MEMORIAL TOWN HALL - 1 LIBRARY ST.
GEORGETOWN, ESSEX COUNTY, MASS.
LOT # 58, ASSESSOR'S MAP 11A



SCALE 1" = 2400
100 0 100 200 300 400 500 FEET

1000 FOOT GRID BASED
ON MASSACHUSETTS COORDINATE SYSTEM, MAINLAND ZONE
THE LAST THREE DIGITS OF THE GRID NUMBERS ARE OMITTED

SCALE REDUCED BY 50%

PLAN INFORMATION DERIVED FROM RECORD DATA,
FOR ASSESSMENT PURPOSES ONLY

GEORGETOWN, MASSACHUSETTS
PLANIMETRIC SURVEY
1985
SCALE: 1" = 100'

NEW ENGLAND SURVEY SERVICE, INC.
CIVIL & CONSULTING ENGINEERS
BOSTON, MASS.

SEE MAP 10

6D	10	11
6C	10	11
5A	10	10



MEMORIAL TOWN HALL

1 LIBRARY ST

GEORGETOWN, ESSEX CO., MASS.

PHOTO BY KATHRYN J. CAVANAUGH

FEB. 2001

NEG. AT MASS. HISTORICAL COMM.

PHOTO #1

VIEW TOWARD SOUTHWEST OF NORTH-EAST FACADES
(FRONT) (SIDE)

470611NNNN24039



MEMORIAL TOWN HALL
1 LIBRARY ST
GEORGETOWN, ESSEX CO., MASS.

PHOTO BY KATHRYN J. GAVANAUGH
FEB 2001
NEG. AT MASS. HISTORICAL COMM.

PHOTO #2.

VIEW TOWARD NORTHWEST OF EAST + SOUTH FACADES
(SIDE) (REAR)



MEMORIAL TOWN HALL

1 LIBRARY ST

6606 TOWN, ESSEX CO., MASS.

PHOTO BY KATHRYN J. GAVANAUH

FEB 2001

NEG. AT MASS. HISTORICAL COMM.

PHOTO #3

VIEW TOWARD NORTHEAST OF WEST + SOUTH FACADES
(SIDE) (REAR)

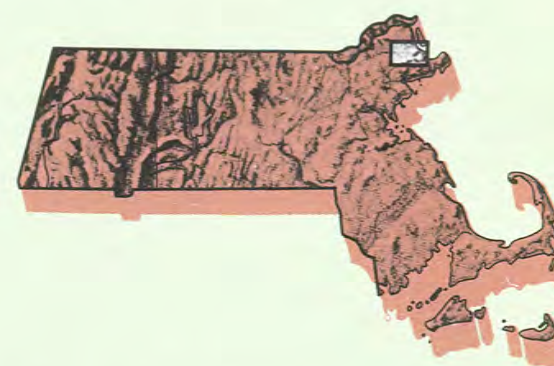
47 0611 NNN 224057



PUBLIC SAFETY BUILDING ON (NON-
CONTRIBUTING)
MEMORIAL TOWN HALL LOT
1 LIBRARY ST. GORHAM (ESSEX), MASS.

PHOTO BY R. J. CAVANAUGH
NEG. IN POSSESSION OF PHOTOGRAPHER
5/2001

VIEW LOOKING SOUTHWEST OF NORTH +
EAST ELEVATIONS



7.5 X 15 MINUTE QUADRANGLE
SHOWING

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



GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

1997

Produced by the United States Geological Survey

Derived from imagery taken 1978 and other sources. Photospectrally using imagery taken 1997; no major culture or drainage changes observed. Survey control points are shown in red. Boundaries, other than corporate, revised 1998

North American Datum of 1927 (NAD 27). Projection and 1000-meter grid: Universal Transverse Mercator, zone 19 10 000-foot ticks: Massachusetts coordinate system, mainland zone

North American Datum of 1983 (NAD 83) is shown by dashed corner ticks. The values of the shift between NAD 27 and NAD 83 for 7.5-minute intersections are obtainable from National Geographic Society NADCON software.

Selected hydrographic data compiled from NOS charts, 13279 (1953) and 13282 (1978). This information is not intended for navigational purposes

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

CONTOUR INTERVAL 3 METERS
NATIONAL GEODETIC VERTICAL DATUM OF 1929
CONTROL ELEVATIONS SHOWN TO THE NEAREST 0.1 METER
OTHER ELEVATIONS SHOWN TO THE NEAREST 0.5 METER
DEPTH CURVES AND SOUNDINGS IN METERS
DATUM IS MEAN LOWER LOW WATER
THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE TWO DATUMS IS VARIABLE
THE MEAN RANGE OF TIDE IS APPROXIMATELY 2.6 METERS

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARD

CONVERSION TABLE

Meters	Feet
1	3.2808
2	6.5617
3	9.8425
4	13.1234
5	16.4042
6	19.6850
7	22.9659
8	26.2467
9	29.5275
10	32.8084

To convert meters to feet multiply by 3.2808

To convert feet to meters multiply by 0.3048

DECLINATION DIAGRAM

UTM grid convergence (GN and 1984 magnetic declination (MN) at center of map
Diagram is approximate

ADJOINING MAPS

1	2	3
4	5	
6	7	8

1	Heavhill
2	Newburyport
4	Lawrence
5	Rockport
6	Reading
7	Salem
8	Gloicester

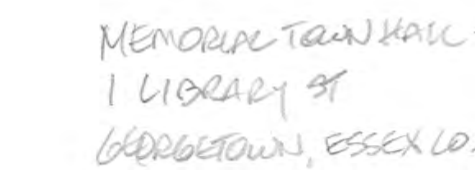
ISBN 0-607-89587-
9 780607 895872

Topographic Map Symbols

Primary highway, hard surface	
Secondary highway, hard surface	
Light-duty road, hard or improved surface	
Unimproved road, oval	
Route marker: Interstate: U, S, State	
Railroad: standard gauge; narrow gauge	
Bridge: drawbridge	
Overbridge; overpass	
Build-up area: only selected landmark buildings shown	
House; church; school; large structure	
Boundary:	
National, with monument	
State	
County, parish	
Civil township, precinct, district	
Unincorporated city, village, town	
National or State reservation; small park	
Land grant with monument; forest 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	
Dam, with gate	
Campground	
Windmill; water mill; spring	
Mine shaft; prospect; adit or cave	
Contour: horizontal station; vertical spot; elevation	
Contour: information; supplementary; depression	
Distorted surface: strip mine, lake, sand	
Bathymetric contours: intermediate, deep	
Personal mile, stream; intermittent lake and stream	
Large, deep lake and falls, large and small	
Submerged marsh; marsh, swamp	
Land subject to controlled inundation; woodland	
Slack; mangrove	

A pamphlet describing topographic maps is available on request.

FOR SALE BY U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY
P.O. BOX 25286, DENVER, COLORADO 80225



19/336750 / 4731720





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

July 9, 2001

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

Dear Ms. Shull:

Enclosed please find the following nomination form:

Memorial Town Hall, 1 Library Street, Georgetown (Essex), 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.

Sincerely,

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

Betsy Friedberg
National Register Director
Massachusetts Historical Commission

Enclosure

cc: Kathryn J. Cavanaugh, consultant
Gladys Kneeland, Georgetown Historical Commission
Christopher Hopkins, Georgetown Planning Board
Lawrence Ogden, Chair, Board of Selectmen