

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

OCT 16 1990

NATIONAL
REGISTER

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Needham Town Hall Historic District

other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number Great Plain & Highland Avenues and Chapel Street N/A ☐ not for publicationcity, town Needham N/A ☐ vicinitystate Massachusetts code MA county Norfolk code 021 zip code 02192

3. Classification

Ownership of Property

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

Category of Property

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

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing
<u>1</u>	<u> </u> buildings
<u>1</u>	<u> </u> sites
<u> </u>	<u> </u> structures
<u> </u>	<u>2</u> objects
<u>2</u>	<u>2</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing:

N/ANumber of contributing resources previously
listed in the National Register 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, 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. ☐ See continuation sheet.

Brona Simon DSHPOSignature of certifying official Executive Director, Massachusetts Historical
State Historic Preservation OfficerOct. 11, 1990

Date Commission;

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. ☐ See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official _____

Date _____

State or Federal agency and bureau

5. 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:) _____

Entered in the
National RegisterArlene Byers11/15/90

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)
 Government/Town Hall
 Recreation/Auditorium; Monument/Marker
 Landscape/Common; Street Furniture/Object

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)
 Government/Town Hall
 Recreation/Monument/Marker
 Landscape/Common; Street Furniture/Object

7. Description

Architectural Classification
 (enter categories from instructions)

Late 19th Century Revivals/Georgian Revival

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation Granite
 walls Brick, Stone

roof Slate
 other Iron; Wood Shingle; Bronze

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The Needham Town Hall Historic District, Needham, Massachusetts, includes an area of approximately one and one-quarter acres, located in the center of the commercial and civic center of Needham. It is bordered by Highland Avenue on the east, Great Plain Avenue (an historic transportation route) on the south, Chapel Street on the west and a commercial lot on the north.

Needham is an inland suburban town, ten miles southwest of Boston and located within a loop of the Charles River. Prominent elevations and upland ponds that drain into the Charles River exist in other parts of the town while the town center, the location of the Town Hall Historic District, is characterized by rolling plains. Needham is bordered by the towns of Dedham on the east and Wellesley on the west, which are connected by a main transportation route, Great Plain Avenue. Newton is northeast of Needham, while Westwood, Dover, and Natick are situated on the south and southwest border.

The Town Hall and Town Common, included in the Town Hall Historic District, are representative of the political and socio-economic development of the town and retain integrity of design as well as displaying a sense of time in the history of Needham. The district is reflective of a period beginning in 1884, when the town purchased the land now known as the Common, and progressing to 1930, during which time the Town Hall was constructed and changes were made to the Common by the installation of commemorative monuments relevant to Needham's past.

The Needham Town Hall Historic District consists of the large Georgian Revival Town Hall building and a plot of land known as the Needham Town Common. The area is enclosed by two important thoroughfares and one side street, making the district visible from several vantage points. The district and its elements continue to serve the public as municipal offices and open space for the citizenry.

The Needham Town Hall Historic District became the town center in the late nineteenth century when the focus of activity was moved due to the location of the railroad in the 1850s. Prior to that, the town center had been one mile west on Great Plain Avenue, near McIntosh Corner (NR 1989) and north of this intersection on Central Avenue and Nehoiden Street. The junction of two railroad lines caused the shift of the town center to its present location.

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Needham Town Hall Historic District,
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Both the Town Hall and the Common contribute to the historical and architectural integrity of the district. Some newer objects have been added to the Common; however, as a whole, the site retains significance.

The overall setting is characterized by urban development of a town center with two major routes and one side street bordering the district. Surrounding buildings are one- and two-story commercial blocks dating from the 1920s, and some late nineteenth century buildings that have been converted to commercial use. None of these retain architectural integrity due to substantial alteration as commercial properties, modern storefront additions obscure the original late nineteenth century structures. Two early to mid-twentieth century commercial brick buildings on the opposite side of Highland Avenue are surrounded by modern buildings and do not constitute an expanded version of the presently nominated district.

Within the district, the Town Hall is situated on the north side of the Common. The prominent brick structure spans the width of the Common from Highland Avenue to Chapel Street. The Common itself is crisscrossed with footpaths and spotted with trees and shrubbery. There is a flagpole set behind a brick wall with a commemorative plaque near the Great Plain Avenue edge.

Town Hall

The large, 2 1/2-story, brick Georgian Revival Town Hall is built on a granite block foundation and has a slate roof and a centrally located cupola. A stone stringcourse wraps around the entire building near the ground level separating the partially raised basement from the first level and at the first/second story level denoting the transition and accentuating the horizontal line. The two parapeted gable ends facing east and west are similar in detail and fenestration pattern. The north elevation, facing a rear parking lot and a large commercial block, is 2 1/2 stories above ground level, with roundheaded windows and stone stringcourses articulating the stories. The main facade or south side displays many architectural details including a tripartite facade with an arcaded loggia, large two-story roundheaded windows and a detailed cornice with balustrade similar to the one on the north facade. All second-story windows on the north and south facades have a low grill-work panel screening the bottom sash.

The cupola or clock tower of the Town Hall is visible from all sides and is an important and prominent feature through which the design of the building is carried out. The square shingle base has an oculus on the north and south sides with wood surround and keystones. There is a dentilated cornice on the square base, which is topped by an octagonal lantern with round pilasters at the corners, a mini-balustrade between the pilasters, louvered roundheaded windows, and a projecting cornice. The latter is pierced by the round clocks

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built into the cornice on each of the four sides of the lantern, corresponding to the four sides of the building. The rounded gold dome rests on top of the octagonal lantern and is surmounted by a weathervane.

Town Hall - South Facade

The main facade of the Town Hall is characterized by brick walls that are rusticated to the top of the first story level, ending with a stone stringcourse running the length of the building. This band visually separates the first and second story. The effect is repeated by the building's entablature, which has a molded architrave, flat frieze, and modillion block cornice, topped by a panelled and turned balustrade. A panelled sign board with gold leaf lettering reading "Needham Town Hall" is part of the roof balustrade. The building's corners are rusticated to resemble quoins.

The stringcourse, cornice and balustrade accentuate the horizontal lines of the building. Verticality is accented by the large, roundheaded, second-story windows separated by brick pilasters on stone bases. These blend into the stone stringcourse and wood caps under the three-part entablature.

The building is approached by wide, granite steps leading to the arcaded loggia or entrance porch, which in turn lead to the recessed entrance door. The foundation of the building is raised and is made of cut stone blocks displaying narrow, closely aligned, parallel tool marks. Flanking the three arched openings of the loggia are large stone bases set close to the building, on which are mounted large iron lanterns with intricate classical bases - a fluted shaft and triangular splayed legs with knees and feet decorated with leaves.

The first-story fenestration pattern is in three parts, with a trio of roundheaded, double-hung windows flanking three similarly arched openings to the loggia. The windows are double-hung sash of eight lights over eight lights, topped by a fanlight. The wood frames and sash are slightly recessed into an arched opening in the brick wall and have stone sills. The three arched openings at the center have rusticated brick piers and stone keystones at the top of each arch. Iron decorative gates with a circular crest design (similar to that found on the grill-work panels that are part of the second-story fenestration) provide access to the recessed, central double doors. The floor of the open porch or loggia is made of quarry and black tiles, with a bronze seal of Needham set into the floor. Placques flanking the entrance door commemorate the Civil War veterans on the east side (installed in 1912) and the construction of the Town Hall with names of Building Committee, architect, and builder on the west side.

The second story has nine bays arranged above the nine openings of the first story. The dominant feature is the string of seven, round-headed, large

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windows which are made up of oversized fifteen-over-fifteen sash and a large, round-headed fanlight. The sash and fanlight are separated by a narrow stone band. Each roundheaded window is flanked by brick piers with stone bases and wood capitals similar to those described above. On each end of the string of seven bays there is one double-hung sash of six lights over six lights with a splayed brick lintel. There is a slightly projecting brick panel above the two end bays in place of the roundheaded fanlight.

Town Hall - East and West Facades

The two gable ends are similar in plan and detail and are both easily viewed from the side streets. The high, parapeted wall of the gable ends has a stone coping that further accentuates the step-down plan of the parapet gable. The first story rustication and narrow stone stringcourse is carried around to the gable ends. The first story has an entrance door centrally located in the gable end and flanked by one roundheaded window with an eight-light moveable bottom sash over a multi-light stationary top sash and fanlight. The entrance door has glass and wood panels and is topped by a five-light transom, which is in turn topped by a fanlight. Each door surround is flanked by square pilasters.

The main feature of the gable ends is the large, second-story, Palladian-style window with projecting balcony. The large, central double-hung sash with roundheaded fan is flanked by five-light sidelights and round and square pilasters; the latter display Classical designs of volutes and drop swags. The balcony of turned balustrades is supported by heavy scrolled brackets.

On the west facade, there are two small lancet-style windows with tall splayed brick lintels flanking the projecting balcony. Above each pair of lancets there is a four-over-four double-hung sash. On the east facade there is a newly added handicapped ramp.

Town Hall - North Facade

The partially raised basement with small multi-light windows is separated from the main block by a stone stringcourse similar to that wrapping around the building between the first and second story. The wall surface is rusticated to the second stringcourse and at the corner quoins. First-story windows are similar to those in the gable ends and on the main facade. The moveable, eight-light bottom sash is topped with a multi-light stationary sash. At the second story, there are seven, large fifteen-over-fifteen sash topped by roundheaded fanlights. The separating piers have no bases or capitals. Keystones reach to the entablature, which is the same as that on the main facade. At the center of the building there is a wide stairwell projecting from the building and descending to the basement level.

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Town Hall - Interior

Well-appointed with architectural detail of a classical design, the first floor has had little alteration and retains its wide hall with several column screens articulating the division of spaces and the entrances to offices. When entering through the main entrance on the south facade, one comes into a rectangular entrance hall with wall niches and molded baseboards and cornice. At the door surrounds, there are square pilasters with bases that project from the baseboard molding, and capitals that support the cornice molding surrounding the space. From the rectangular entrance hall, one enters the main wide corridor through modern glass doors that have been installed for energy conservation purposes.

The central hall space is defined by the cornice molding, which is square with clipped corners, forming an octagon-like space. Four large pilasters articulate the wide corridor opening that runs east-west through the building. The wide doors to the Selectmen's Chambers have a molded surround with pilasters as well. North-south cased beams forming a type of cornice and supported by square pilasters symmetrically divide the wide corridor into four sections on each side of the central octagonal space. The end sections are separated by a glass double door screen with transom and half sidelights. Each end section is partially divided into two sections by crown molding and round columns. The end wall has the entrance/exit door described in the gable end section as well as a wide staircase providing access to the second floor. The wider, more grand staircase is found in the east end of the building. It has a heavy oak balustrade with a large, square newel post and wide stairs.

The basement level of the building has painted brick walls with utility rooms and some offices on each side of the wide corridor. The second floor has been altered with the addition of modern walls and flooring to divide what was a large assembly room with stage and balcony. The former auditorium space now serves as many offices. At either end of the building, there are stairs leading to the third story or attic level with access to the former stage and balcony.

Town Common

The open space south of the Town Hall, between the main facade and Great Plain Avenue, has been held by the town as open space since 1884. As early as 1893 the footpaths that crossed the space were paved to become crosswalks. The area is planted with grass and mature deciduous trees (maple and linden) that are randomly scattered near the paths. Several clumps of evergreen shrubbery (ilex and yew) are clustered near the ends of paths and at the junction of the crossing walkways. A flagpole is located near the center of the frontage along Great Plain Avenue. The brick terraced area with a memorial wall, in front of the flagpole, is a recent design. The bronze plaque in the brick

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wall was moved from a memorial boulder. The benches, first put in the parklike Common in 1926, were replaced in 1975 when the entire Common was re-landscaped.

A wide segmental arched driveway separates the Town Hall entrance from the Common.

Alterations to the district include interior second-story alterations made within the Town Hall, which have had little effect on the architectural integrity of the district and re-landscaping alterations made within the Common. Among the latter are moving the flagpole, the construction of the brick terrace and commemorative wall near Great Plain Street, and new benches and plant material. The additional plant material maintains the aesthetic of the place through appropriate scale and texture. However, the Garden Club's and Bicentennial Committee's 1975-1976 project did not attempt a strict in-kind replacement of material. The design and use of the Common have been retained.

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Needham Town Hall Historic District,
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Archaeological Description

No prehistoric sites are recorded in the district or in the general area (within one mile). This evidence combined with its long distance from wetlands and the presence of landscaping and construction disturbances, indicates a low potential for locating prehistoric sites.

Twentieth century landscaping and construction have probably had an impact on any 18th or 19th century historic resources which may have been in the area. Archaeological survey and testing can, however, determine the possible location of the 19th century town dump reported near the northeast corner of the Town Hall Historic District.

(end)

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

☐ nationally ☐ statewide ☒ locallyApplicable National Register Criteria ☒ A ☐ B ☒ C ☐ DCriteria Considerations (Exceptions) ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E ☐ F ☐ G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Architecture
 Community Planning & Development
 Politics/Government

Period of Significance

1884-1930

Significant Dates

1902

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

Winslow & Bigelow; Bigelow, Henry F.

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

The Needham Town Hall Historic District is illustrative of an early twentieth century civic center around which the downtown commercial district of Needham has evolved. It demonstrates the importance and effect of major transportation and communication routes in the choice and evolution of the location of the civic center. The District retains architectural and historical integrity with the juxtaposition of the two resources, the Town Hall and the Town Common. The period of significance extends from 1884, when the land of the Davis farm was purchased by the Town for the use as common space, to 1930, when the commemorative marker telling the details about the founding of Needham was installed. A significant date within the period of significance is 1902 when the cornerstone for the Town Hall was laid.

There are four resources, two contributing and two noncontributing, included in the district. The building (the Town Hall) and the site or landscape feature (the Town Common) contribute to the significance of the District. Two objects on the Common, a flagpole and memorial wall with plaque, postdate the period of significance. The District retains integrity of location, setting, design, association, materials, workmanship, feeling and association and meets Criteria A and C of the National Register of Historic Places on the local level.

Colonial settlement of Needham started as early as 1636 when the General Court of the Province granted to thirty families two hundred square miles of wilderness. The northeast corner of the large land grant was Needham, located in the curve of the Charles River and directly across that river from the site of the parent town of Dedham. Parts of Needham were granted to English immigrant families from 1643.

The traditional beginning of settlement occurred in 1680 when the Town of Dedham purchased twenty square miles within the loop of the Charles River from the Ponkopaug Indians. By 1710 there were forty householders who petitioned the General Court to incorporate as a separate town due to the isolation caused by the Charles River and the remoteness of this] and from the religious

☒ See continuation sheet

9. Major Bibliographical References

Atlases of Norfolk County

1876 - W.A. Sherman, Comstock & Cline, New York.

1888 - E. Robinson, New York.

1909 - Walker Lithograph and Publishing Co., Boston, MA.

Clarke, George Kuhn, History of Needham, Massachusetts 1711-1911, Privately published at University Press.

Massachusetts historical Commission. Needham Inventory of Historic Resources, 1970s. National Register Nominations for Needham Properties, 1980s.

☐ See continuation sheet

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 # _____

Primary location of additional data:

☒ State historic preservation office

☐ Other State agency

☐ Federal agency

☒ Local government

☐ University

☐ Other

Specify repository:

Massachusetts Historical Commission;

Needham Public Library

10. Geographical Data

Acres of property approximately one acre

UTM References

A 19 315290 4684110

Zone Easting

Northing

B 19 315290 4684060

Zone Easting

Northing

C 19 315250 4684060

D 19 315260 4684110

☐ See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

See Attached Assessors' Map

☒ See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

☒ See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Gretchen G. Schuler with Betsy Friedberg, National Register Director

organization Massachusetts Historical Commission

date June 1989

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center in Dedham. Their petition was granted and the town of Needham was incorporated in 1711. The area was still vast, and in 1798 a second parish was established in what was known as West Needham, an area that would become Wellesley in 1881.

While population figures for Needham prior to 1885 are difficult to ascertain due to the town's changing physical boundaries, the general population patterns were consistent with surrounding towns. A steady increase occurred during the eighteenth century and continued into the nineteenth, with a substantial bulge in the mid 1800s due to the influx of Irish immigrants and the advent of the railroad connecting Needham to larger centers. The population growth continued throughout the late nineteenth century, reaching 2,586 in 1885 and 4,014 by 1900. The suburbanization of the town into the early twentieth century led to a continued increase, accounting for residential and service expansion.

Needham, like every community in colonial New England, began with an agricultural economy, some grazing, and winter lumbering. Mills cropped up along the Charles River as early as 1688; however, there were no well-known saw or grist mills that survived the eighteenth century. Much of the mill activity, including paper mills, was located at Charles River Village. The manufacturing of underwear, which was to become the major industry of Needham, began prior to the 1830s and was greatly expanded in the 1850s. Other mid-nineteenth century industry included cottage industries, producing hats, shoes, and silk. Most cottage industries dwindled by the 1870s. The production of hosiery and underwear grew, and Carters was established in the 1880s on Highland Avenue at Needham Highlands, north of the early twentieth century town center.

The first meetinghouse in Needham was established at the base of North Hill along the Great Plain in 1712, the year after incorporation. Two other meetinghouses replaced the first one at the same location of Central Avenue and Nehoiden Street before the shift of the town center to Great Plain Village. This occurred after the development of the railroad in 1853. The only remnants of the early town core are two residential buildings, the Davis Mills House and the Townsend House (both NR 1982), the burying ground, and the McIntosh Corner Historic District (NR 1989) on Central Avenue just south of the site of early meetinghouses.

The development of the railroad in 1853 near Highland Avenue and Great Plain Avenue, in an area known as Great Plain Village and later Needham Village, led to the construction of other roads and bridges (across the Charles River) leading toward the Village. This led to a diversion of traffic from the early town center on Central Avenue. A new town center developed around the Needham Village depot, and by the 1870s there were churches, schools, and the meetinghouse, moved from Central Avenue to the new center. The deliberate attempt to establish a new Town Common and to articulate the new town center

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Needham Town Hall Historic District,
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was somewhat singular to Needham due to this shift in the community's core.

Most suburban towns retained their original Town Common, established when a rural agricultural community. The greensward or common connoted a public town center, with the meetinghouse and later the town hall located on or near the open space. When the town center of Needham was relocated due to the shift in transportation routes, the establishment of the new common was a useful way in which to articulate the new center. The intent was to eventually build a town hall, which was carried out in 1902.

The plot of land that is today known as the Town Common was owned by a C. E. Keith, and the land was subdivided into many small lots. According to early atlases and maps, there were no buildings on this land in the late nineteenth century. In 1884 the same land, then owned by George P. Davis, was purchased by the town. Within two years, the area at the northeast corner, which had been used as a town dump, was filled and the first town flagpole was erected, the first step toward declaring the function of the new town land. According to the 1888 Atlas, the land was immediately known as the Common. In 1893, the town paved the Common footpaths.

In 1901, an additional piece of land north of the Common parcel was purchased in anticipation of the development of a town hall. This commercial area had clearly become the new town center and would be a logical site for a new town hall. It is said that the purchase of the land by the Town also halted plans to construct a blacksmith shop on the parcel. In any event, the need for a town hall was great. From 1881, town meetings had been held in private halls. A permanent and substantial place for town meeting was necessary. The other important issue was the storage of town records, which were scattered throughout the town in the homes of town officials. A permanent, fireproof location was imperative.

In 1902, a Town Hall Building Committee was formed with a charge from Town Meeting to choose plans for a brick or stone building that would accommodate 800 people in an assembly hall and an additional 200 seats in a balcony. Other guidelines stated that the building include offices for the selectmen, the assessors, and the water board, a basement kitchen, cells and a room for the police, and a fireproof room for town records. The fireproof room was becoming a common request due to the many tragic losses throughout the Commonwealth.

Architects for the Town Hall were Winslow and Bigelow of Boston, a well-known turn-of-the-century Boston architectural firm. Henry Forbes Bigelow was the principal architect for this project and with his partners designed other Georgian Revival buildings, including the Weston Town Hall (1917, NR 1983) in Weston, Massachusetts, and the American Antiquarian Society (1910, NR, NHL 1968) in Worcester, Massachusetts, both of which differed from the Needham

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Town Hall in the use of Classical columns in their designs. The Needham Town Hall was constructed by Mead, Mason, & Co., also of Boston. The cornerstone was laid in 1902 and the building was completed by December 1903 for a cost of \$57,500.

There are no records telling of the design process for the Town Hall. Most early twentieth century public buildings display the Georgian Revival and Classical Revival style popular for its representation of a nationalistic style appropriate for public buildings. In Needham the Classical Revival Emory Grover Building (1898, NR 1987) was built as the first high school and today serves as the school administration building. The Needham Free Public Library, built in the Colonial Revival style, was not constructed until 1915. While some surrounding and nearby towns have Revival-style town halls (Newton, Weston), many others, including Wellesley and Westwood, have late-nineteenth century buildings exhibiting irregular plans in Queen Anne and Romanesque or Victorian Gothic styles. Most town halls were built in the mid to late 1800s. Those that were constructed in the early modern period or early twentieth century generally displayed Classical and Colonial Revival styles.

The assembly hall with stage on the second floor was the site of Town Meeting from 1904 to 1952, when the hall was divided into offices. Prior to that, plays, minstrel shows, operettas, and recitals were held using the stage and assembly hall, and for many years the hall was used for dances and dancing classes for local children.

The Town Common, the site of the first town flagpole and crossing footpaths before the Town Hall was built, was retained as a large open space in front of the new Town Hall. In 1911 a bandstand was built in the center of the parklike Common, where it remained until 1924, when it was removed to Memorial Field. The first flagpole had been removed with the construction of the bandstand and a new one was erected near Great Plain Avenue in 1912, retaining the civic and public quality of the area. Soon after, benches were installed and were frequently used by those waiting for the streetcar that travelled along Great Plain Avenue.

In 1926, Chapel Street, which had looped behind the Town Hall to connect with Highland Avenue, was continued through to May Street and Highland Avenue (its present path). This provided greater access and exposure for the Town Hall and was the incentive for commercial development of the land west of the Town Hall District.

The public aspect of the Common was enhanced in 1930 with the addition of a commemorative bronze plaque articulating the details of the founding of the town. It was placed near the flagpole on a large boulder.

There was no further development until 1975 when the Common was re-landscaped

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for the Bicentennial. The flagpole was moved back away from the edge of the Common, and a walled, brick terrace was built with a wall into which the commemorative plaque was set. New benches were added as well as some new plant material; however, the overall design of the Common as a parklike area relating to the Town Hall was not altered. Also in the 1970s, new lampposts, based on a historic design, were added.

The most distinctive quality of the Town Hall Historic District is the Georgian Revival Town Hall. The construction of the Town Hall next to the Town Common perpetuated and articulated the role of public use generated by the Common since 1884.

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Needham Town Hall Historic District,
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Archaeological Significance

Any
survivals associated with the 19th century town dump have the potential for providing detailed information on the social, cultural and economic patterns that characterized Needham's residents during that period. Similar resources have been investigated elsewhere in Massachusetts and found to contain moderate if not high research potential.

(end)

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VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The boundaries of the Needham Town Hall Historic District are shown on Needham Assessor's Map #51 Lot #1. Beginning in the northeast corner of Lot #1 the boundary follows Highland Avenue south to Great Plain Avenue, a distance of 300.20 feet, where it turns westward rounding a corner of 47.30 feet, and follows Great Plain Avenue for 113.06 feet to Chapel Street. At this point the boundary turns in a northerly direction around a corner of 59.77 feet and continues 294.40 feet to the northwest corner of Lot #1 on which the Town Hall and Town Common are contained. The boundary turns in an easterly direction and runs along the north side of the Town Hall for 5,660 feet to meet the northeast corner at Highland Avenue.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

Justification for the Needham Town Hall Historic District boundary is related to the lot lines defining the plot of land on which the Town Hall and Common exist. It is this 53,564 square feet of land that serve a public function and that were purchased by the Town in 1884 for this purpose. It is related to the civic planning for the Town. Surrounding commercial properties do not conform to this municipal and institutional area and do not retain integrity of design due to many alterations.

**NEEDHAM TOWN HALL HISTORIC DISTRICT
DISTRICT DATA SHEET**

MAP #	NAME	DATE	STYLE	TYPE	STATUS
1	Needham Town Hall	1902	Georgian Revival	B	C
2	Needham Town Common	1884 -	landscape	Si	C
A	Flagpole	moved 1975	memorial	O	NC
B	Memorial Wall	1975	monument	O	NC

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY NAME: Needham Town Hall Historic District

MULTIPLE
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: MASSACHUSETTS, Norfolk

DATE RECEIVED: 10/16/90 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 10/30/90
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 11/15/90 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 11/30/90
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 90001756

NOMINATOR: STATE

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N
OTHER: N PDIL: N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N
REQUEST: N SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: N NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

☒ ACCEPT ☐ RETURN ☐ REJECT 11/15/90 DATE **Entered in the
National Register**

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

RECOM./CRITERIA _____
REVIEWER _____
DISCIPLINE _____
DATE _____

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

CLASSIFICATION

☐ count ☐ resource type

STATE/FEDERAL AGENCY CERTIFICATION

FUNCTION

☐ historic ☐ current

DESCRIPTION

☐ architectural classification
☐ materials
☐ descriptive text

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

BIBLIOGRAPHY

GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

☐ acreage ☐ verbal boundary description
☐ UTM's ☐ boundary justification

ACCOMPANYING DOCUMENTATION/PRESENTATION

☐ sketch maps ☐ USGS maps ☐ photographs ☐ presentation

OTHER COMMENTS

Questions concerning this nomination may be directed to

_____ Phone _____

Signed _____ Date _____



Needham, MA

Suffolk County

Town Hall Historic District

View of south facade of
town Hall looking north across

Town Common

Gretchen G Schuler

MAY 1989



Needham, MA

Norfolk County

Needham Town Hall

looking north-main entrance facade

Gretchen G. Schuler

MAY 1989



Needham, MA

norfolk County

Town Hall Historic District

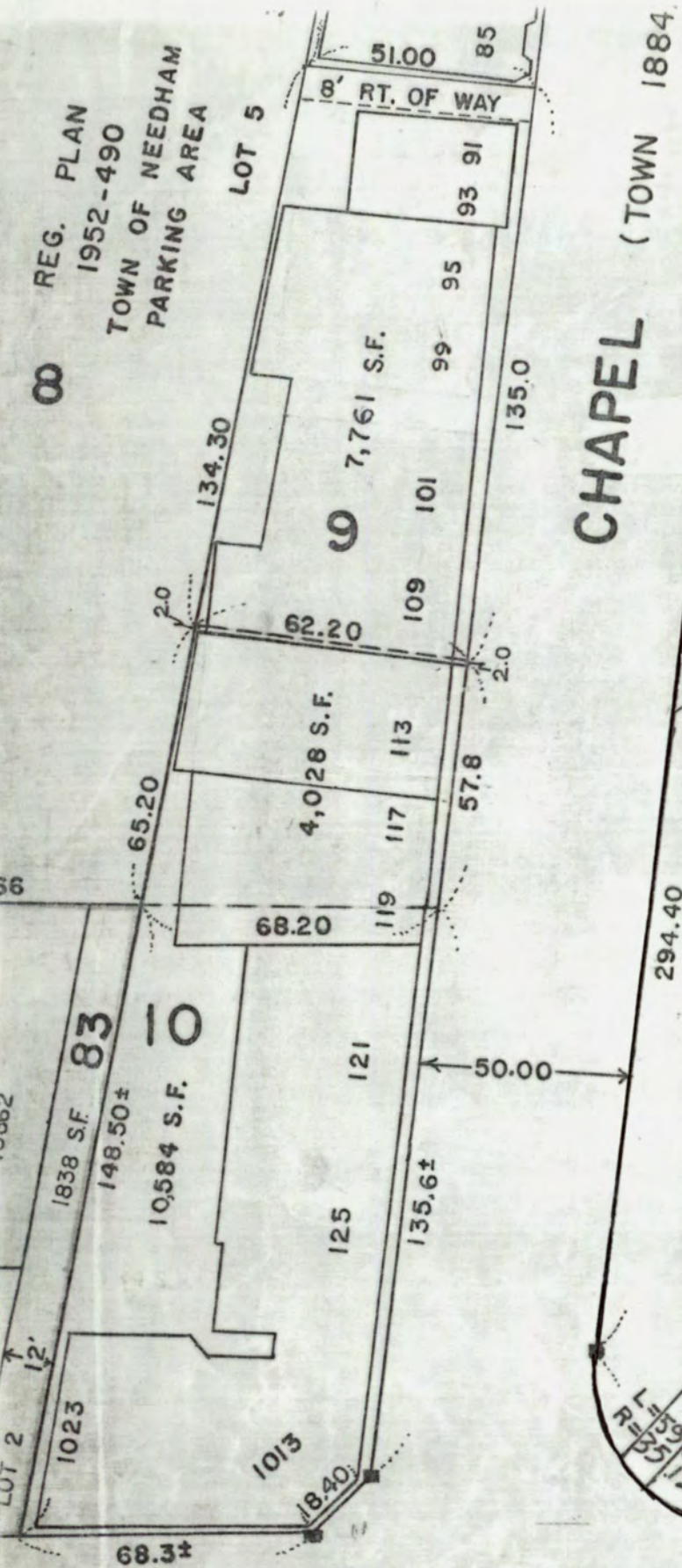
View of south + west facades
of Town Hall looking northeast

Gretchen B Schuler

MAY 1989

REG. PLAN
1952-490
TOWN OF NEEDHAM
PARKING AREA

LOT 5

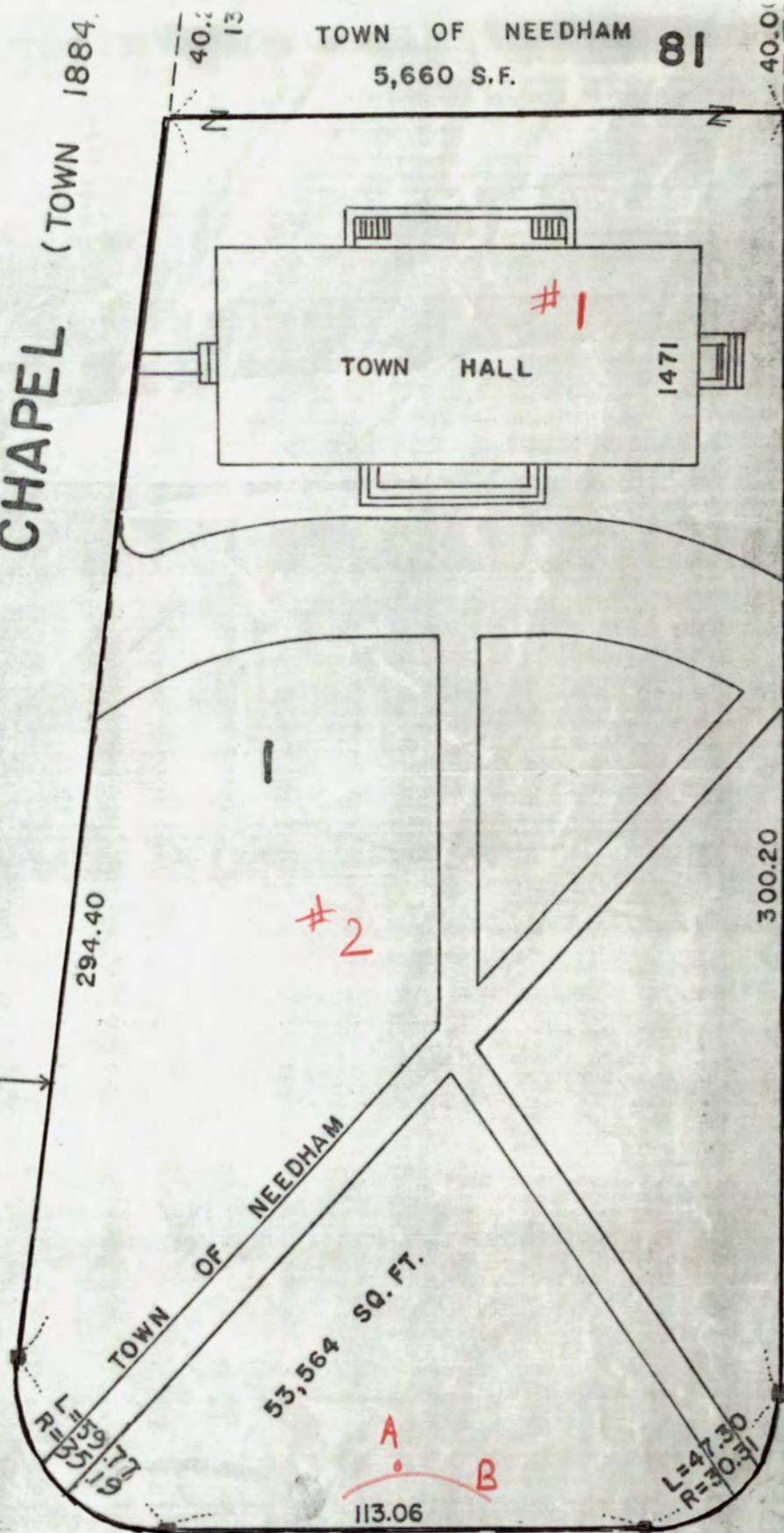


CHAPEL

(TOWN 1884)

TOWN OF NEEDHAM
5,660 S.F.

81



ASSESSORS

PLAN

Town Hall
District

NO. 51

Town of
Needham

SCALE: 1 IN.=40 FT.

D. F. GREENWOOD - TOWN ENGINEER

Missing Core Documentation

Property Name

Needham Town Hall Historic District

County, State

Norfolk,
Massachusetts

Reference Number

90001756

The following Core Documentation is missing from this entry:

☐ Nomination Form

☐ Photographs

☒ USGS Map



October 9, 1990

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

Dear Ms. Schull:

Enclosed please find the following nomination:

Needham Town Hall Historic District, Great Plain Avenue, Highland Avenue and Chapel Street, Needham (Norfolk County), Massachusetts 02192.

There has been no owner objection for the property listed above.

The nomination has been voted eligible by the State Review Board and has 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 form.

Sincerely,

Betsy Friedberg
National Register Director
Massachusetts Historical Commission

Enclosure: