

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. 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.

1. Name of Property

Historic name: North Town Hall

Other names/site number: Town House, Chelmsford Community Center

Name of related multiple property listing:

N/A

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

2. Location

Street & number: 31 Princeton Street

City or town: Chelmsford State: MA County: Middlesex

Not For Publication: Vicinity:

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, 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 at the following level(s) of significance:

___ national ___ statewide ___ local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

___ A ___ B ___ C ___ D

| | |
|--|-------------------------------|
| <p>_____ Signature of certifying official/Title:</p> | <p>_____ Date</p> |
| <p>_____ State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government</p> | |

North Town Hall
Name of Property

Middlesex Co., MA
County and State

| | |
|---|--|
| In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria. | |
| _____ | _____ |
| Signature of commenting official: | Date |
| _____ | _____ |
| Title : | State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government |

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- ___ entered in the National Register
- ___ determined eligible for the National Register
- ___ determined not eligible for the National Register
- ___ removed from the National Register
- ___ other (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- Private:
- Public – Local
- Public – State
- Public – Federal

North Town Hall
Name of Property

Middlesex Co., MA
County and State

Category of Property

(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 | |
|--------------|-----------------|------------|
| <u>1</u> | <u>0</u> | buildings |
| <u>0</u> | <u>0</u> | sites |
| <u>0</u> | <u>1</u> | structures |
| <u>2</u> | <u>0</u> | objects |
| <u>3</u> | <u>1</u> | Total |

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

GOVERNMENT: City Hall
RECREATION AND CULTURE: Hall

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

RECREATION AND CULTURE: Hall

North Town Hall
Name of Property

Middlesex Co., MA
County and State

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

MID-19TH CENTURY: Greek Revival

LATE VICTORIAN: Italianate

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: STONE, WOOD

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

Summary Paragraph

North Town Hall is a 3 ½-story civic building and meeting hall in Chelmsford, Massachusetts. North Town Hall fronts on heavily-travelled Princeton Street/MA Route 4 in the mill village of North Chelmsford. North Town Hall's Greek-Revival style architecture is evident in its front-gabled roof, basic rectangular shape (40'x78'), and classical detailing (dentils and pilaster corner boards). Set on a high granite basement, the wood-framed building is covered with wooden clapboards and an asphalt roof. Three paired-sash bays wide and four paired-sash bays long, the building also has a small (16'x16') two-story rear ell off the northwest corner of the building, and a center-bay front-gabled open front porch. The ground floor of the building contains offices and an open central meeting room (40'x40'), while the two-story main community-room auditorium above contains a raised stage and dressing room, as well as a full-length rear gallery/balcony. North Town Hall was built in 1853 as a square-two story hall and significantly expanded in 1886, when the hall was lifted a full floor, with a new ground floor inserted, the building significantly extended in length to the front, and the ell attached. A secondary Italianate detail from this expansion is a bracketed side entry porch. Other contributing resources on the lot include a pair of granite hitching posts with rings that frame the front sidewalk, and, at the northwest corner of the lot, granite steps and eight tall granite posts from an old lot-line fence. Carefully restored and updated as an auditorium and community center in 2012, North Town

North Town Hall
Name of Property

Middlesex Co., MA
County and State

Hall is in excellent condition, retains its historic integrity, and clearly reflects the design of the building as it was during its period of significance.

Narrative Description

NOTE ON DIRECTIONS: North Town Hall faces northeast, directly toward Princeton Street, which travels from the north-northwest to south-southeast. To simplify descriptions and clarify directions, in this nomination North Town Hall will be considered as facing east.

North Town Hall fronts on heavily-travelled Princeton Street/MA Route 4 in the mill village of North Chelmsford (Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC) inventory #CLM.124). It occupies a prominent hilltop setting, above and halfway between the nineteenth and early twentieth century mill buildings along Stony Brook to the south and the neighborhood commercial hub of Vinal Square to the north (**Figure 7.1** topographic map). Only a preliminary-level MHC neighborhood survey, from 1987, exists; at that time more than half of the 80 buildings identified were thought to be historically significant and to retain historical integrity (CLM.G). That percentage appears to hold for 2015. North Town Hall stands at the northwest corner of the intersection of Princeton Street and Washington Street. Directly to its north is the Samuel T. Wright-George Swett House (25-27 Princeton Street, 1873, CLM.131), which occupies a large corner lot at Princeton and Wright streets. Built as a double-family house by a North Chelmsford businessman, this square Italianate house (with a substantial rear ell) remains a double-family house today. Directly to the south of North Town Hall is the newest building in the immediate neighborhood, the North Chelmsford Fire Station or Engine 2 (35 Princeton Street, 1956, no MHC#). It occupies a full block between Washington and Gay Streets, formerly the site of the Princeton Street School complex (razed after 1953). A paved area at the back of this Fire Station lot serves as the event parking for the North Town Hall. Directly to the west of the North Town Hall is another building with mixed Greek Revival and Italianate design elements, the Alonzo A. Davis House (5-7 Washington Street, 1854) Built at roughly the same time as the North Town Hall, probably by its first owner who was a carpenter, this two-story wood frame house has its roof ridge parallel to the street and a few Greek-Revival details, such as its cornice returns. It was built as a single family house but later divided. Further west on Washington Street, the Henry Southland House (29 Washington Street, 1852, CLM 133), at the corner of Newfield Street, has Gothic Revival elements; its first owner was a machinist. The Samuel T. Wright-George W. Whidden House (16 Washington St, 1876, CLM.120), behind the fire station, is a two-story end-gabled house with Italianate details. In general, this block of Washington Street is not densely developed.

The houses across Princeton Street from this intersection are more densely built up and seem more indicative of the neighborhood's mill village past. The oldest is the Lincoln Drake-Ephraim Kennon House (38 Princeton Street, 1835, CLM.126), a 1.5-story Cape which likely was built as worker's housing. It sits diagonally across from North Town Hall on the corner of Cottage Row, a narrow street lined with small single and double houses built by the mill owners for workers in the 1830s and 1840s. The four buildings packed along Princeton Street between Cottage Row and Wright have not include been surveyed for their historical character. Turning its back on

North Town Hall

Middlesex Co., MA

Name of Property

County and State

Princeton Street, 19-21 Cottage Row is a large two-story Colonial Revival duplex from 1896, with a distinctive Palladian window on the second floor of its Cottage Row façade. Fitted closely behind it (and also directly across the street from North Town Hall) is 34 Princeton Street, an 1880 Cape with a full-length pop-up façade dormer. Finishing the block are two multi-family mill-worker-housing buildings: 30-32 Princeton is a 1.5 story Cape-style duplex with a full-length front porch, while 22-28 Princeton is a ca. 1930 L-shaped 2-story 4-unit double-duplex block, at the corner of Wright, with two more units on the Wright wing of the L.

Of all the buildings that surround North Town Hall, only the fire station appears to date after 1900, but even it dates from within the period of significance. The main organizing spine of the immediate neighborhood is Princeton Street, which was successively a Native American trail, a segment of the Great Road to Boston (1794), and the Turnpike between Boston and Nashua, New Hampshire, through the early 1800s. The Hales Survey of 1831 does not show who, at that time, owned or used the land where North Town Hall was built. But the 1856 Wallings map of North Chelmsford shows that the previous owners of the lot, Benjamin Adams and Thomas J. Adams, owned at least ten pieces of property around the crossroads that would later become Vinal Square, including the hotel and the store.

Fronting on Princeton Street at its intersection with Washington Street and Cottage Row, North Town Hall is a 3 ½-story wood-framed building (**Photograph 1**). In massing, it is an end-gabled 40'x78' rectangle, 3 stories high, with a basement and attic, and a square 16'x16' 2-story ell added to the northwest corner. To make sense of the building, its description, and the changes it has gone through, it helps to know briefly the interior arrangement and the broad sequence of changes. The ground floor consists of a front hall, a large meeting room, and rear offices. The second floor is a two-story meeting hall with a stage and a rear gallery. The building was built in 1853 as a square two story hall, which stood a distance back from street; otherwise we have no images or descriptions of it. In 1886, the whole building appears to have been doubled in length. The meeting hall was raised a story, and a new ground floor inserted. The front of the building was also extended at least 20 feet, and the rear side ell added. After the period of significance, the building was covered in vinyl siding and partially converted to offices for the school board, and then sat vacant for almost three decades. In 1997, the North Town Hall Committee formed to return the building to use as a public space. These volunteers removed the office partitions, as well as some damaged original elements, including most of the plaster in the upper and lower halls. But redevelopment stalled at that point. In 2012 Chelmsford restored the North Town Hall as the Chelmsford Community Center, returning it to its form and layout during the period of significance, with allowances for current building code and accessibility standards.

North Town Hall occupies most of its relatively small lot, with only a few feet of clearance from either lot line at its northwest corner rear ell (**Figure 7.2 Site Map**). This northwest corner of the lot is the highest point of the lot, while the northeast corner is the lowest point. The building has five entries: a formal entry to the east off the Princeton Street sidewalk, two side entries and a basement bulkhead off Washington Street, and an emergency exit out of the eastern wall of the rear ell. The only significant lawn space is to the front of the building along Princeton Street. Part of the lawn on the Washington Street (south) side of the building was paved to provide a temporary parking lane for those entering the disabled-access entry. Three site elements should

North Town Hall

Middlesex Co., MA

Name of Property

County and State

be noted. Bracketing the wide front sidewalk are a pair of **Granite Hitching Posts** (ca. 1886), approximately 5' high, with iron rings in their tops, which may date from the 1886 expansion. At the rear of the property, along the north lot line, are a series of eight **Granite Fenceposts** (ca. 1886), as well as three loose granite treads for **Steps**, enabling people to more easily navigate the short slope around the northwest corner of the building. For the purposes of this nomination, each of these elements (the Granite Hitching Posts and the Granite Fenceposts and Steps) should be considered contributing elements. One significant change in the lot between the completion in 1886 (**Figure 7.3** historic photograph) and the end of the period of significance is a change in the slope at the front of the building. At the end of the period of significance, the front of the lot had a much gentler slope than originally. At some point, the front lawn was graded down and several feet more of the front granite foundation was exposed. This change necessitated a rebuilding of the front steps into their present substantial form. That slope change may have necessitated the construction of the concrete retaining wall which extends from the rear third of the building directly north to the lot line, with a series of three steps next to the building. Because of the materials used and the uncertainty about its date, this **Retaining Wall and Steps** is considered a non-contributing structure for the purposes of this nomination. Before commencing the 2012 restoration, the town took a long series of "before" pictures, which confirm that only the wide front sidewalk toward Princeton Street dates from the period of significance. The other doorways opened onto lawn, without sidewalks. These before-and-after comparative pictures are too numerous to reproduce here, but are on file with the Massachusetts Historical Commission.

The Princeton Street gable-end façade of the building is its most architecturally important exterior, balanced and symmetrical (**Photograph 2**). The clapboard-covered wood frame is raised 3.5 stories on a high granite basement, its wall composed of three bays of double windows. Wide paneled pilaster cornerboards with dentiled capitals frame the wall, and support cornice returns at the gable ends. On each of the three floors, the paired windows are topped with a wide entablature-like lintel board with dentils at its top. Although the second-story hall and third-story gallery windows are treated like separate floors, they are also subtly joined with a continuous side trim band on both sides. In the center bay, these trim bands (along with the sill above and lintel below) neatly frame a signboard, black with gold lettering, that reads "NORTH TOWN HALL." The attic window also has an interesting trim flourish, a blind fanlight pediment. The basement windows are 4x4 light casements, while the windows in the three stories above are 4x4 light double sashes. The attic window is a double sash window, 8x8 lights. Only the attic window sash is original. The other windows, many of which had significantly deteriorated and had been covered by combination aluminum storm windows, were replaced by new wooden windows, in the same sash pattern, milled to match the originals. Shutters have been re-created to match those on the second, third, and attic levels of the façade; these were the only windows on the building to have shutters. Several of the original shutters, now stored in the basement, were used as models to fabricate the new shutters. The northern bay of windows shows the diagonal line of the interior staircase. The front door trim, carefully conserved and restored, consists of double wooden doors flanked by four rectangular sidelights on either side, the whole composition topped by a wide, somewhat flattened fanlight. The doors themselves have a double-paneled lower half topped by a large single window.

North Town Hall

Middlesex Co., MA

Name of Property

County and State

The Washington Street (southern) elevation is the next most important exterior (**Photograph 3**). A relatively thin cornice trim band is supported by paneled cornerboards. The four window bays are spaced an equal distance from each other to light the hall, although they are slightly offset to the west because of the balcony. The paired ground floor windows are identical to those on the eastern façade, but the second and third floor windows are combined into paired two-story continuous openings to provide tall windows to light the hall. These windows have sashes with 2x2 lights. The roof, visible from this side, is covered in asphalt shingles. Likely it was covered originally in wooden shingles, although no record of the early roofing exists. The civil defense siren has been left in place atop the roof, although it has not been connected for some time. Between the first and second bays on the western end, a doorway opens from the rear stairway hall. This four-paneled solid door opens onto a granite slab porch, on a cut-granite foundation, with granite steps to the street. Farther east, between the third and fourth bays, is a bulkhead for the stairs into the basement. Originally, and until the 2012 restoration, this basement entry was covered with a small gable-fronted enclosed shed. In 2012 this shed was replaced with the bulkhead, and a third, new entry was added one bay further down. This entry gives direct street-level access into the elevator lobby for disabled patrons. An open entry porch supported by square posts, it is topped by a triangular pediment that echoes the vestibule which stood next to it.

The western rear elevation of the North Town Hall shares many of the characteristics of the other elevations, including the gable end returns and paneled cornerboards of the eastern façade (**Photograph 4**). This elevation is also three bays wide, with the same dentiled ground floor windows of the other sides and the double-height second/third story windows. The middle bay does not have a window opening in the upper hall, likely to reduce lighting problems on the stage. The attic has a vent rather than a window. This is the narrowest point on the lot, with only four or five feet between North Town Hall and the neighbor's fence to the west. It is also the highest point; the ground level rises to within several inches of the top of the granite foundation. The two-story northern ell has two window bays above, but only a single bay on the ground level. The northern ell is end gabled; although the ell's northern wall has no windows, it does have paneled pilaster cornerboards supporting gable returns (**Photograph 5**). The eastern ell façade is two bays wide, all windows except for the inner bay on the ground floor, which has a doorway with a corner hood supported on a spoked bracket. The solid paneled door is topped with a row of transom windows. This view of the ell also shows the concrete slab along the north end of the ell that holds the exterior air conditioning units, and the granite fenceposts (which no longer support a fence) on the lot line.

Due to the ell, the northern façade is only three bays wide (**Photograph 6**). The westernmost bay on the ground floor has a two sets of double windows, one lighting the lower hall and one lighting the rear corridor. Looking from across the street, one can see the tall brick chimney in the northwest corner, which was also restored as part of the 2012 work (**Photograph 7**).

The large front porch makes a distinctive entry into the North Town Hall (**Photograph 8**). However, it was not original to the 1886 construction; it replaces an earlier Italianate hood (see **Figure 7.3**). The current front porch was added to the North Town Hall sometime during the period of significance, after the slope of the lawn was altered. It has a tall square cut-granite

North Town Hall

Middlesex Co., MA

Name of Property

County and State

base, a smooth granite slab deck, and is connected to the front sidewalk with six wide granite risers. Square paneled corner posts hold up an end-gabled roof with a clapboarded tympanum. Although smaller, the westernmost entry on the south side must also be documented, as it is the single distinctive Italianate element (**Photograph 9**). The projecting hood has a set of elaborately carved side supporting brackets, with scallops, pendants, and incised decorations. It is topped with a bracketed hood with a triangular pediment and empty tympanum. While these brackets could also be read as the more up-to-date Queen Anne style, they appear to be a stock decorative item, and echo the Italianate design elements of some of the mill village buildings and houses of the time. For example, an almost identical pair of Italianate brackets was located two blocks away on a rowhouse that stood on Gay Street, is illustrated in a photograph in *Chelmsford* (Chelmsford Historical Society 68).

The basement of the North Town Hall most clearly shows the 1853 and 1886 building sequence (**Figure 7.4** basement plan in 1996). Interior access to the basement is by a wooden doglegged staircase in the northeast corner. The western half (1853) of the basement is little more than a crawl space, only partially excavated. The original eastern end wall—then the front foundation wall—now serves to divide the basement in half. The eastern half (1886) of the basement, although unfinished, is full height, lit by windows at the top of the walls, and has a solid concrete floor. Brick-encased piers hold up the ground floor of the building, and a wide set of granite steps goes up to the exterior bulkhead. The biggest change to all three floors on the interior in 2012 occurred in the southwest corner, where the elevator shaft was located in 2012. In the case of the basement, the former oil tanks and furnace were removed and replaced elsewhere in the basement. One disconnected part of the outmoded mechanical system was preserved in place, though: a “Century Squirrel Cage Induction Polyphase Motor,” produced by Century Electric Co., of St. Louis. Two of the original (1886) shutters are also stored in the basement.

The ground-floor lobby on the eastern end of the North Town Hall clearly shows the care taken in the 2012 restoration (**Figure 7.5**. Ground floor plan in 2012 and in 1996). The dimensions of the lobby itself, its connected open staircase (to your right as you enter the lobby) that winds upwards in the northeast corner of the building, and the wainscoting that seamlessly lines both the lobby and staircase, have been restored almost without change. A close look at some of this woodwork, such as that around the front (east) door, clearly shows the weathered patina of the original wood, freshened with a new coat of paint. The framing around the front door of the After School Room is also original, although the original double doors have been swapped out for a wide single door with breaker bar and a side blocking panel, apparently for building code purposes. The doorway trim consists of boards with a center grooved section, joined at the upper corners by square blocks with a bullseye grooved pattern. To your left as you enter the lobby are two doors into the southeast corner of the building: to the elevator and to a restroom. In 1886 this wall held only a single door, which opened into the selectman’s room. Over time this room was partitioned into two restrooms, one entered from the open hall next door. In 2012 the single center door was replaced by paired doors, with trim similar to the original. To indicate that these are new work, the upper corner blocks were left plain, rather than decorated with the bullseye pattern (Prescott, “Architecture”). The space in this building corner not taken up by the elevator and the new south disabled-access entry lobby (a half-story level below) was reconfigured into a single restroom.

North Town Hall
Name of Property

Middlesex Co., MA
County and State

The bulk of the ground floor is taken up with a large multi-functional meeting room—known in 1886 as the dining room—currently the After School Room (**Photograph 10**). This nearly square room retains many of its original features, including the polished wooden flooring, wainscoting, large cased and wainscoted oak support posts, and ceiling composed of “great timber, 12 x 12 inches, cased with inch pine that holds the joists of the upper floor,” as described in an 1886 newspaper account. This ten-foot high cased-timber ceiling gives the effect of a grand coffered space. The space is lit with a combination of historic pendant and necessary recessed lighting fixtures. Two changes were made to the general room layout in 2012, both in the west wall. The northern door—of the two doors in the west wall—was removed, and a double-doored closet was added in the center of the wall, for media carts and other storage. The layout of the rear third of the building was also somewhat changed. The original lobby room and secondary staircase in the southwest corner were restored without change, including the Georgia pine treads and paneling in the staircase. During the period of significance, most of this rear area was divided into two rooms. Opening directly onto the staircase and dining hall was the meeting room of the Spaulding Light Cavalry, which used the room until 1907 when it disbanded. No record exists of what interior finishes may have originally been in this space. To the north of this space was the kitchen. The 2012 work, faced with questions of fire codes and the need for disabled-access restrooms and support spaces, reconfigured these spaces into a rear corridor and support rooms, as indicated on the floor plan (see **Figure 7.5**): the building office, storage, warming kitchen, men’s and women’s disabled access restrooms, restroom, and a janitor’s closet. This change also necessitated removing a third staircase in the 1886 ell.

Returning to the front lobby, the visitor ascends the wide wainscoted staircase to the second floor (**Figure 7.6**, second floor plan in 2012 and in 1996). The original Georgia pine treads and curving ash banister, with machine-turned balusters, was still intact and has been restored. The second-floor lobby retains much of its wainscoting and the trim-framed double-doorway entrance into the main auditorium. The original paneled doors were replaced with new paneled doors, fitted with striker bars, which comply with current fire and safety code requirements. The southwest corner of the building, which in 1996 was configured as an office and restroom with a single doorway, was reconfigured with two doors, one for the elevator shaft and another for the locked room for the elevator equipment. The 1970s fluorescent light fixture in the lobby has been replaced with recessed lighting.

The second floor main auditorium is the grandest space in the North Town Hall (**Photograph 11**). The configuration of the auditorium itself is almost identical to the period of significance. It retains some of its original finishes, including its birch flooring and the rail-topped wainscoting which wraps all four sides of the auditorium, including the curved front apron of the raised stage. The walls have a dark maroon-brown border painted at the ceiling, as described in the 1886 article on the building’s opening. The center of the ceiling has its original large iron circular medallion vent. The “before” photographs show that large banks of fluorescent lights hung down from the ceiling into the auditorium on pipes prior to the 2012 restoration. These were replaced with recessed lighting and spoked metal chandeliers with globes, similar to one of the original gas-jet chandeliers which was discovered stored in the attic. The stage retains a narrow back-stage inset wall with doorway openings stage left, right, and center. Both side doors are wide

North Town Hall

Name of Property

Middlesex Co., MA

County and State

sliding doors, set in the original frames. The wall served for stage entries when plays were performed in the North Town Hall by the Chelmsford Players and other groups. The rear of this inset wall retains the signatures of generations of Chelmsford actors. To the south of the stage is the secondary rear staircase in a narrow hall, lit by the westernmost bank of double windows. To the south of the stage is the original stairs from the auditorium up to the stage level. The staircase originally also led down to the ground floor, but that had to be replaced with a wheelchair lift that makes the stage itself disabled accessible. The remainder of the ell contains an auditorium-level restroom and a stage-level dressing room.

The rear gallery or balcony stretches across the entire width of the auditorium and has a paneled front similar to the wainscoting, although it has been painted white (**Photograph 12**). Originally both balcony staircases were to be retained (see Figure 7.6, second floor plan in 2012. This change is the only substantial alteration between these original 2012 plans and the as-built current plan). However, the space requirements for the elevator headhouse meant that the southern staircase had to be enclosed. The former hallway coatroom on the second floor was converted into second-floor storage and mechanical space, now accessible from the auditorium. The northern stairs is now the only access into the balcony, which has made it a space reserved for lighting and technical uses rather than general public access. However, the original balcony flooring remains, refinished and polished, as well as the horizontal boarding on the lower walls (instead of the more expensive wainscoting of the other two floors. The elevator headhouse is boxed and capped and serves as counterspace.

The attic is accessed through a locked door by an enclosed staircase along the eastern end in the northern corner, directly in line with the other staircases below but narrower. This staircase has not been refinished. The common rafter roof has clasped purlins without a ridgeboard. Each of the six internal truss bays (as far as could be determined from the eastern end) is formed of large beams that rise from the wall plate to a collar tie above the purlin level. At the purlin level, these beams are cross braced by a diagonal beam, as in a queen-post truss system. Much of the attic is floored over, although some of the boards have been raised for insulating. The space is filled by the metal vents and insulated pipes of the building's substantial HVAC plant.

Carefully restored as an auditorium and community center in 2012, North Town Hall continues to provide the type of community space for which it was most consistently used during its period of significance. Apart from restoration, the changes that were made to the building in 2012 were required to conform with health and safety building codes and disabled access. North Town Hall is in excellent condition and has historic integrity in terms of its location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.

North Town Hall
Name of Property

Middlesex Co., MA
County and State

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.)

- A. Owned by a 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 old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

COMMUNITY PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT
POLITICS/GOVERNMENT
ENTERTAINMENT/RECREATION
ARCHITECTURE

North Town Hall
Name of Property

Middlesex Co., MA
County and State

Period of Significance

1853-1965

Significant Dates

1853

1886

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

Pollard, Dawson (1853 carpenter)

Sampson, Seth Phillips (1853 mason)

Swett, Charles (1853 mason)

Swett, Edmund (1853 carpenter)

Barclay, Cyrus P. (1886 contractor)

Bargmann Hendrie + Archetype, Inc. (2012 restoration architect)

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

North Town Hall is locally significant under Criteria A and C for its important contributions to community planning and development, politics/government, entertainment/recreation, and architecture in Chelmsford, Massachusetts. Located atop a rise on MA Route 4/Princeton Street, North Town Hall is significant to Community Planning and Development because of its important role as the symbolic center in the development of North Chelmsford, a substantially intact nineteenth-century mill village. The period of significance begins with its construction in 1853, when local mill owners and developers were building not just mills and industrial buildings, but also residential, commercial, and civic buildings. Its significance to Politics/Government stems from its role as the first stand-alone town hall built in Chelmsford, when North Chelmsford was the only neighborhood outside the town center to successfully

North Town Hall

Middlesex Co., MA

Name of Property

County and State

lobby for its own town hall. Even after a new town hall was built in 1879, Town Meetings were held at North Town Hall, in alternate years, until 1885, and North Town Hall continued as a polling place for decades afterwards. It is the oldest building remaining in a secondary civic center at the intersection of Princeton and Washington Streets. North Town Hall is significant to Entertainment/Recreation as the community center for the neighborhood, a role that it has fulfilled from its construction, to the end of its period of significance in 1965, and again today. As a public meeting space, it has hosted community meetings, social functions, local clubs, benefits, plays, lectures, family reunions, and dances; it continues to do so today, in its current role as the North Chelmsford Community Center. North Town Hall is significant to the Architecture of Chelmsford as a prominent civic building in the Greek-Revival style, built by masons and carpenters from Chelmsford and Lowell. North Town Hall's period of significance ends in 1965, which marks not only the fifty-year threshold but also the last use of the building as a polling place. After use for office space and storage, and nearly three decades of vacancy, in 2012 North Town Hall was carefully restored and updated to ensure it will function as a community center for many more decades.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

Chelmsford is a town located approximately 25 miles northwest of Boston, near the New Hampshire border. Named after an English town, Chelmsford was first settled by Europeans in 1653 and chartered as a town in 1655. While primarily an agricultural community, early on Chelmsford built mills and other industries along its waterways, producing bricks, glass, iron, lime, and lumber. After the Revolutionary War, Chelmsford became known for quarrying limestone and granite. Chelmsford granite quarried by the H.E. Fletcher company was widely used for Federal and Greek Revival buildings across New England and around the country, such as Harvard's University Hall (1812, NRHP, NHL) in Cambridge and Quincy Market (1826, NRHP, NHL) and the wings (1917) of the Massachusetts State House (NRHP, NHL) in Boston. The western section of Chelmsford became Westford in 1729. In 1826 East Chelmsford (the northeastern corner of Chelmsford, which extended along the south bank of the Merrimack River as far as the Concord River) became the core of the industrial city of Lowell, the nation's first large planned industrial community ("Brief History"). The Middlesex Canal (NRHP, NHL), surveyed in 1793 and opened in 1803, started in Middlesex Village in Chelmsford (also now part of Lowell; annexed in 1874) and stretched nearly 27 miles, from the Merrimack River to the Port of Boston. One of the first important canals built in the United States, it was an innovative civil engineering project, with locks and dams and eight aqueducts carrying the canal over existing rivers. Closed in the winter and impassable when its towpath was muddy, the canal was paralleled by the Boston and Lowell Railroad in 1835; the competition caused the canal to close by 1852. Parts of the Middlesex Canal remain intact and watered in Chelmsford. Ralph Waldo Emerson, the Transcendentalist poet and philosopher, briefly ran a school in Chelmsford (in 1825).

Besides Lowell and Westford, Chelmsford is bordered by Tyngsborough to the north, Tewksbury and Billerica to the southeast (part of the border formed by the Concord River), and Carlisle to

North Town Hall

Middlesex Co., MA

Name of Property

County and State

the south. At Chelmsford, Interstate 495 intersects with U.S. Route 3, the major limited-access highway between Boston and Nashua, New Hampshire. Additionally a half-dozen Massachusetts state highways also cross the town: 3A, 4, 27, 40, 110, and 129. Chelmsford experienced only modest growth during most of its history, with U.S. census populations of 2,097 in 1850, 2,695 in 1890, 5,010 in 1910, and 9,407 in 1950. However, postwar prosperity and the expansion of highways caused huge increases over the next two decades, with population jumping to 15,130 in 1960 and then doubling to 31,432 in 1970. The 2010 population was 33,802 (US Census); Chelmsford has a population which is predominately White alone (87.1%), with 8.4% identifying as Asian alone and 2.0% Hispanic. The White residents report an ancestry that is 32.1% Irish, 16.9% English, 14% Italian, 8.3% French, 6.8% German, and 6.7% French Canadian (City-Data.com).

North Chelmsford, while technically a neighborhood of Chelmsford, also enjoys a strong civic identity of its own. The village has its own library, post office, fire station, recreation area, water district, local calling area, and zip code. More densely populated than the rest of Chelmsford, North Chelmsford was the town's largest village in the middle of the 19th century, when North Town Hall was built. Today humorous bumper stickers declare "I'm from North Chelmsford—Don't Tread on Me," while the *Lowell Sun* published an article describing a rivalry between Town Center and North Chelmsford as "Chelmsford's Civil War Rages On," (7 August 2005, qtd. in "North Chelmsford" (Wikipedia)).

Community Planning and Development: North Chelmsford and North Town Hall

North Town Hall is significant to Community Planning and Development in Chelmsford because of its important role as the symbolic center in the development of North Chelmsford, a substantially intact nineteenth-century mill village. The period of significance begins with its construction in 1853, when local mill owners and developers were building not just mills and industrial buildings, but also residential, commercial, and civic buildings.

Chelmsford has a rich, if little-documented, Native American history. The Merrimack and Concord Rivers, along with Stony Brook and the many other small tributaries and nearby ponds, provided many opportunities for food, transportation, and year-round habitation. Several tribes made East Chelmsford their seasonal home: the falls of the Merrimack River were a prime fishing area for salmon and other species, and the islands and surrounding banks held cornfields. Wamesit, one of John Eliot's Praying Towns, was established here. The first English settlers arrived in Chelmsford in 1652 from Concord and Woburn, and in 1655 they gained a town charter (Kelleher; "Chelmsford"). The settlers vied with the tribes for control of the Wamesit territory, although King Phillip's War (1675-1678) disrupted the Praying Towns and led to their dissolution. Although early English habitation in Chelmsford remained close to the town center, in 1669 Thomas Hinchman built a saw mill on Stony Brook, the first step toward the establishment of North Chelmsford.

Princeton Street, on which North Town Hall sits, is one of the constant elements in the history of North Chelmsford. Although its path through North Chelmsford remains unaltered, its name has frequently changed. It likely began as a Native American trail (Kelleher). In 1794 it was part of

North Town Hall

Middlesex Co., MA

Name of Property

County and State

the Great Road to Boston (“25 miles to the State house”), linking the town-center meeting house with the Dunstable/Tyngsborough road. The 1794 Chelmsford map shows that today’s Middlesex Street, which began as a Native American trail on the southern bank of the Merrimack River, turned west along the south bank of Stony Brook and crossed Stony Brook with the Great Road. In 1805 the Middlesex Turnpike was chartered, a toll road laid out from Cambridge to Tyngsborough and then beyond to Nashua, New Hampshire. A more direct route to Boston than the old Great Road, it bypassed Chelmsford’s town center to the east, but joined North Road south of Stony Brook and continued northward. It was still known as the Turnpike in 1875, although toll collecting had ceased several decades previously. “Princeton” first appears on the 1889 map, when a stretch of North Road south of Stony Brook is labeled “Princeton Boulevard.” Princeton Boulevard was an important Lowell street that eventually connected to the Turnpike in Chelmsford. At some point, the segment in North Chelmsford became Princeton Street. In the 20th century, automobile highways were built along the lines of the turnpikes. Parts of the Middlesex Turnpike became New England Interstate Route 6, which was replaced (and bypassed in many dense areas such as North Chelmsford) by U.S. Route 3 in 1926. Today Princeton Street is the northern terminus of MA Route 4, while the old main road becomes MA Route 3A a couple of blocks north of North Town Hall, at Vinal Square.

North Chelmsford grew only gradually in the Colonial Period, with a concentrated period of settlement around the mills in Stony Brook valley from 1682 to 1700 (“Chelmsford”). Daniel Waldo built a grist mill at the mouth of Stony Brook in 1695, and subsequent grist mills operated there until the 1850s (Smith). Mill operator John Richardson started an iron works on Stony Brook in 1706, although subsequent development in the area was modest. The Federal period also saw limited growth; William Adams rebuilt the Richardson sawmill and gristmill complex on Stony Brook in 1814, and the Adams family became one of the largest landholders in North Chelmsford. Kirk Boott, agent for the Merrimack Manufacturing Company in Lowell, bought this complex in 1822 to secure the water rights (Eleanor Parkhurst 278).

The most important triggering event for the growth of North Chelmsford was the establishment of the North Chelmsford Canal in 1823 (CLM.918, including HAER Inventory Card). The 1794 map of Chelmsford shows few neighborhood details, but by the 1831 map, the triangle of roads that defines North Chelmsford had been established (**Figure 8.1**). Foundry Street had been laid out alongside the canal parallel to Stony Brook, as a group of mills and an iron foundry. Foundry Street began at the Turnpike and ended to the east at what is now Middlesex Street (although only the Turnpike is named on the map). Middlesex Street, which ran along the south and west bank of the Merrimack River, was also the most direct route from North Chelmsford to Middlesex Village, where the first section of the Middlesex Canal had been completed in 1794. By 1831 the Turnpike and Middlesex Street both cross Stony Brook separately, and they intersect farther north at the apex of the triangle, today’s Vinal Square, where a tavern and schoolhouse are shown. Taverns were especially common along turnpikes, where they catered to the Boston stagecoaches. From the apex, the Turnpike and two other roads branch off to the north and west, leading to Tyngsborough, Dunstable, and Groton. The mills along Foundry Street are powered by the new North Chelmsford Canal. It was built by William Adams, who diverted water from Stony Brook in West Chelmsford into Newfield Pond, raising the pond’s level almost 20 feet. Adams then channeled water from the pond into a canal running along the

North Town Hall

Middlesex Co., MA

Name of Property

County and State

north bank of, and parallel to, Stony Brook. This new, more reliable water source powered a new foundry built by General Shepard Leach (d. 1832) of Easton, Massachusetts, and eventually other factories as well, making North Chelmsford a smaller, less-regimented version of its mammoth neighbor, Lowell. In fact, the Leach Foundry was important to the development of Lowell, because it “supplied the Lowell Machine Shop with all its castings until the construction of a foundry in Lowell in 1840” (HAER Inventory Card).

By the 1850s, another transportation innovation had further transformed North Chelmsford: the railroad. In 1856, North Chelmsford had its own separate civic map, the first to show the North Town Hall of 1853 (labeled “Town House,” **Figure 8.2**). The Nashua & Lowell Railroad (1838) followed the south bank of the Merrimack River; it was double-tracked, with a station stop in North Chelmsford. Near the station was the intersection with the Stony Brook Railroad (1848), a major branch line westward to Ayer, along the south bank of Stony Brook. From the Stony Brook Railroad a branch private line led to Fletcher’s Chelmsford Granite quarries in West Chelmsford (“Chelmsford”; Waters 670-671). These railroads drove the continuing evolution of industrial development in North Chelmsford. The textile mill owners frequently enlarged and rebuilt their shops, replacing old wooden buildings with stone and brick buildings. The most prominent companies at this time are Baldwin & Co. (established 1841), Williams, Bird, & Co., and Gay, Silver, & Co. Silver & Gay (as it usually was known), established 1832, was reportedly “one of the first machine shops in [the] U.S. to manufacture worsted yarn machinery, and inventor of the automatic ball winder [for] balls of twine” (“Chelmsford” 6). In 1898 it became North Chelmsford Machine & Supply Co. Center Village had little industry at this time and was primarily residential, while North Chelmsford was the “dominant industrial center of the town” (“Chelmsford” 6). In order to house and provision the workers at these mills, the mill companies laid out a ladder of streets up the center of the triangular space between the Turnpike and Middlesex Streets and built commercial and residential buildings along them. By 1917, North Chelmsford had two miles of side track and processed 700 railroad cars per month. The 1856 map also shows that in addition to the new North Town Hall, a new school (ca. 1850?) had been built across Washington Street from the Town House. These two buildings anchored an alternate civic core that challenged the Center Village for control of Chelmsford.

By 1878, North Chelmsford had achieved much of its current layout of streets, which for the first time are all named on the map (**Figure 8.3**). Since property lines are shown for the first time on this 1878 map as well, it is easy to see how far back on its lot North Town Hall was built; this placement made possible its eastward expansion in 1886. Because streets were generally laid out east of the Turnpike before they were laid out to its west, they sometimes have slightly discontinuous intersections and different names. For example, mill-owning partners Silver and Gay gave their names to the same street on either side of the Turnpike (both blocks now known as Gay Street). Cottage Row takes its name from the group of cottages erected there for mill workers, while the street to the west has the more generic civic name of Washington Street. In addition to Silver and Gay, the major businesses in 1878 are the Baldwin Carpet Yarns Co. and G.C. Moore Wool Scouring Establishment. A fire in 1875 had destroyed several of Moore’s buildings, which he quickly rebuilt (Smith). George C. Moore (d. 1923) reopened the mill as the Silesia Worsted Mills in the 1877; it became the dominant mill by the end of the century (“Chelmsford”). Moore sold the Silesia mill to the United States Worsted Company in 1912, for

North Town Hall

Middlesex Co., MA

Name of Property

County and State

\$3 million (“Brief History”). George Moore eventually owned most of the mills and property in North Chelmsford; in 1917, for example, owned 60 tenements in North Chelmsford (Waters 669).

By the time of the 1889 map, North Chelmsford has expanded the North Town Hall and added other neighborhood institutional amenities, including a public library on Gay Street and a common with a bandstand at the apex of the triangle at Vinal Square (**Figure 8.4**). One of the first religious presences in northern and eastern Chelmsford was the Second Congregational Church, founded in 1821, with a building completed shortly after in Middlesex Village. The Congregationalists and Unitarians separated and eventually sold the building (Waters 703-705). A second Congregational meeting house was built in 1838 at the corner of Middlesex and Foundry streets in North Chelmsford; it burned in 1893. The cornerstone for the current church, across from the bandstand on the Common, was laid later that same year, and the church completed in 1894 (with an addition in 1959) (“The History of Our Little Church on the Common”). Note that the Congregational Church appears twice on this slightly revised 1889 map, with crosshatching through the church on Middlesex Street that burned, and the new church on Princeton Street penciled in. In the 1840s, Irish immigrants began arriving in North Chelmsford, and sought their own Roman Catholic parish. In 1859 they purchased the Congregationalist’s old 1821 meeting house in Middlesex Village and dragged it—with horses and log rollers—two miles west to a new location on Middlesex Street in North Chelmsford, several blocks south of Stony Brook. Local members of the anti-Catholic Know-Nothing party attempted lawsuits and threatened to burn the church, and church members had to stand guard with shotguns during the arduous process of relocation. St. John’s Mission became a parish in 1893, serving a community of Irish and French from North Chelmsford and Lowell. Its current building dates from 1963 (“Our History”). In the early 20th century, other religious organizations founded mission parishes in rented locations in North Chelmsford to cater to a later wave of English immigrants: the Plymouth Brethren in 1914 and St. Alban’s Episcopal in 1915. The first Episcopal service in North Chelmsford had been held in North Town Hall in 1911, when Archdeacon Babcock had said mass and baptized several children (Waters 715). The North Chelmsford Library Association had formed in 1872. In 1947 the North Chelmsford Library relocated to its current location, the renovated home of the former librarian, three blocks west of the North Town Hall. The Anna C. MacKay Branch Library (1900, 43 Newfield Street, no MHC#). North Chelmsford renovated this library in 2007-2012 (Kelleher 73).

In 1893, North Chelmsford was an established Merrimack River mill village, celebrated in an expansive bird’s-eye view (**Figure 8.5**). North Chelmsford was connected to its urban neighbor, Lowell, by a newly opened line of the Bay State Street Railway. The busy line from Lowell to North Chelmsford was double-tracked, with extensions from there to Ayer, Tyngsborough, and Chelmsford Center (Waters 671). The 3-story North Town Hall, built atop the hill along the old Turnpike, dominated the 1893 view of North Chelmsford, and continues to do so today. Today many of the Mill Village landscapes and structures remain intact, and have been inventoried preliminarily as part of a potential North Chelmsford historic district (CLM.G). Many of the mill buildings continue to find new uses, either for manufacturing (in the late 1980s to 1992, many were owned and used by Wang Laboratories) or, increasingly, for offices, warehousing, and condominiums (Eleanor Parkhurst 327-329).

North Town Hall
Name of Property

Middlesex Co., MA
County and State

Politics/Government and the North Town Hall

North Town Hall is significant to Politics/Government as the first stand-alone town hall built in Chelmsford, when North Chelmsford was the only neighborhood outside the town center to successfully lobby for its own town hall. Town Meetings were held at North Town Hall, in alternate years, between 1853 and 1885, even after a new town hall in Chelmsford Center was built in 1879. Rebuilt and expanded in 1886, North Town Hall continued as a polling place until 1965, which also marks the fifty-year threshold and thus ends the period of significance. It is the oldest building remaining in a secondary civic center at the intersection of Princeton and Washington Streets.

The first Chelmsford town meetings took place in 1654 in a private house, but the residents quickly built a meeting house for religious and civic gatherings—by 1660—in what became Chelmsford Center. A second meeting house replaced it in 1712, and this meeting house was considerably enlarged in 1792. Although Chelmsford officially separated town and parish in 1830, they continued to use the same building until 1842, when a fire destroyed the meeting house. The town promptly voted to build a brick basement for meetings, and the First Congregational Society built a church above it (Eleanor Parkhurst 234). Today this building is known as the First Parish Unitarian Universalist Church at 2 Westford Street (CLM.213; NRHP Dis.). Town Meeting notices were posted in neighborhood gathering spaces throughout Chelmsford; in North Chelmsford, that meant the Tavern. But the concentration of residents in North Chelmsford, and their distance from the meeting site in town center, made it clear that it would be beneficial for North Chelmsford to have its own public meeting place.

As North Chelmsford continued to expand, its residents were able to push through town meeting a plan to build a second town hall. In 1851, the businessmen of North Chelmsford petitioned the Massachusetts state legislature to divide the town, but their petition failed (Fred Merriam, “History”). On October 28, 1852, the selectman agreed that “At the request of Charles T. Bird & others—to see if the town will agree & vote to build a suitable building to do Town business in, in that part of Chelmsford called North Chelmsford” (Town of Chelmsford, Records Vol. 20, 1852-1865: 39). Bird had come to Chelmsford from Easton, Massachusetts, and was one of the partners in Williams, Bird, & Co. Bird was elected as a selectman in 1851 and had served as Town Meeting moderator. On November 8, the selectmen “Voted To build a suitable building to do town business in at that part of the town called North Chelmsford. The expense of the same to the town, not to exceed the cost of the present town house” (Town of Chelmsford, Records Vol. 20, 1852-1865: 47). The selectman appointed Bird to a building committee that included Arnold Burt, Dawson Pollard, Edward Smith, and Thomas J. Adams. The residents of North Chelmsford were weighing other options as well, as another subcommittee reported at the same meeting: “Resolve, that, in the opinion of this committee; the Town should build a town house at North Chelmsford, suitable for town purposes, and in consideration thereof, no efforts should be made by individuals for a division of the town” (Town of Chelmsford, Records Vol. 20, 1852-1865: 56-57; emphasis added). Obviously, if the town voted down their request for a neighborhood town hall, they could become their own separate municipality. Of the building committee members, Arnold Burt was the owner of a tavern, possibly the one in North

North Town Hall

Middlesex Co., MA

Name of Property

County and State

Chelmsford; Dawson Pollard was to be the main carpenter for the new North Town Hall; and Thomas Adams, a hotel keeper and major landowner in North Chelmsford, donated the land for the new town hall, along with his brother Benjamin Adams, who was elected a selectman in 1851.

At the annual Town Meeting on March 7, 1853, the resolution passed, and the meeting “Resolved that the thanks of the town be tendered to Hon. Benjamin Adams and Thos. [Thomas] J. Adams Esq. for their liberal, free & generous gift of a piece of land at No. [North] Chelmsford for the purpose of placing a town House thereon” (Town of Chelmsford, Records Vol. 20, 1852-1865: 59-61). By the April meeting of the selectman, the process of building was already enough advanced that they vowed to meet there for the November election (Town of Chelmsford, Records Vol. 20, 1852-1865: 68-70). Williams, Bird, & Co. donated \$100 towards the cost of the North Town Hall, which totaled \$1,847.66 (Waters 601). On November 14, 1853, the Town Meeting met in the newly completed North Town Hall.

The only known account of the construction of the North Town Hall comes from an article published decades later, when the building was expanded in 1886:

For nearly a generation the old structure has served for the civil purposes of the town, and also for most of the public gatherings of the village. It was built originally in 1853 and finished August 25 [1853]. The contractors at that time were Charles Swett and Seth P. Sampson for the mason work, Edmund Swett and D. Pollard for the carpenter work, of whom the only one probably living at this time is S.P. Sampson of the village, who participated largely in the present opening. It was a fine building in its day for a village of our pretensions, and until the new town hall was built in the Centre, some eight years ago, was the best public building in the town, which includes the Centre, West, South[,] and East. (“North Chelmsford,” *Lowell Daily Courier* 21 January 1886. Contrary to this account, Dawson Pollard was still alive at that time)

Continued town growth and the increasing inadequacy of the old basement hall under the First Parish Church led the town to build a new town hall in Chelmsford Center in 1879. The proposal had first advanced in 1873, but had been voted down, as was a proposal to build another town hall in West Chelmsford (Eleanor Parkhurst 234). When South Chelmsford was also turned down, it formed the private South Chelmsford Hall Association and built its own community hall in 1878. Known as Liberty Hall, this one-and-a-half story Greek Revival/Italianate hall stands at 318 Acton Road in South Chelmsford (CLM.275). In 1879, the Town Meeting finally approved construction of a new town hall in Chelmsford Center. Designed by Charles T. Emerson, the Italianate/Victorian Eclectic new town hall opened at 1A North Road (CLM.255, NRHP Dis.).

Town Meetings continued to be held at North Town Hall, in alternate years, beginning in 1853 and continuing even after the new town hall was built in Chelmsford Center in 1879. In 1871, the town agreed to alternate intermediate and special meetings between the two town halls (Waters 601). According to the 1876 Chelmsford Annual Report, S.M. Macomber was in charge of the care and heating of the North Town Hall. He was also paid \$15 for a number of repairs, including 19 lights of glass, 6 lbs. of putty, window cords, and fasteners for repairing blinds. In

North Town Hall

Middlesex Co., MA

Name of Property

County and State

1878, the town paid to repair the roof and rebuild the chimney at North Town Hall. In 1885, Town Meeting voted to stop gathering at North Town Hall, as the building had grown inadequate for these purposes. North Chelmsford businessmen rallied again and forced the enlargement of North Town Hall.

At the Annual Town Meeting on March 17, 1884, the citizens "Voted An motion by Ziba Gay to raise and appropriate the sum of two thousand (2,000) dollars to repair and enlarge the town house at North Chelmsford" and "To have a Committee of five (5) to carry into effect the last-preceding vote. Chose as such committee Ziba Gay, Geo. A. Moore, Jonathan Larcom, Christopher Roby, P. P. Perham" (Town of Chelmsford, Records Vol. 22, 1877-1891: 232). The committee included two of the most powerful mill owners in North Chelmsford (Gay and Moore), while Larcom and Perham represented Chelmsford Center. Ziba Gay, Jr. (b. 1823) was a graduate of Andover Prep and Yale College (1846) who moved to North Chelmsford to work in Silver & Gay, the business launched by his machinist father. He became the sole proprietor of Silver & Gay in 1884, and served Chelmsford as Postmaster, Selectman, Representative of the General Court (1874) and President of the North Chelmsford Library Association (*Illustrated History* 156). Christopher Roby was the owner of a scythe-making firm in West Chelmsford, which during the Civil War was known as the Roby Sword Company, and produced swords whose quality continues to be prized (Linda V. Prescott). But the money appropriated in 1884 was not enough, and the committee returned to the 1885 Town Meeting and requested \$1000 more. They also raised private funds as a supplement.

The 1886 expansion of North Town Hall was extensive. Cyrus P. Barclay, a Lowell contractor, undertook the work. Barclay had previously worked in North Chelmsford as the general contractor for the Highland School on Pine Street (Town Minutes 1881). At North Town Hall, he lifted the building ten feet, dropped the foundation one foot, and inserted a new first floor. Barclay also extended the front of the building out 20 feet or more, and added a small-two story service ell to the rear. D.M. Prescott of Lowell was the subcontractor for plastering and tinting the walls. Work began on October 7, 1885, and was completed on January 1, 1886. Again, the newspaper notice of its January 1886 opening is the most detailed account:

[North Chelmsford Town Hall], having lost her supremacy with time and change . . . had greatly fallen in the estimation of the present generation. For years there had been talk about repairs, remodeling or a new building. . . . The front was cut away, and nearly 20 feet was added to it, and the old roof was extended out over the whole. The old windows remain the same in the hall proper, modern mullioned frames being placed in the new lower part and also in the front, both for hall and gallery above, making three tiers of windows in front. There is one front main entrance, and one upon either side of the building in the rear, one leading from the street . . . into a room to be occupied by the Spalding Light Cavalry, the other leading into the extension. . . . As one enters the main door there is a room on the left, to be used by the selectmen, and to the right the main stairway, 6 ½ feet wide, with ash rail and banister and Georgia pine steps. Opposite the entrance in this vestibule, which is 13 by 27 feet, are the doors into the lower or dining hall, which is 40 feet square and ten feet 6 inches high. Here may be noted the strength of the main hall above. Resting on strong oak posts are the great timber, 12 x 12 inches,

North Town Hall
Name of Property

Middlesex Co., MA
County and State

cased with inch pine that holds the joists of the upper floor. Beyond this hall in the rear is the armory for the cavalry; on the left a large square room, 23 x 27 feet, and the kitchen on the right, 23 x 13 feet, which room opens into a hall and a stairway that leads to the dressing room and platform of the upper hall. This dressing room above and the hall, stairway and lower rooms devoted to kitchen purposes are all outside of the main building in the new extension. This gives a platform in the main hall unencumbered, it being thus 40 feet long and 12 feet wide [deep]. This is quite an improvement. Coming up onto this platform from the dressing room and hall, we are in the main hall, which at once impresses one with the great change that has been made. The new hall is 76 feet long by 40 feet wide and 18 feet high, with a gallery on the front end extending into the hall 13 feet, just as it was in the original building. A new and polished birch floor has been laid. At the other and front end of the hall, looking from the platform [under the gallery] are the double doors in the middle leading into the upper vestibule, a door on the right opening into the cloak or reception room, 13 x 13 feet, on the left a door connected with a passage and stairway in the front of the building leading up into the gallery. The side walls of the hall are tinted a salmon color, with a deep border on the top of dark maroon. The hall is wainscoted, as is also the hall below. The rooms and all the stairways are painted, with windows and doors, a dark sage green in the main hall, while all the rest is in drab particolored. (“North Chelmsford,” *Lowell Daily Courier* 21 January 1886)

For the grand opening, the hall was festooned with red, white, and blue bunting affixed along the walls and stretching to the central chandelier in a great canopy, all “spangled with stars.” Flags and shields of the United States were hung and draped all around the hall. The 450 guests were welcomed to a meal, served in shifts in the downstairs hall, with 200 persons “at the first table.” After supper, the guests moved to the upstairs hall, where the 22-piece North Chelmsford brass band played, followed by a quartette, duet, soloist with guitar accompaniment, recitations, and a cornet obligato. Then the floor was cleared so that all could dance to the 7-piece Queen’s Orchestra. The evening’s events raised an additional \$200 to furnish the North Town Hall (“North Chelmsford”).

The January 1886 town report minutes note that the acoustics in the new hall were excellent. The 1886 Town Reports confirm the payment to Cyrus P. Barclay of \$3,100.23 for material and labor for the hall at North Chelmsford (21).

North Town Hall remained the civic anchor of North Chelmsford throughout the period of significance. Although no longer used for town meeting, North Town Hall continued to be a polling place until 1965. A school had been built on the lot directly across Washington Street from North Town Hall in about 1850, and was expanded or rebuilt in 1864 in the Greek Revival style, but with a distinctive cupola. In 1899 the neighboring lot south, at Turnpike and Silver (today Princeton and Gay), was cleared and became the site of a large wooden quoined Colonial Revival-style school building, designed by Merrill and Gilbert (Eleanor Parkhurst 51; plans in the MA State Archives: North Chelmsford School, Case B, Rack 1, Apart. 28, No. 2822. No set of blueprints is indexed in this archive for North Town Hall). Together, these three buildings made an impressive civic center that was celebrated in several postcard images (**Figure 8.6**). The school was closed in June of 1953, and both buildings were torn down before the current North

North Town Hall
Name of Property

Middlesex Co., MA
County and State

Chelmsford Fire Station (1956, no MHC #) opened on that site (*History of the Chelmsford Fire Department 1956*).

Although not used for Town Meeting after 1885, North Town Hall has continued to be town-owned and used for town-sponsored activities. During the period of significance, these included voter registration drives and functioning as a public polling place (until 1965). In 1892, North Town Hall hosted the public hearing for the establishment of the Middlesex Truant School campus (1893-1903, later the Middlesex Training School; no MHC#) —on the North Chelmsford side of the Lowell line. Many school programs and school graduations were held in the hall, including those of North Chelmsford High School (until 1917). In the 1920s, North Town Hall was used for extra classroom space for the overcrowded schools. Public health initiatives at North Town Hall included chest X-ray screenings for workers (1950) and, in 1952, blood-typing clinics for Civil Defense purposes (Prescott).

Entertainment/Recreation and the North Town Hall

North Town Hall is significant to Entertainment/Recreation as the community center for the neighborhood, a role that it has fulfilled from its construction, to the end of its period of significance in 1965. As a public meeting space, it hosted community meetings, social functions, local clubs, benefits, plays, lectures, family reunions, and dances (**Figure 8.7**). It continues to do so today, in its current role as the North Chelmsford Community Center. As its civic functions have receded, these Entertainment/Recreation functions have become the primary use and ongoing significance of the North Town Hall.

Special note should be made of the Spaulding Light Cavalry of the Massachusetts Voluntary Militia, who had a dedicated meeting room (sometimes called their “armory”) with street entrance in the southwest corner of the North Town Hall (as it was expanded in 1886). In 1864 at the height of the Civil War, several paramilitary groups formed in response to perceived threats along the Canadian border by Southern sympathizers. Christopher Roby, the owner of the Roby Mill in West Chelmsford, which produced battle swords, organized a mounted militia for northern Massachusetts. Roby had been a member of the Governor’s Horse Guards in New Hampshire, and got permission from Massachusetts’ Adjutant-General to raise a cavalry of 100 horsemen. They were inaugurated September 5, 1864 in Chelmsford Center as Troop F Cavalry, with elected officers from Chelmsford, and rank and file from Chelmsford and five surrounding towns. During its first encampment at Westford in 1865, the troop received a “stand of colors” from the grandson of a Chelmsford Revolutionary War hero, Capt. Noah Spaulding, and adopted Noah Spaulding as its namesake (Waters 375-376). Roby remained in command until 1877, and helped secure the Spaulding Light Cavalry their meeting room as part of the 1886 North Town Hall building committee. The group also sponsored its Annual Ball in North Town Hall, with tickets that read “Military Gentlemen are requested to appear in uniform” (Prescott). The Spaulding Light Cavalry disbanded in 1907 (Waters 376).

During the period of significance, the list of community uses (apart from town-sponsored activities) was very long, as even a brief summary might suggest. Local clubs and organizations using the North Town Hall include the American Legion, Boy Scouts, Brownies, Chelmsford Players, Girl Scouts, Jaycees, Knights of Columbus, North Chelmsford Parent-Teacher

North Town Hall

Middlesex Co., MA

Name of Property

County and State

Association, Varney Athletic Association, and the Varney Playground Association. Most of the local churches—including the North Congregational Church, St. Alban’s Episcopal Mission, St. John’s Catholic—sponsored benefits, concerts, performances, or plays there. Neighborhood gatherings included Halloween and Christmas parties. In the 1920s, the County Extension Service screened silent movies (Prescott). In 1937, the Russian youth of North Chelmsford presented a concert and play (*Lowell Sun* 18 June 1937). In 1950, the North Chelmsford Fireman’s Association held a whist party benefit (*Lowell Sun* 23 September 1950).

One of the community traditions for dramatic presentations was for the players to sign the back of the stage’s false back wall. The recent renovations to the North Town Hall carefully preserved these signatures.

North Town Hall Since the Period of Significance

In the early 1960s North Town Hall had increasingly been used for school purposes, and in 1967, the Town gave the Chelmsford School Department full use of the building. In 1966, North Chelmsford polling was moved from North Town Hall to North School on Groton Road (Eleanor Parkhurst 244). The change in occupancy meant that an array of groups lost their meeting place/offices in 1967: American Legion Post 313 Auxiliary, Boy Scout Troops 42 and 76, Chelmsford Players, Chelmsford Recreation Committee, Cub Scout Pack 76, the Junior Chamber of Commerce, National Mothers and Wives of Veterans, North Chelmsford Water District, and the Senior Citizen Organization (*Lowell Sun* 1 August 1967). The School Department partitioned the interior into offices and made other changes in 1972: the Town encased the building in vinyl siding in 1976, obscuring its dentils and cornerboards (Chelmsford Building Permits). In 1981 the School Department left North Town Hall for Parker School, their new office location. That year the Chelmsford Pop Warner baseball league hired the North Town Hall for equipment storage. In 1986, the Board of Selectmen deeded North Town Hall to the Chelmsford Housing Authority. After their plans to convert it to housing fell through, they returned it to Chelmsford in 1987. The Town Meeting authorized sale of the building in 1990, but no offers were received (Fred Merriam, “History”). In 1996, Chelmsford commissioned Belanger and Foley, Inc., to do an evaluation of the long-shuttered and now uninhabitable building. The consultants produced a report and floor plans (see **Figs. 7.4-7.6**), but no funding was available for construction.

It would take two more decades of community activism and new town-generated funding sources to return North Town Hall to its use as a community center. In 1997, residents formed the North Town Hall Committee and removed a number of the post-1965 additions, as well as much of the failing interior plasterwork, hoping that it could be returned to public use. In 2004, Chelmsford appropriated \$50,000 from the Community Preservation Fund to stabilize the building, replacing the roof and repairing windows. But nothing happened until 2009 (Fred Merriam, “History”).

Meanwhile the Center Town Hall of 1879 went through a comparable set of changes; its hall was partitioned for town offices. In 1981 Chelmsford moved its town offices to the 1916 McFarlin High School at 50 Billerica Road (Edwin R. Clark, no MHC#), and removed many of the later partitions to the Center Town Hall. In 1983 Center Town Hall reopened as the Chelmsford Community Center, although some space was leased to private tenants. In 2008 the Cultural

North Town Hall
Name of Property

Middlesex Co., MA
County and State

Council and Recreation Committee were moved elsewhere, and after a year as a charter school it too became vacant. In 2009, the Town announced the sale of both town halls for a dollar apiece to the Chelmsford Housing Authority, to convert them into a total of 17 units of affordable housing, primarily for veterans. Chelmsford residents objected to the plan and so the Town appointed a Town Halls Utilization Study Committee, to see if a reuse of the buildings could be found that kept them as public spaces and also covered their operating expenses:

The buildings would also have to meet current building and accessibility codes and historic preservation standards so Center Town Hall could retain its status on the National Register of Historic Places and North Town Hall might achieve that status in the future. At public input sessions held in June, July, and August, energetic advocacy groups came forward with realistic plans for the use of each town hall. This made it possible for the study committee to submit its report with a positive recommendation to the Board of Selectmen in October 2009. The report recommended use of Center Town Hall as the "Chelmsford Center for the Arts" (CCA), use of North Town Hall as the "North Chelmsford Community Center," and restoration of both with historic preservation funding set aside from town taxes, as allowed by the state Community Preservation Act (CPA). (Eleanor Parkhurst 315)

The Board of Selectmen approved the plans in February of 2010, and the April 2010 Town Meeting passed the necessary articles to budget \$5.2 million for the restoration of both buildings. The Town sponsored a dual groundbreaking on August 2, 2011 (Eleanor Parkhurst 315). Both old town halls reopened in 2012, as the Chelmsford Center for the Arts (on July 3) and the Chelmsford Community Center.

The 2010 Town Meeting vote that approved funding to restore both buildings to their original use as public halls allocated \$2.85 million of CPA funds to restore North Town Hall. Work on the North Town Hall, which had at that point been vacant for decades, began in 2011. The stated goal was to restore it as much as possible to its earlier form, with allowances for accessibility and current building codes. Although most of the windows had to be replaced, the attic window was retained, and the new window trim was made to match the original. The removal of the aluminum siding revealed the original dentils and pilaster cornerboards. Working with the Chelmsford Historical Commission, the contractors restored the interior, including many of the original paint colors. The existing wood floors were refinished, and the existing trim, especially the wainscoting, was restored. When necessary, replacement trim was milled to match the original. Parking was provided with a lot across Washington Street, on the rear of the lawn of the fire station. With its formal reopening on September 14, 2012, North Town Hall is now "a crown jewel in historic Vinal Square" (Fred Merriam, "History"). Most importantly, it is busy almost every day of the week.

Starting from this point, the Town plans to continue to recognize and preserve the historic character of North Chelmsford. In 2013, the restored North Town Hall received the 35th Annual Massachusetts Preservation Award. On March 10, 2014, the Board of Selectmen voted to request that the Massachusetts Historical Commission seek National Register of Historic Places status for the North Town Hall. Laura Lee, of the North Town Hall Advisory Committee, summed up

North Town Hall
Name of Property

Middlesex Co., MA
County and State

the community support for the project: “I thought it would be a shame to lose public access to such a beautiful historic building with a stage and an auditorium. A historic building like North Town Hall is irreplaceable and is a great asset to the town” (qtd. in “North Town Hall”).

Architecture and the North Town Hall

North Town Hall is significant to the Architecture of Chelmsford as a prominent civic building in the Greek-Revival style, with Italianate elements, built by masons and carpenters from Chelmsford and Lowell. In 2012 the building was carefully restored to its 1886 form and updated according to current building safety codes and accessibility standards to ensure it will function as a community center for many more decades.

Despite its major reconstruction in 1886, the building is primarily Greek Revival in style, with the Italianate element concentrated in some trim details. According to the completed survey forms on file with the Massachusetts Historical Commission, both Greek Revival and Italianate style are not uncommon in Chelmsford, with approximately two dozen recorded examples of each (primarily houses). A number of Chelmsford public buildings are in the Greek Revival Style, including some built long after other styles predominated: the Village Hall of the South Chelmsford Village Improvement Association (1878, CLM.275), Chelmsford District Schoolhouse #7 (1877; CLM.228), and Golden Cove School (1896, CLM.215). Churches adopted the style, including the First Baptist Church (1836, CLM.214), and the First Parish Unitarian Universalist Church (1842, CLM.213). Although less consistently surveyed, commercial and factory buildings in Greek Revival style include the Chelmsford Mill Company Office (1846, CLM.20) and the Edwin Parkhurst King Grocery Store (1862, CLM.205). While the Greek Revival style Village Hall of the South Chelmsford Village Improvement Association (1878, CLM.275), mentioned above, also has Italianate elements, the most significant public building in the Italianate style is the Old or Center Town Hall (1879, CLM.225), which also has strong elements of French Second Empire style.

Only a single source tells us the names of the 1853 builders of the North Town Hall in North Chelmsford: a *Lowell Daily Courier* article for January 21, 1886 (available on the Chelmsford Historical Commission website). The official Town Treasurer Records for 1851-1853 do not provide any corroborating or conflicting information (Town Accounts). Nor do the published Town Reports for 1886. None of the makers listed below has any other listing in the MHC’s MACRIS database.

Dawson Pollard (1810-1895) of West Chelmsford was one of two carpenters who built—and was possibly the designer—of the North Town Hall, as built in 1853. Both he and his wife Julia Ann Durgin (1812-1875) were born in New Hampshire. According to genealogical records (Pollard 2:265; online genealogies based on Pollard) they married in 1832; but more likely they married in 1839, as recorded in *Vital Records of Lowell* (where she lived and they married) and *Vital Records of Westford* (where Dawson Pollard lived in 1839). They apparently then moved to Chelmsford, and had two children listed as born in Chelmsford: Harriet E. (Pollard) Reed (1843-1875) and Charles Dawson Pollard (1847-1848) (Pollard 2.265). In 1847 Dawson Pollard was listed as a carpenter (*Vital Records of Chelmsford*) and in 1877 as a “carpenter and machinist”

North Town Hall

Middlesex Co., MA

Name of Property

County and State

(Runnels 2.239). In the *Massachusetts Register*, Dawson Pollard of West Chelmsford is listed variously as a carpenter/builder, justice of the peace, and undertaker (1867). Pollard served a long career as Justice of the Peace—for example, in swearing the validity of the 1862 contract between the U.S. Government and Christopher Roby for the production of Roby Swords at West Chelmsford during the Civil War (*Contracts with Christopher Roby* 442-443). Dawson Pollard, carpenter, died of apoplexy in West Chelmsford on March 5, 1895 (Chelmsford Death Register). The family plot is in the West Chelmsford Cemetery.

Dawson Pollard was the first owner and may have been the builder of the late-Federal style Dawson Pollard House (ca. 1837, CLM.57), which still stands at 231 Main Street in West Chelmsford. At his death in 1895, Pollard was considered the oldest inhabitant of Chelmsford and “enjoyed the love and respect of everyone” (CLM.57).

Seth Phillips Sampson (1822-1901) was the lead mason for the North Town Hall, and lived close by it for much of his life. The 1886 Lowell newspaper article says (mistakenly, given that Dawson Pollard was still alive) that Seth P. Sampson is “the only one [of the four] probably living at this time.” Seth Sampson, born in Fitchburg, Massachusetts, married Rhoda Taylor (or Taisey/Tacy), born in Vermont; the wedding took place in Acton, Massachusetts, in 1844 (*Vital Records of Acton*). Seth and Rhoda Sampson lived in Chelmsford in 1850, 1860, 1870, and 1880, according to the U.S. Census; in 1880 Rhoda was suffering from catarrh. Seth Sampson is listed variously as a mason, brick mason, or “master mason” (1860 Census). He is listed as a mason living in North Chelmsford in 1852, according to the *Massachusetts Register* (Adams 147). Sampson appears frequently in town reports as being paid for roadwork, repairs, and foundations, including work at North Chelmsford Cemetery in 1884 and for installing a new cistern at North Town Hall in 1888. Seth P. Sampson is buried in Riverside Cemetery in Chelmsford (Drury). He was a member of the North Library Board in Chelmsford, which acknowledged his passing in 1902 with a resolution. In the 1889 map of North Chelmsford, “S. Sampson” is shown as living two houses away from the North Town Hall on Cottage Row. The 1900 census lists him as a brick mason living on Cottage Row; his son James (b. 1849) was a machinist.

The second 1853 mason of the North Town Hall was **Charles Swett** (1804-1861) a laborer and sexton in North Chelmsford. He was born in Bedford, New Hampshire, son of a man who fought the British at Bunker Hill. His wife was Ann Babcock (1800-1867). In the 1850 U.S. Census, Charles Swett, a laborer, and his wife Ann live in Chelmsford. In the 1852 *Massachusetts Register*, Charles Swett is listed as an undertaker. He died of typhoid fever. He was the first owner of a 1.5 story Cape Cod-style cottage, the Charles Swett-Arthur Sheldon House (1845) at 21 Edwards Place, just three blocks southeast of North Town Hall (CLM.82; see also **Fig. 8.2**). The house continued in family ownership until 1935, most prominently as the residence of his son-in-law Arthur Sheldon, a moulder and town selectman. Sarah Swett Sheldon was a member of the board of the North Chelmsford Library (Obituary of Sarah E. (Swett) Sheldon, *Lowell Sun* April 15 1927: 3).

Less is known about the other 1853 carpenter, **Edmund Swett**. An Edmund Swett was a member of a committee charged in 1851 with removing the seats in the existing town hall and replacing

North Town Hall

Middlesex Co., MA

Name of Property

County and State

them with “moveable seats or settles” (1851 Town Records 398). Swett was a common surname in North Chelmsford and Lowell during this time period, which complicates searches. For example, the Samuel T. Wright-George Swett House next door to the North Town Hall at 25-27 Princeton Street was owned by another Swett family, but years after it was built (CLM.131). In the 1865 and 1867 *Massachusetts Register*, Edmund Swett of Middlesex Village (a neighborhood of North Chelmsford) is listed as a carpenter. An Edmund Swett (ca. 1796-1880), who may or may not have worked on North Town Hall, is buried in Riverside Cemetery in North Chelmsford (Drury).

Cyrus P. Barclay (1819-1906), who renovated and expanded the North Town Hall in 1886, was a carpenter and lived on Pine Street in Lowell at the middle of the century. He was born in Lisbon, New Hampshire and lived in Lowell most of his life, according to the 1850, 1860, 1870, 1880, and 1900 U.S. Census reports. He and his second wife Lydia S. Rundlett had four children. In 1880 his son George Barclay (b. 1856) was also listed as a carpenter. In 1880 and 1900 Cyrus Barclay lived on Smith Street in Lowell. In the 1867 *Massachusetts Register*, Cyrus Barclay of Lowell is listed as a carpenter. Barclay was an accomplished builder, as evidenced by the only other work for which he is credited, a ca. 1879 double brick block at 324-326 Fletcher Street in the Acre neighborhood of Lowell. In 1901, the O’Sullivan Rubber Heel company announced that it was selling off an investment income property at that address: “The block is three stories high, has eight tenements of four rooms each and a store carrying two rooms with it. Each tenement has a separate cellar with concrete floor, water closet, and is in first class condition. The foundation for the building was put in by Patrick O’Hearn and the building was constructed by Cyrus Barclay” (“J.E. Conant and Co., Auctioneers” *Lowell Sun* June 1, 1901: 3). The one-story building on that site in 2007, according to survey form LOW.2929, may still be the original Barclay building; its top two stories were removed in 1973.).

Bargmann Hendrie + Archetype, Inc. restored the North Town Hall in 2012. The firm’s 2015 Linked-In page summarizes its history and approach: “Founded in 1980, Bargmann Hendrie + Archetype, Inc. (bh+a) offers architecture, interior design and owner’s project management services. BH+A is led by four Principals, Joel Bargmann, Carolyn Hendrie, Tom Scarlata and Dan Chen. The BH+A team brings an integrated, consensus-building approach to private and public sector clients with senior level attention on every project.” Based in Boston, the firm includes 35 architects and 7 interior designers, and works on a wide range of projects, with particular specialization in aquatic facilities, community centers, housing, workplaces, preschool/daycare, and historic preservation and museums. The firm’s 2015 online portfolio of 27 completed historic/museum projects includes work at many sites with National Park Service oversight, including the Independence Hall Tower in Philadelphia; the Saint Gaudens National Historic Site (NHS) in Cornish, New Hampshire; the Franklin Delano Roosevelt NHS in Hyde Park, New York; and Massachusetts sites including the Old State House (NRHP, NHL) in Boston, Longfellow NHS in Cambridge, the Minute Man National Historic Park in Concord and Lexington, and the Plymouth Rock Portico (NRHP) in Plymouth. Jack Glassman, AIA LEED, is the architectural firm’s Director of Historic Preservation. The firm has received awards for its preservation projects, including (most recently) a 2014 Massachusetts Green Building of the Year Award for its rehabilitation of Factory 63 in Boston, and a 2013 Massachusetts Historical Commission Preservation Award for its restoration of the North Chelmsford Town Hall.

North Town Hall
Name of Property

Middlesex Co., MA
County and State

Additionally, the 2012 project manager was Vertex Construction Services, Inc., and the general contractor was M. O'Connor Contracting, Inc.

North Town Hall
Name of Property

Middlesex Co., MA
County and State

9. Major Bibliographical References

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North Town Hall
Name of Property

Middlesex Co., MA
County and State

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Prescott, Linda V., for the Chelmsford Historical Commission. “Town of Chelmsford: Town Hall Restoration Project: North Town Hall. For the Massachusetts Historical Commission 2013 Preservation Award.” Fred Merriam, Photographer. Ms. Prescott also answered several email inquiries, and with her son kindly spent several hours at the Pollard Library in Lowell researching the builders of the North Town Hall, in connection with this nomination.

Pollard, Maurice J. *A History of the Pollard Family of America*. 2 vols. Self-published. 1964. Available online through Google Books.

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Smith, Howard D. “Newfield: North Chelmsford.” *Chelmsford Tercentenary Souvenir Program*. Chelmsford: NP, 1955. 35.

Town Accounts. Chelmsford Accounts (1826-1865). Digital copies of microfiche cards of the original records are available through Ancestry.com.

Town of Chelmsford Records. Town Clerk’s Office. Due to space issues and renovation work at the Chelmsford Town Office Building, the original records were not accessible. However, Town Clerk Onorina Z. Maloney and Assistant Town Clerk Thaddeus J. Soule kindly examined the town records and provided the quotes under this citation from volumes 20 and 22, via email, on 8 August 2014.

Waters, Wilson. *History of Chelmsford, Massachusetts*. Lowell: Courier-Citizen, 1917.

Historic Maps (listed chronologically). These maps are available on the Chelmsford Historical Commission website, with the exception of the 1893 and 1907 maps.

1794. Frederick French. *A Plan of Chelmsford*.

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1856. Henry F Walling. “North Chelmsford.” *Map of Middlesex County, Massachusetts*.

1875. F.W. Beers. “North Chelmsford.” *County Atlas of Middlesex County*.

1889. George H. Walker. “No. Chelmsford.”

1893. George E. Norris. “No. Chelmsford, Mass. (On the Merrimac River).”

1907. Smith and Brooks. “North Chelmsford Fire District.” Rpt. in Waters.

North Town Hall
Name of Property

Middlesex Co., MA
County and State

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 # _____
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
 - Other State agency
 - Federal agency
 - Local government
 - University
 - Other
- Name of repository: _____

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Less than one acre

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates (decimal degrees)

Datum if other than WGS84: _____

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

- | | |
|--------------|------------|
| 1. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 2. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 3. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 4. Latitude: | Longitude: |

North Town Hall
Name of Property

Middlesex Co., MA
County and State

Or

UTM References

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

NAD 1927 or NAD 1983

- | | | |
|-------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| 1. Zone: 19 | Easting: 304740 | Northing: 4723100 |
| 2. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 3. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 4. Zone: | Easting : | Northing: |

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The National Register of Historic Places boundary for this property corresponds to the legal boundary as defined by the Chelmsford Assessor's Office: Map 13, Block 39, Lot 3.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The nominated property includes the entire parcel associated with North Town Hall since it was built in 1853 and continuing as a single unchanged unit to the present day.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Timothy T. Orwig, Consultant
organization: for the Massachusetts Historical Commission
street & number: 409 Common Street
city or town: Walpole state: MA zip code: 02081
e-mail: ttorwig@aol.com
telephone: 617.817.4732
date: 1 February 2015

Additional Documentation

North Town Hall
Name of Property

Middlesex Co., MA
County and State

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Photo Log

Name of Property: North Town Hall
City or Vicinity: Chelmsford
County: Middlesex State: Massachusetts
Photographer: Timothy Orwig
Date Photographed: 28 July 2014
Camera: Olympus SP-800UZ 14 megapixel

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

NOTE ON DIRECTIONS: North Town Hall faces northeast, directly toward Princeton Street, which travels from the north-northwest to south-southeast. To simplify descriptions and clarify directions, in this nomination North Town Hall is considered as facing east.

1 of 12. North Town Hall, showing the east façade and south elevation. Looking northwest.

2 of 12. North Town Hall, showing the east façade. Looking west.

3 of 12. North Town Hall, showing the south elevation. Looking north.

4 of 12. North Town Hall, showing the south and west elevations. Looking northeast.

North Town Hall
Name of Property

Middlesex Co., MA
County and State

5 of 12. North Town Hall, showing the northern ell and part of the northern elevation. Looking southwest. Note also the granite fenceposts.

6 of 12. North Town Hall, showing the northern ell and the northern elevation. Looking southwest. Note also the retaining wall and steps.

7 of 12. North Town Hall, showing the east façade, north elevation, and north ell. Looking southwest.

8 of 12. North Town Hall front (east façade) portico. Looking southwest.

9 of 12. North Town Hall southwest side porch, showing its Italianate bracketed and incised hood. Looking northeast.

10 of 12. North Town Hall ground floor main meeting room. Looking west.

11 of 12. North Town Hall second floor auditorium, showing the stage. Looking west.

12 of 12. North Town Hall second floor auditorium, showing the balcony. Looking east.

Site Map and Additional Documentation

Figure 7.1. Detail of the topographic map of the North Chelmsford, MA. From the Nashua South N.H.-MA map (1965, photorevised 1979).

Figure 7.2. Site Plan for the North Town Hall, Chelmsford, MA, based on a Bing Maps aerial view ca. 2010 (before the North Town Hall restoration).

Figure 7.3. North Town Hall in Chelmsford after its completion, ca. 1890. Courtesy Chelmsford Historical Commission.

Figure 7.4. North Town Hall basement plan in 1996.

Figure 7.5. North Hall Ground Floor Plan in 2012 (left) and in 1996.

Figure 7.6. North Hall Second Floor Plan in 2012 (left) and in 1996.

Figure 8.1. Early North Chelmsford: Detail of the 1831 J. G. Hales Survey Map of Chelmsford.

Figure 8.2. Henry F. Walling map of North Chelmsford in 1856. The North Town Hall, built in 1853, appears on the map as “Town House.”

Figure 8.3. North Chelmsford detail of the 1875 Beers map of Chelmsford, showing the North Town Hall (shaded) on the corner of Turnpike and Washington streets.

North Town Hall
Name of Property

Middlesex Co., MA
County and State

Figure 8.4. George H. Walker map of North Chelmsford in 1889. This was the first map printed after the 1886 expansion of the North Town Hall.

Figure 8.5. Detail of the 1893 North Chelmsford birds-eye view. North Town Hall, the three-story building atop the hill (just above Washington Street), is marked with a letter “Q” on its roof.

Figure 8.6. North Chelmsford Civic Center in the 1910s: North Chelmsford High School, Princeton Street School, and North Town Hall.

Figure 8.7. View of the North Town Hall interior in 1922, showing the second-floor stage. Courtesy of the Chelmsford Historical Commission.

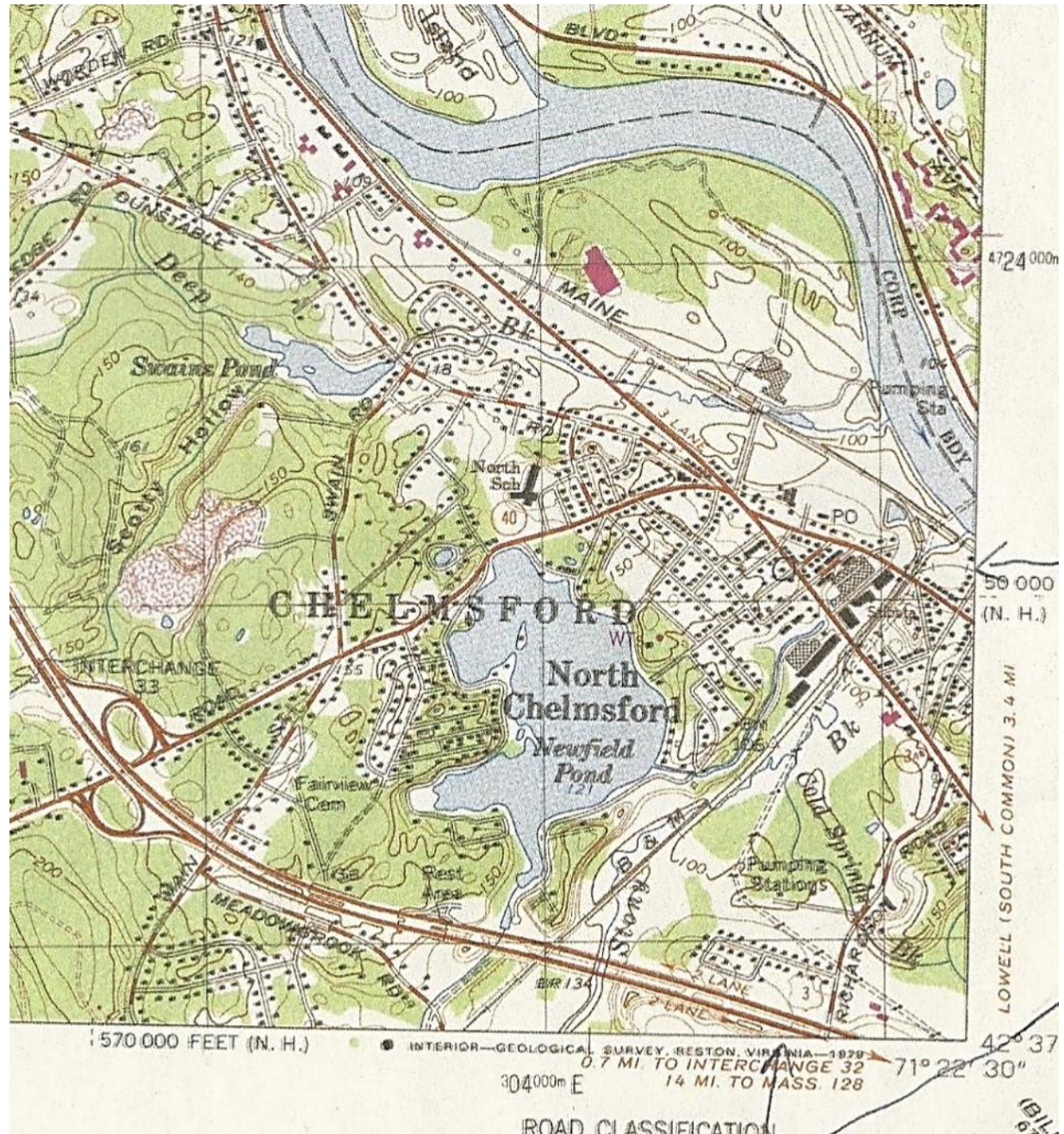
Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including 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 Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

North Town Hall
Name of Property

Middlesex Co., MA
County and State

Figure 7.1. Detail of the topographic map of the North Chelmsford, MA. From the Nashua South N.H.-MA map (1965, photorevised 1979). The arrows in the margins indicate the site of North Town Hall.



North Town Hall
Name of Property

Middlesex Co., MA
County and State

Figure 7.2. Site Plan for the North Town Hall, Chelmsford, MA, based on a Bing Maps aerial view ca. 2010 (before the North Town Hall restoration). With the 2012 restoration, the lawn along Washington Street (to the south of North Town Hall) was converted into disabled access lane/parallel parking. On this map, north is straight up. Dotted lines mark the lot lines. Arrow heads with Arabic numerals show the location and direction of each of the exterior photographs. “X” (in shadow) marks the location of the Retaining Wall and Steps and Granite Fenceposts and Steps, slightly to the west at the corner of the building and side of the lot. “O” marks the location of the Granite Hitching Posts bracketing the front sidewalk. Despite the Bing Map legend, Princeton Street in front of the North Town Hall is actually MA Route 4. Route 3A technically begins a couple of blocks to the north at Vinal Square.



North Town Hall
Name of Property

Middlesex Co., MA
County and State

Figure 7.3. North Town Hall in Chelmsford after its completion, ca. 1890. Courtesy Chelmsford Historical Commission.

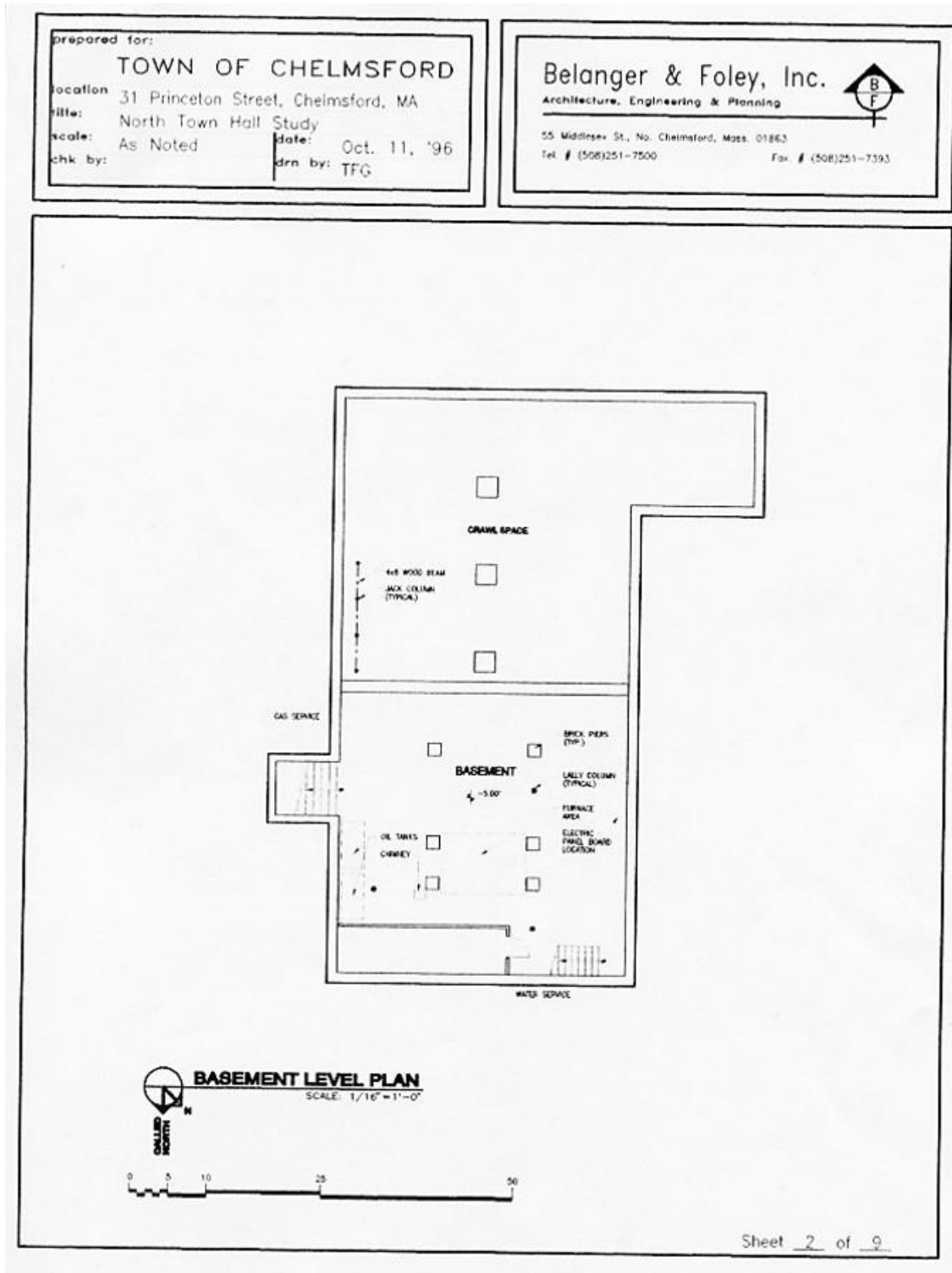


MA_Chelmsford_PrincetonSt_31_cpl_38_2 1886 Restoration

North Town Hall
Name of Property

Middlesex Co., MA
County and State

Figure 7.4. North Town Hall basement plan in 1996. Plan by Belanger and Foley, Inc.



North Town Hall
Name of Property

Middlesex Co., MA
County and State

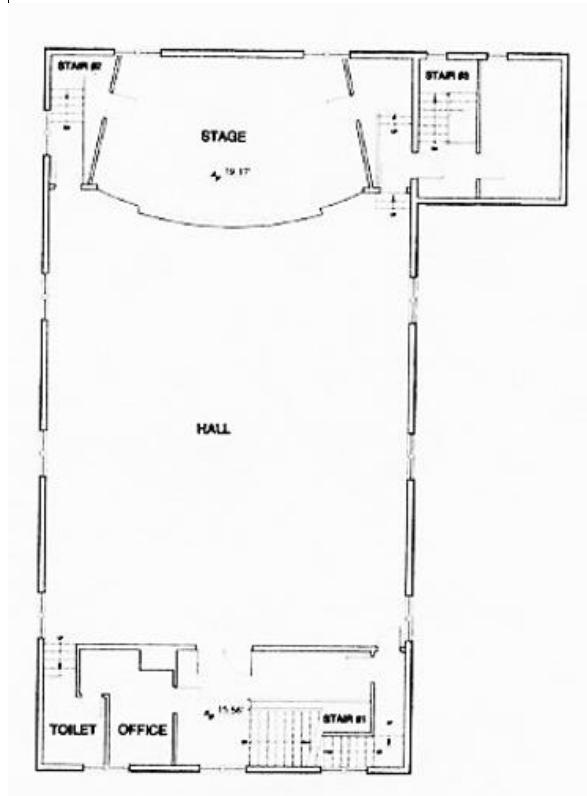
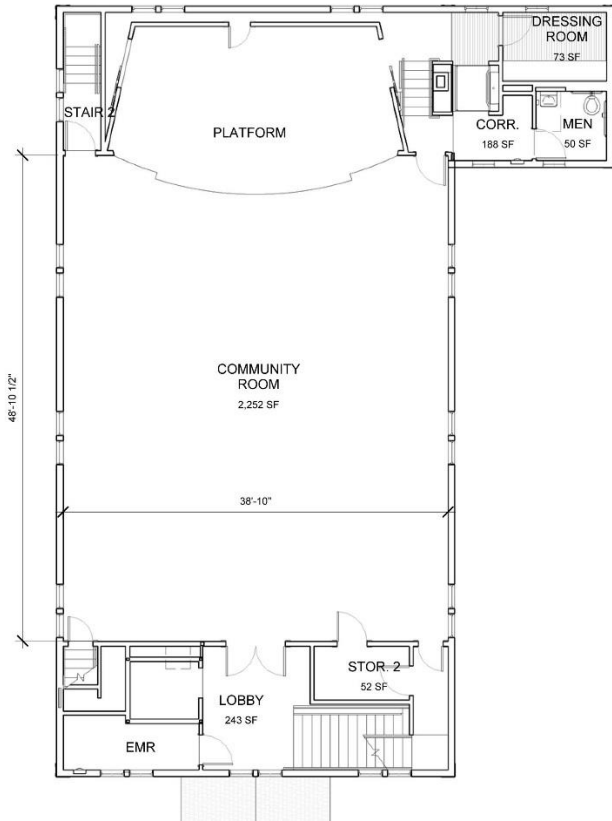
Figure 7.5. North Hall Ground Floor Plan in 2012 (left) and in 1996. 1996 plan by Belanger and Foley, Inc.; 2012 plan by Bargmann Hendrie + Archetype, Inc.



North Town Hall
Name of Property

Middlesex Co., MA
County and State

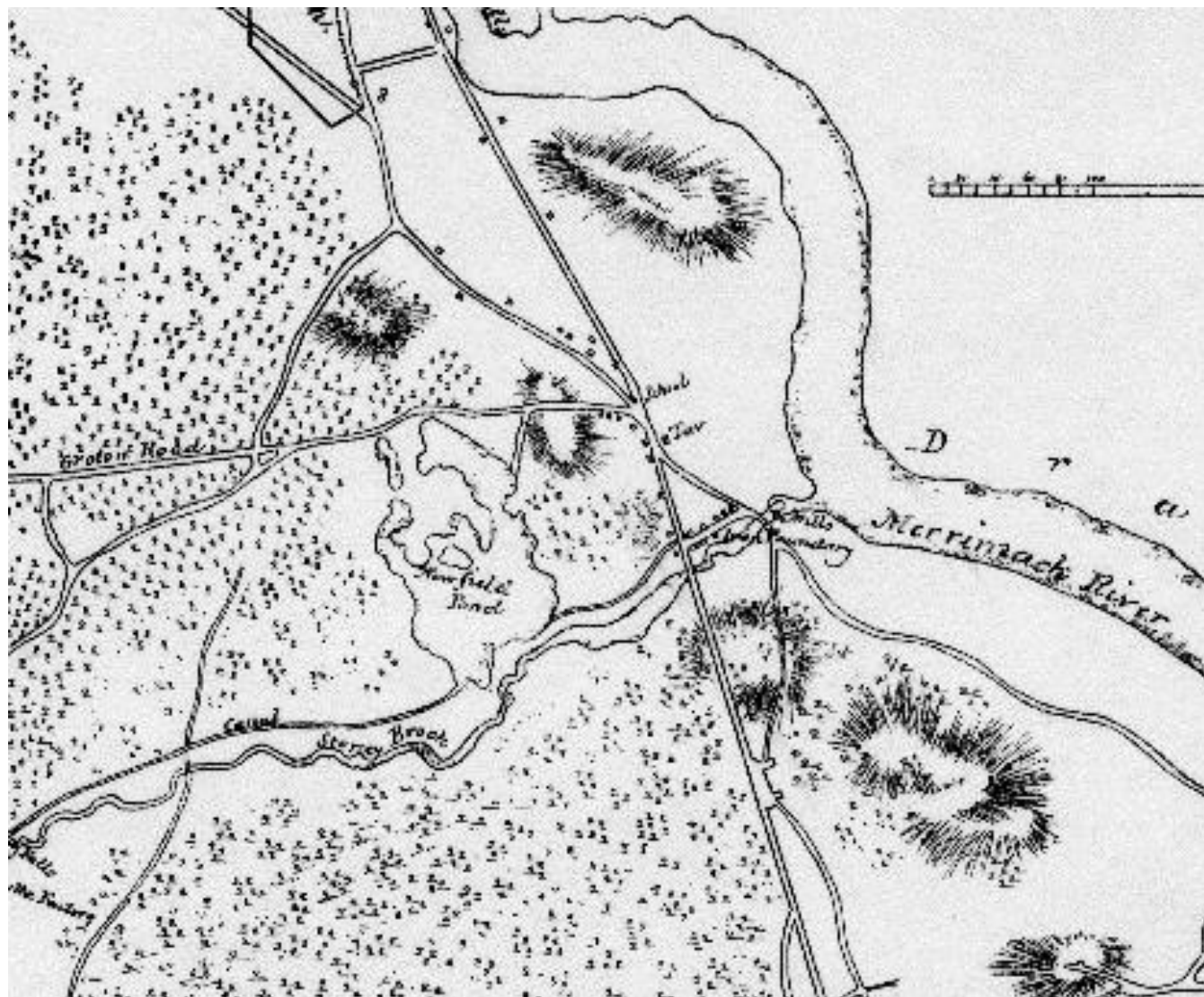
Figure 7.6. North Hall Second Floor Plan in 2012 (left) and in 1996. 1996 plan by Belanger and Foley, Inc.; 2012 plan by Bargmann Hendrie + Archetype, Inc.



North Town Hall
Name of Property

Middlesex Co., MA
County and State

Figure 8.1. Early North Chelmsford: Detail of the 1831 J. G. Hales Survey Map of Chelmsford. The future site of the North Town Hall is on the Middlesex Turnpike (the major north/south road), east of Newfield Pond (since 1986 known as Freeman Lake) and west of the Merrimack River. Note the triangle of roads that still defines the neighborhood, its base (now Foundry Street) along the north bank of Stoney Brook (with its mills and iron foundry labeled) and its apex at the intersection of the Turnpike with Groton Road and Tyngsborough Road (location of the school and tavern). The other (eastern) arm of the triangle leads southeast towards the Chelmsford village of Middlesex, the starting point of the Middlesex Canal. Courtesy Chelmsford Historical Commission.



North Town Hall
Name of Property

Middlesex Co., MA
County and State

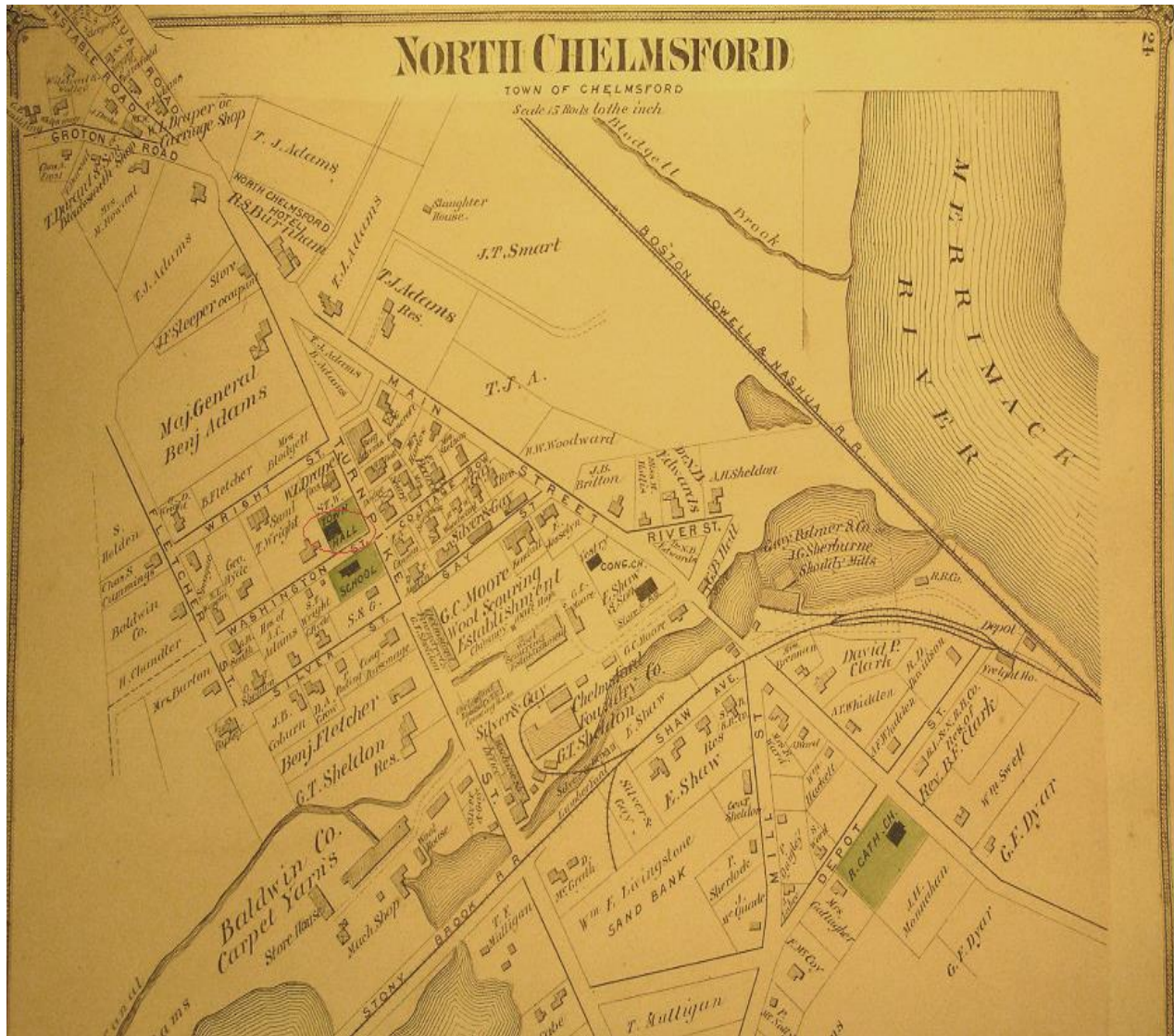
Figure 8.2. Henry F. Walling map of North Chelmsford in 1856. The North Town Hall, built in 1853, appears on the map as “Town House.” Note the addition of the Nashua & Lowell and Stony Brook railroad lines which further define the neighborhood. Courtesy Chelmsford Historical Commission.



North Town Hall
Name of Property

Middlesex Co., MA
County and State

Figure 8.3. North Chelmsford detail of the 1875 Beers map of Chelmsford, showing the North Town Hall (shaded) on the corner of Turnpike and Washington streets. Note how far back on the lot the earliest section of the North Town Hall was located. This position made it possible to expand the building forward in 1886. Courtesy Chelmsford Historical Commission.



North Town Hall
Name of Property

Middlesex Co., MA
County and State

Figure 8.4. George H. Walker map of North Chelmsford in 1889 (revised in pencil in 1894). This was the first map printed after the 1886 expansion of the North Town Hall. Courtesy Chelmsford Historical Commission.



North Town Hall
Name of Property

Middlesex Co., MA
County and State

Figure 8.5. Detail of the 1893 North Chelmsford birds-eye view. North Town Hall, the three-story building atop the hill (just above Washington Street), is marked with a letter “Q” on its roof. The map also shows a streetcar and streetcar tracks on Main Street (now Middlesex Street; that section of map not illustrated here). George E. Norris (1855-1926) of Brockton produced this bird’s eye view, one of 135 he published between 1883 and 1897. Courtesy of the Chelmsford Public Library.



North Town Hall
Name of Property

Middlesex Co., MA
County and State

Figure 8.6. North Chelmsford Civic Center in the 1910s: North Chelmsford High School, Princeton Street School, and North Town Hall. Courtesy Chelmsford Historical Commission. Both schools were closed in 1953 and razed for the current fire station (1956) on this site.



North Town Hall
Name of Property

Middlesex Co., MA
County and State

Figure 8.7. View of the North Town Hall interior in 1922, showing the second-floor stage. Courtesy of the Chelmsford Historical Commission.



Cast of play performed by the Congregational Church
in North Chelmsford in the North Chelmsford Town Hall
pictured on the stage in the hall about 1922 ±.
J. Leslie Merrill is at the far right in the back row.
[George L. Merrill has the original picture.]
January, 1998



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

November 6, 2015

Matt Hanson
Chair, Chelmsford Board of Selectmen
50 Billerica Road
Chelmsford, MA 01824

Re: National Register of Historic Places

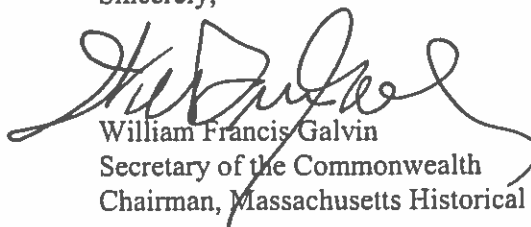
Dear Mr. Hanson:


The Massachusetts Historical Commission is pleased to inform you that the North Town Hall, Chelmsford, Massachusetts, was accepted on October 13, 2015, by the National Park Service, Department of the Interior, for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. A certificate recognizing the designation of this property in the National Register is enclosed.

For your information, an explanation of the National Register of Historic Places is also enclosed. If you have any questions or wish further information, please do not hesitate to contact the Massachusetts Historical Commission.

We share with you a sense of pride that this historic Town Hall has been listed.

Sincerely,


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


Brona Simon
State Historic Preservation Officer
Massachusetts Historical Commission

cc: George Merrill, Chelmsford Historical Commission
Tim Orwig, consultant
Paul E. Cohen, Chelmsford Town Manager
Edmond Roux, Chelmsford Planning Board

enclosure

220 Morrissey Boulevard, Boston, Massachusetts 02125
(617) 727-8470 • Fax: (617) 727-5128
www.sec.state.ma.us/mhc

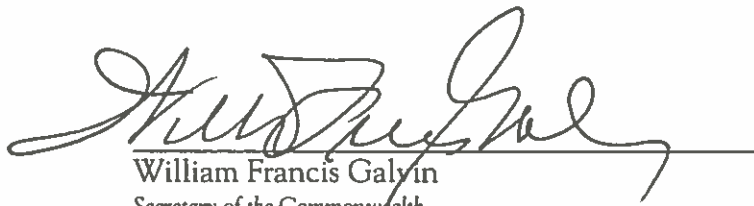


North Town Hall
Chelmsford, Massachusetts

was accepted on *October 13, 2015* for inclusion in the

National Register of Historic Places

The National Register is the nation's official list of buildings, districts, sites, structures, and objects that retain their historical character and are important to our local, state, or national history. The National Register was established under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 and is administered in the Commonwealth by the Massachusetts Historical Commission.


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


Brona Simon
State Historic Preservation Officer

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
A Division of the Secretary of the Commonwealth