

FORM B - Building

Massachusetts Historical Commission
Massachusetts Archives Building
220 Morrissey Boulevard
Boston, Massachusetts 02125

Photograph

(3"x3" or 3-1/2x5" black and white only) Label photo on back with town and property address. Record film roll and negative numbers here on form. Staple photo to left side of form over this space. Attach additional photos to continuation sheets.

Roll Negative(s)

Map and Lot # USGS Quad Area(s) Form Number
113 18 Y 146

Town Groton
Place (neighborhood or village)
Groton Center

Address 99 Main Street
Historic Name Groton Public Library
Uses: Present Library
Original Library

Date of Construction 1893

Source Town report

Style/Form Classical Revival

Architect/Builder Arthur Rotch, arch.; Chas. Dodge, builder

Exterior Material:

Foundation Stone

Wall/Trim Brick

Roof Slate shingles

Outbuildings/secondary structure

Major Alterations (with dates)

Major addition to rear, 1999

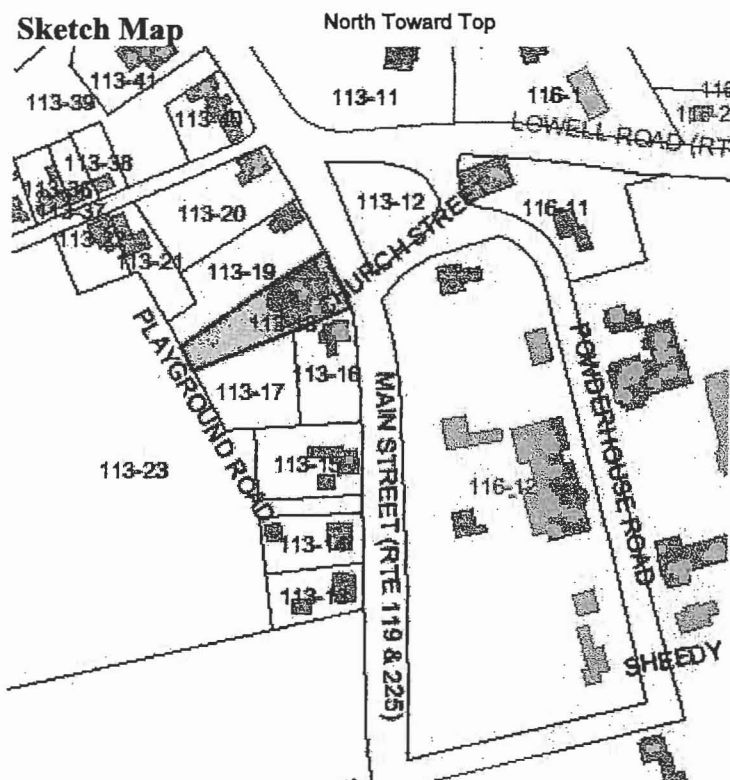
Condition Excellent

Moved no ☒ yes ☐ Date

Acreage 1

Setting Town center

Sketch Map



Recorded by Sanford Johnson

Organization Groton Historical Commission

Date (month/year) 6/06

Follow Massachusetts Historical Commission Survey Manual instructions for completing this form.

BUILDING FORM

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

☐ see continuation sheet

Describe architectural features. Evaluate the characteristics of this building in terms of other buildings within the community.

- * The GPL is a 4-bay, 1-1/2-story Classical Revival style design with a ridge hipped roof built of yellow brick with a wing on the south side that is set back from the façade; an enclosed gabled entry porch in the center of the principal elevation and a modern rear addition of 3 stories as seen from the rear
- * Decorative features consist of the tall brick chimney rising from the south roof slope with pronounced corbel, string and beltcourses done in masonry across the façade, the gabled entry porch with a bas relief in the tympanum over an entablature which is supported by paired Ionic fluted columns, square pilasters flanking the entry which has a classical surround including a cornice with consoles at the corners; a copper ventilator marks the rear slope of the roof
- * Windows in the main block are tripartite round headed sash with brick hoods and stone lintels on either side of the entry and grouped fixed square 6-pane sash in the south wing
- * The library is set close to the road and across Main Street from the First Parish Church
- * The c. 1995 addition is thoughtfully done in yellow brick and adopts design elements from the original building including window placement, roof shape and material and wall ornament such as the beltcourse
- * While it is much smaller than the brick town hall, the library is the only civic building in the town center that is comparable to it due to the construction material and the similarly high quality of the late Victorian period design

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

☐ see continuation sheets

Discuss the history of the building. Explain its associations with local (or state) history. Include uses of the building, and the role(s) the owners /occupants played within the community.

Construction of the Groton Public Library was completed in 1893 according to plans drawn by Harvard and MIT-trained Boston architect Arthur Rotch (1850-1894) of Rotch and Tilden, and under the supervision of builder Charles H. Dodge. Mr. Dodge (d. 1921), a native of West Groton, and later president of the C. H. Dodge Construction Co. with offices on Common Street and Devonshire Street in Boston in 1905, also built the Acton and Watertown Libraries, Wellesley College Art Museum, John Hancock Building on Devonshire Street, Boston, the Groton Water Co. Pumping Station, Shawfieldmont (176 Main Street), possibly the stone tower on Gibbet Hill and his own house on Pleasant Street in 1892. The construction was the culmination of decades of effort by local residents to obtain a building to function specifically as a library. A social lending library had been established in the 1796 which was folded into a second competing library in the 1830. In 1854, Abbott Lawrence, ambassador to the Court of St. James, namesake of Lawrence Academy, founder of textile mills in the Massachusetts city that bears his name and grandfather of the architect, donated \$500, voted unanimously at town meeting in March 1854 to be matched by the town, for the creation of a public library which, once established, was kept in a store at the corner of Main Street and Station Avenue, later in Town Hall and still later in Liberty Hall, formerly located at Main and Court Streets (burned 1878, after which, the library returned to Town Hall). In 1891, Mrs. Charlotte Sibley (1819-1902), tenant at 98 Main Street (MHC #24) donated the current lot of land and \$4000 for a library if the town would agree to raise \$15000. This was done in addition to acquiring \$10000 in private donations, some of which also came from Ms. Sibley. The storekeeper Michael Sheedy (148 Main Street, MHC #144) was chairman of the building committee and had a such a difficult time getting the gift and subsequent commitment to raise \$15,000 accepted at town meetings in 1891 that former governor George S. Boutwell (of 172 Main Street, MHC #4) came up from Washington DC in order to speak in its behalf on two occasions, thereby assuring the article's passage. The building was

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

☐ continuation sheet

Butler, pp. 225-226; Tercentenary Booklet, p. 31; 1889 Walker atlas; Previous GHS research; Resident directories, 1918, 1929; Undated (1992?) Groton Herald article by Helen McCarthy Sawyer; Report of Free Public Library Commission, 1899; 1888 resident directory; Sawyer, "People and Places of Groton", pp. 3, 45-46; "More People and Places of Groton", pp. 73, 93; May, "Groton Houses", pp. 97-98, 225; Dr. Green, pamphlet: "History of the Groton Massachusetts Public Library"; "Free Public Libraries of Massachusetts", pp. 148-150; <http://www.gpl.org/about/150.htm>;

**** All properties mentioned in bold type are individually inventoried resources**

- ☒ Recommended for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. If checked, you must attach a completed National Register Criteria Statement Form.

INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

Massachusetts Historical Commission
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Town
Groton

Property Address

Area(s)

Form No.

99 Main Street Historical Narrative

dedicated on May 18, 1893. The 57 years' service (1891-1948) of librarian Emma F. Blood, resident of 258 Main Street (MHC #179), and the 15 years' service of librarian Jennie Thayer (1876-1891), are commemorated in the local history reading room. The 1899 Report of the Free Public Library Commission indicates the collection was moved from Town Hall into the left wing of the building in June, 1893. At that time, the historical room occupied its current location right of the entrance; the trustees' room was to the left; the basement contained a spot for books rarely called for as well as Sibley Hall which housed the overflow of objects from the historical room. Funding was by annual appropriation and from proceeds of the dog tax. The librarian was paid \$200 per year, the janitor \$125. Volumes in the library in 1898 numbered 8,145 and circulation was 10,839. Donations to the library other than those of Ms. Sibley and Mr. Lawrence include \$2,000 from Willard Dalrymple of Charlestown and 583 Lowell Road (MHC #165); \$1,000 from the estate of Augustus Kimball Fletcher, a Groton native from Chippewa Falls, WI and \$1,000 from Luther Blood of 1 Powderhouse Road (MHC #143). Michael Sheedy was a trustee for 52 years and Martha Lawrence for 35 years. The local author Helen McCarthy Sawyer was also a trustee and notes that the interior was remodeled in 1910 and wired for lights in 1911, the Sibley Hall was put to use as a children's room in 1929 and windows were added and the stacks lowered in 1955, the stacks having previously been accessible only to the librarian. The major rear addition was completed c. 1995.

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99 Main Street

Town
Groton

Property Address

Area(s)

Form No.



Massachusetts Historical Commission

Massachusetts Archives Building
220 Morrissey Boulevard
Boston, Massachusetts 02125

Community Groton
Property Address
99 Main Street

Area(s)
Y

Form No.

National Register of Historic Places Criteria Statement Form

Check all that apply:

Individually eligible ☒ X

Eligible only in a historic district

Contributing to a potential historic district ☒ X

Potential historic district

Criteria: ☒ A ☐ B ☒ C ☐ D

Criteria considerations: ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E ☐ F ☐ G

Statement of significance by: Sanford Johnson

The criteria that are checked in the above sections must be justified here.

The Classical Revival Style Groton Public Library at 99 Main Street is potentially eligible for the National Register of Historic Places as an individual resource at the local level. Construction of the Groton Public Library was completed in 1893 according to plans drawn by Harvard and MIT-trained Boston architect Arthur Rotch (1850-1894) of Rotch and Tilden, and under the supervision of builder Charles H. Dodge. The construction was the culmination of decades of effort by local residents to obtain a building to function specifically as a library. In 1891, Mrs. Charlotte Sibley donated the current lot of land and \$4000 for a library if the town would agree to raise \$15000. This was done in addition to acquiring \$10000 in private donations, some of which also came from Ms. Sibley. The storekeeper Michael Sheedy (148 Main Street, MHC #144) was chairman of the building committee and had a such a difficult time getting the gift and subsequent commitment to raise \$15,000 accepted at town meetings in 1891 that former governor George S. Boutwell (of 172 Main Street, MHC #4) came up from Washington DC in order to speak in its behalf on two occasions, thereby assuring the article's passage. The building was dedicated on May 18, 1893. The building's associations with historic educational activity in Groton establish its significance under Criterion A. The design of the yellow brick building's arched window tops and columniated entry porch, the surviving historic exterior materials and architectural details make the property eligible under Criterion C. The library retains integrity of design, materials, setting and workmanship.