

FORM B - Building

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

Map and Lot # 101-22 USGS Quad W Area(s) Form Number 197

Town Groton
Place (neighborhood or village) West Groton

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.

Address 33 West Main Street
Historic Name Squannacook Hall
Uses: Present Vacant
Original Fire Station and Meeting Hall

Date of Construction 1887

Source Town report

Style/Form Victorian Eclectic

Architect/Builder George Woods, builder

Exterior Material:

Foundation Brick

Wall/Trim Vinyl clapboards, wood shingles

Roof Asphalt shingles

Outbuildings/secondary structure

Major Alterations (with dates)

Re-sided with vinyl, late 20th c.; porch and concrete ramp added, 20th century

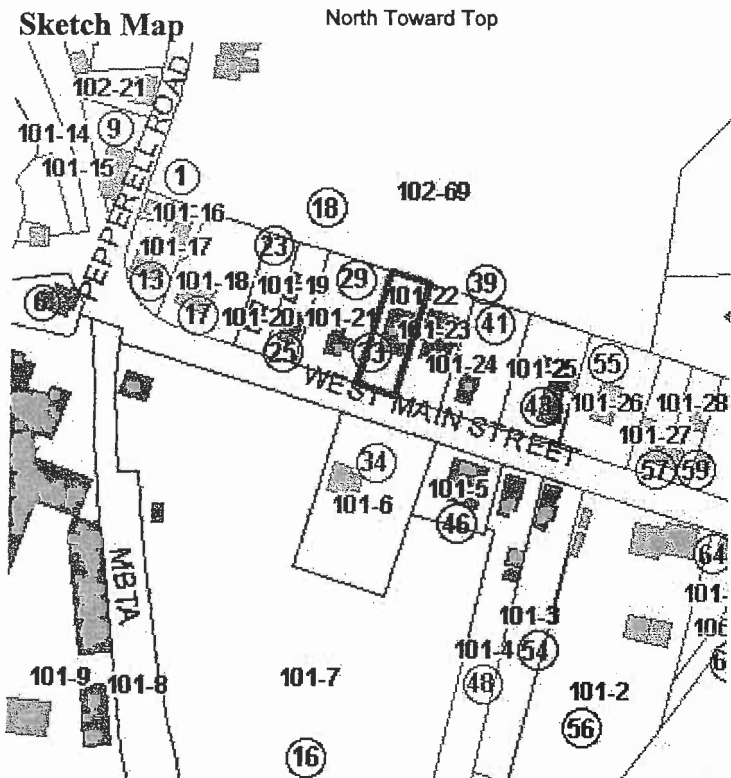
Condition Fair

Moved no yes Date

Acreage .5

Setting Rural village

Roll Negative(s)



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.

- * Squannacook Hall is an institutional scaled, 3x5-bay, front-gabled, Victorian Eclectic style building of 2 1/2-stories
- * The side-hall entry is covered by a gable-roofed porch with clipped gable, exposed rafter ends and a 3-pane transom
- * Decorative features include the clipped gables in the front and rear elevations, gable returns, corner boards and the band of wood shingles laid across the façade between floors in stagger-butt and sawtooth patterns
- * Windows are mainly 6/6 double-hung sash with hoods; exceptions are the paired 4/4 double-hung units in the center bay of the second story, the rose window in the front gable peak and the small awning windows in the west side of the first story of the façade that occupy the space formerly occupied by the fire engine door
- * The building is in fair condition due to its vinyl siding, the Plexiglas storm window over the rose window in the gable peak and the addition of the concrete ramp at the front door
- * The building, one of a few institutional designs on the densely residential West Main Street, occupies a narrow parcel with pavement on the east side and little in the way of landscaping

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.

Prior to construction of a fire station in West Groton, burning buildings frequently caused no alarm, either because there were no whistles or sparse settlement prevented word from traveling. In 1886, a volunteer fire company in West Groton was formed of "good, active, young men" who kept the town's oldest fire engine, the "Torrent" built by the engineer Loammi Baldwin Jr. in 1802, on the property of a private individual in a shed that allowed changes in weather to deteriorate the apparatus. The problem of equipment storage was addressed by construction of Squannacook Hall in 1887 for the Engine Company #2 while fire whistles were blown at the nearby leatherboard factory until the 1950s. This was the town's second firehouse, the other being located in Groton Center. The entire town at this time employed 3 engineers and 69 men, 25 of whom were in the Squannacook Company. The resident directory from 1888 lists Patrick Kane as the foreman of the company, John Dugan as the assistant foreman and W. V. Bixby as the clerk. Twenty five men served in the company at that time. Originally, the façade of the building had a side hall entry with no porch in the east side and a vehicle door for the "Torrent" in the west. Construction, which cost \$2,462.97 (\$962.67 over budget), was carried out by 13 different men listed in town reports as laborers who earned between \$1.90 and \$58. George Woods, however, earned \$498 for his labor which suggests him as the primary builder on the job. A public meeting hall was located on the upper floor and furnished with settees and a stove. Uses of the building included the fire station (a purpose it served until construction across the street of a new brick station c. 1970), first meeting place for the West Groton Water Supply District in 1911, meeting place for the boy scouts starting in the 1940s and the West Groton Community Club which sponsored athletic events, village improvement projects, field days, dances and holiday parties starting in 1946. Renovations to Squannacook Hall in 1977 provided for the building's use by Groton's senior citizens which continued until 1996 when the Council on Aging moved east to the former VFW building on West Main Street.

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

continuation sheet

Groton at 350, pp. 101, 187; Town Reports, 1885-1888; Groton Tercentenary, pp. 35, 37, 74, 79;

**** 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.
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