

FORM B – BUILDING

Assessor's Number USGS Quad Area(s) Form Number

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
MASSACHUSETTS ARCHIVES BUILDING
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

14 70 Marion N, AA MRN.22

PR 2019

Town/City: MARION

Place: (*neighborhood or village*): Marion Village

Photograph



Address: 140 Front Street

Historic Name: Marion First Congregational Meeting House – Marion General Store

Uses: Present: Commercial (Store)

Original: Civic-Religious (Meeting House)

Date of Construction: 1799, altered after 1841

Source: H. Edmund Tripp, *Reflections on a Town*

Style/Form: Federal, altered to Greek Revival

Architect/Builder: Unknown

Exterior Material:

Foundation: Rough-cut granite blocks

Wall/Trim: Wood shingles/ Wood

Roof: Asphalt shingles

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures:

None

Major Alterations (*with dates*)*:

Replacement windows (post-1998); Clapboards replaced with shingles (late-20th c.); full-width one-story addition on Main Street (date unknown), 19th century store windows on Front Street (likely late-19th c.)

*Based on Property Card and/or observation

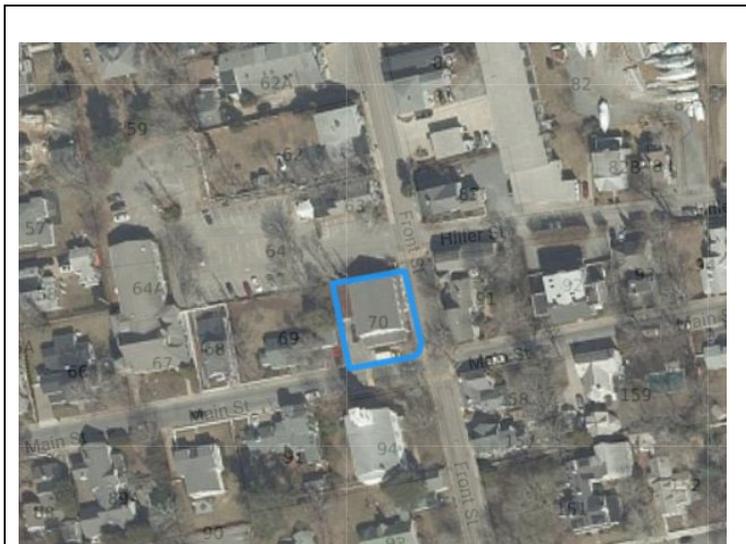
Condition: Good

Moved: no yes **Date:**

Acreage: 0.16 acres

Setting: This important building is located at the center of Marion Village at the intersection of Main and Front Street. The surrounding area is a mix of historic houses, churches, and commercial buildings, most set close to the street and to each other on small lots. Across Main Street is the Meeting House's successor, the 1841 Greek Revival-style Marion Congregational Church, 28 Main Street (MRN.39). This building marks the southern entrance to the town's small commercial center.

Locus Map



Aerial Imagery, 2021

Recorded by: Eric Dray, Preservation Consultant

Organization: Sippican Historical Society

Date (*month / year*): March 2023

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

MARION

140 FRONT STREET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area(s) Form No.

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MRN.22

Recommended for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

If checked, you must attach a completed National Register Criteria Statement form.

Use as much space as necessary to complete the following entries, allowing text to flow onto additional continuation sheets.

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION:

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

(Adapted from Edward Gordon's 1998 Form B).

The large, 2½-story building was completed in 1799 during the period when Federal-style architecture was employed, but this building has the appearance of a Greek Revival-style building, which may have resulted from alterations made post-1841 when its successor, the Marion Congregational Church was completed across the street (28 Main Street, MRN.39), and this building was converted to commercial use. The Greek Revival style, popular from ca. 1825 to 1860, was inspired by then new Greek archeological discoveries, and employed temple forms and details for domestic American architecture.

This building rests, like most 19th century buildings in the village, on a rough-cut granite block foundation. The elevations are now clad in wood shingles, but until the late-20th century were clad in wood clapboards. The buildings corners have broad pilasters (flat columns), with recessed, rounded panels. The roof is clad in asphalt shingles (wood shingles originally), and has a prominent, deeply-projecting molded box cornice with two-part frieze boards below. This cornice design carries across both end gables forming full pediments (intended to evoke the Greek temples that inspired the style).

The first story along Front Street was altered, likely in the late-19th century, when adapted for commercial use. Projecting from the northern half of the Front Street elevation is a storefront with a recessed entrance flanked by large fixed windows, and enclosed by a modified hip roof. The age of the current storefront windows is unknown. This projecting bay also carries across the north elevation. A similar projecting, one-story bay extends along the south elevation, covering what was likely the original main entrance to the meeting house. The one-story bays on the north and south elevations had bands of raised windows that have since been replaced with banks of modern 6/6 windows.

The second story likely displays the original window configuration, with evenly-spaced replacement 6/6 double-hung windows. What may have been the original or early 6/6 windows were still in place when the 1998 version of this Form B was prepared, and the 6/6 muntin pattern was commonly employed for both Federal and Greek Revival-style buildings. The windows on the south and north elevations are set in frames with hooded lintels, and those on the east and west elevations are set into the frieze boards of the roof entablature and have molded surrounds. In the gable peak of the south elevation is a more elaborate three-part window system that is not replicated on the north elevation. This is likely an indication that the south elevation served as the front elevation.

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

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.

(Reprinted from 1998 Form B, edited)

Completed in 1799, the Marion General Store was originally built as the First Congregational Church in Marion. Its present Greek Revival appearance belies its Federal Period origins. As early as 1683, the French Huguenot minister Reverend Samuel Shiverick preached at Minster's Rock, Little Neck. Marion's Congregational Church is a direct descendent of Reverend Samuel Arnold's church which was built in 1703 across from the Little Neck Burial Ground on Hermitage Road. At some point between 1710-1720, the Little Neck church was abandoned in favor of a house of worship at Rochester Center. This relocation occurred at the beginning of Rev. Timothy Ruggle's pastorate of nearly 60 years and came about so as to be more central for the parishioners of Marion, Wareham, Rochester, and Mattapoisett. In 1726, the Second Church of Rochester was formed at Mattapoisett. In 1758, the Third Church of Rochester was organized in North Rochester. Unspecified "troubles" during the pastorate of Reverend Jonathan Moore (1768-1791) resulted in a loss of membership and evidently started ferment within Marion for the establishment of its own Congregational Church.

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140 FRONT STREET

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Begun in 1794, the construction of Marion's first Congregational Meeting House lagged because of lack of funds. Captain George Bonum Nye financed its completion on the condition that title to this property would be in his name. He subsequently sold pews to parishioners and assessed the pew owners when repairs were necessary. A descendent of Ichabod Nye who came to Massachusetts from England in 1637. Captain Nye built the substantial late-Georgian residence at 266 Converse Road (ca. 1800, MRN.85). He made a fortune as the first entrepreneur in Marion to establish a salt works and built Nye's Wharf (east of the intersection of Water and Lewis Street).

Originally, this meeting house's interior consisted of a single large room open to the rafters (gold leaf still in evidence on the attic's ceiling). According to Tripp, "it had 40 pews in four lines of ten each with very high sides and, when seated, members of the congregation could not be seen except by the minister in the pulpit. There were three pews for the choir, and pews for blacks in a gallery upstairs, the men on one side and the women on the other."

The construction of Marion's first meetinghouse marks the beginnings of Wharf Village's ascendancy as the primary focus of Marion's social, commercial, political as well as religious life. Indeed, the seeds of Marion's separation from Rochester in 1852 are rooted in the establishment of this church. The Old Landing area, home to numerous sea captains and the Pythagorean Lodge, continued to exert considerable influence over town affairs until the philanthropy of Elizabeth Pitcher Taber during the 1870s and 1880s decidedly favored Wharf Village rather than the Old Landing.

Beginning in 1799, Reverend Oliver Cobb alternated his preaching between the First Congregational Church at Rochester Center and the new meeting house in Wharf Village. Born in Kingston, MA, Reverend Cobb was a graduate of Brown University and was "especially esteemed as a sermonizer." In 1799, he built a house at a location roughly halfway between Wharf Village and Rochester Center (460 Front Street, MRN.149). In 1827, a permanent division between the Rochester and Marion churches, resulted in a full-time pastorate for Reverend Cobb's at the Wharf Village church. At that time, the Marion meeting house's communicants numbered fifty-seven. By the 1830s, the old meeting house was in poor condition, but Captain Nye refused to make necessary repairs. In 1841, the handsome Greek Revival Marion Congregational Church was built at 28 Main Street (MRN.39). Here Reverend Oliver Cobb, along with a son, Reverend Leander Cobb, conducted a co-pastorate until the elder Cobb's death in 1849.

After construction of the new church, the old church building was used as a meeting hall, theatre and general store. Purchased by Deacon Stephen Delano during the early 1840s, it was called Delano Hall until it was sold to Andrew Hadley for \$1,000 in 1856. Stephen Delano was well known for having successfully negotiated a round trip by sleigh across the frozen Buzzard's Bay, between Marion and Wing's Neck on the Cape. The Marion General Store's current Greek Revival appearance evidently dates to the Delano period of ownership.

This building's long and continuing history as a grocery store dates to the Hadley purchase. Andrew Hadley had been a partner in Hadley and Blankinship's grocery store which stood on the site of the Marion General Store parking lot. Hadley established "a real country store" on the first floor of the old meeting house. Evidently, the separation of the second floor and attic date to the beginnings of Hadley's ownership of this property. The second floor contained "three small shops as well as a large hall used for suppers, dances, concerts and town meetings." In addition to his duties as the proprietor of a provisions dealership, Andrew Hadley was also the agent for ships that docked at Long Wharf. Hadley was charged with paying the crews on their returns from voyages. An 1879 advertisement notes that "A. J. Hadley and Son, dealers in dry goods, groceries and provisions, boots and shoes, hats and caps, flour and meal is located at the corner of Front and Main, Marion." By ca. 1900, Hadley's estate owned this store. Peleg Hadley assumed control of the store around 1900 and by all accounts was one of the colorful characters of Wharf Village. One story traces the removal of the old meeting house's pulpit from the building to the day when a customer, unaware of the building's history, bet Hadley that his store really didn't sell "everything" because he didn't keep church pulpits in stock. The surprised customer lost the bet, paying Hadley fifteen dollars for this piece of Marion ecclesiastical history.

Operated by Alonzo Hathaway during the mid-20th century, the old meeting house still houses a general store.

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National Register of Historic Places Criteria Statement Form

Check all that apply:

- Individually eligible Eligible **only** in a historic district
- Contributing to a potential historic district Potential historic district

Criteria: **A** **B** **C** **D**

Criteria Considerations: **A** **B** **C** **D** **E** **F** **G**

Statement of Significance by Eric Dray, Preservation Consultant for Sippican Historical Society
The criteria that are checked in the above sections must be justified here.

This property is a contributing resource in the combined Areas of Wharf Village-Sippican Village (MRN.N) and Water Street (MRN.L), hereinafter referred to as Marion Village.*

Marion Village is recommended as eligible for listing at the local level under Criterion A in the area of Maritime History. Marion Village contains the great majority of buildings connected to Marion's historical maritime development beginning in the late-18th century. With the rise of salting, shipyards, and whaling, maritime activity increased dramatically into the mid-19th century, as did residential development in Marion Village. In addition to the houses built by those in the maritime industry, Marion Village contains numerous buildings and structures associated with maritime industrial activity, including a chandlery, sail loft, cooperage, and wharves. As Marion Village's prosperity became linked to Sippican Harbor, Marion Village also became the commercial, political and institutional center of the town.

Marion Village is also recommended as eligible for listing at the local level under Criterion A in the area of Entertainment/ Recreation. Starting in the mid-19th century, maritime activity declined significantly. The decline in maritime activity was eventually replaced by the rise in the 1870s of a summer colony as Marion Village emerged as an elite summer resort. This was facilitated by the arrival of train service in the 1854. Summer visitors, including artists and writers, were drawn Sippican Harbor's beauty and tranquility. A large hotel, the Sippican Hotel, was located at the corner of South and Water Streets, and a few houses were converted to inns. While the hotel was town down in 1929, a large livery complex built by the Hiller Brothers at 147 Front Street (MRN.216) is extant. They provided horse-drawn vehicles to summer visitors registered at the Sippican Hotel, and ferried guests back and forth between the hotel and the train depot. In Marion Village, ownership (or occupancy through rental) of many houses began to shift from local maritime families to seasonal residents, including nationally-noteworthy politicians, businessmen, artists and writers. During this period, Marion Village also saw the addition of high style, architect-designed summer cottages and recreation resources.

Marion Village is recommended as eligible for listing at the local level under Criterion C in the area of Architecture. Marion Village is a remarkably intact historic town center, including a compact collection of historic dwellings, along with a few churches, schools, commercial buildings and recreation buildings. Marion Village contains a great concentration of Federal and Greek Revival houses; and examples of later Victorian-era styles, including high-style examples of summer house architecture along Sippican Harbor and large institutional buildings not found elsewhere in Marion.

This property is also eligible individually under Criterion A and C at the local level. Its completion in 1799 symbolizes the beginnings of Wharf Village's architectural identity as Marion's town center, and is of major historical significance as the first house of worship located within the town since the early 1700s.

*The potential Marion Village district boundaries include surveyed areas within the boundary of MRN.N completed in 2020-2022 for Barden-Hiller (MRN.Y), Cottage Street (MRN.Z), Main Street (MRN.AA), South Street (MRN.AB), Upper Pleasant Street (MRN.AC), and Upper Main Street (MRN.AH).