

FORM B – BUILDING

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

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

15 77

Marion

N,
AC

MRN.49

PR 12/2012

Town/City: MARION

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

Address: 80 Pleasant Street

Historic Name: Marion First Universalist Church

Uses: Present: Church

Original: Church

Date of Construction: 1833

Source: Edmund Tripp, *Reflections on a Town*

Style/Form: Greek Revival

Architect/Builder: Seth Eaton

Exterior Material:

Foundation: Granite

Wall/Trim: Wood shingles/ Wood

Roof: Asphalt shingles

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures:

None

Major Alterations (*with dates*)*:

Pinnacles at tower removed, original clapboards replaced by wood shingles (date unknown).

Interior of building adapted for reuse as community art center with office, galleries (post-1957).

Ell along south wall poss. later addition.

Condition: Good

Moved: no yes **Date:**

Acreage: acres

Setting: Prominently sited at corner of Pleasant and Main streets. The surrounding area includes historic houses set close to the street and each other, and the large former Taber Academy campus across Main Street.

Photograph



Locus Map



Recorded by: Eric Dray, Preservation Consultant

Organization: Sippican Historical Society

Date (*month / year*): February 2023

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

MARION

80 PLEASANT STREET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

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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 and expanded from 1998 version of this Form B)

Built in 1833, the former Marion Universalist Church at 80 Pleasant Street, now the Marion Art Center, successfully blends the Greek and Gothic Revival styles. Together with the tower of the nearby Marion Town House and Congregational Church, the Universalist Church's tower is one of the great "place making" features of Wharf Village. Prominently sited on a corner lot enclosed by a fence consisting of granite posts and iron tie rods, this church, together with its Greek Revival-style rectory next door (78 Pleasant Street, MRN.275), preserves an unspoiled glimpse of, pre-Civil War Marion.

This church is composed of a boxy, rectangular, two-bay by three-bay main block and a two-story, gable-roofed ell addition which projects from the western end of the south elevation. The church was originally clad in wood clapboards, but is now clad in wood shingles with plain cornerboards. The roof is clad in asphalt shingles (wood shingles originally), and has a projecting molded box cornice with partial returns across the gable ends (a Greek Revival detail).

On the front (east) elevation, there are paired, boldly enframed entrances that exhibit Doric pilasters and heavy, cornice headed entablatures. Above these entrances, at the center of the second floor, is a tripartite window that culminates in a cornice-headed entablature. The side walls are pierced by square, 2/2 windows which rise from louvered apron panels to louvered pointed arches (a Gothic Revival detail). The top tier of the tower has corner Gothic Revival pinnacles, and a wood railing sits atop the first stage, with its wooden circular motifs. The upper stage corners are finished with Doric pilasters.

Projecting from the Main Street elevation is a small entrance vestibule that is enclosed by a modified hip roof. This entrance is not shown on the 1908 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, but was in place by the time the 1921 Sanborn map was prepared. A modern gallery entrance and window have been added to the western end of this elevation (Photo 2).

The south elevation has a large two-story ell at the western end (Photo 3). The footprint of this ell was not shown on the 1879 Plymouth County Atlas, but was in place by the time the 1903 Atlas was prepared. A smaller ell with gable roof at the eastern end of the south elevation was added sometime later, as was the one-story, shed-roofed ell that connects the two larger ells.

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 version of this Form B, with edits)

80 Pleasant Street is historically significant as the spiritual home of Marion Universalists for over 100 years. Built in 1833, this building is also a highly successful mid- 20th century example of a Massachusetts historic preservation adaptive reuse project.

The organization of this church in 1828 as the First Universalist Society of Rochester reflects a New England-wide phenomenon within the Congregational Church known as the Great Schism. During the late-18th and early-19th centuries, theological differences between the conservative or Trinitarian Congregationalists and the more liberal faction known variously as Unitarians and Universalists resulted in the liberals forming their own churches. The first Universalist preacher in Marion was Robert T. Killam, while the minister at the time of the church's 1833 construction was Alanson St. Clair. The church's original members included members of the Clark, Bassett, Bates, Blankinship, Foster, Martin, Southworth and Wing families. Perhaps this church's best known preacher was Henry C. Vose whose three pastorates (1844-47, 1857-1861 and 1866-1884) totaled 25 years.

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Photo 2. View from Main Street, looking southeast.



Photo 3. View from Pleasant Street, looking northeast.

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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 saltmaking, 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.

The great majority of resources in Marion Village retain substantial integrity of location, setting, materials, workmanship, design, feeling, and association.

*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).