

FORM B – BUILDING

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

14 42 2

Marion

N

MRN.61

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

Town/City: MARION

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

Photograph



Address: 11 Spring Street

Historic Name: Marion Pythagorean Lodge

Uses: Present: Clubhouse – Masonic Lodge

Original: Clubhouse – Masonic Lodge

Date of Construction: ca. 1908

Source: *Wareham Courier*, October 15, 1908

Style/Form: Colonial Revival

Architect/Builder: Unknown

Exterior Material:

Foundation: Granite

Wall/Trim: Synthetic clapboard/ Wood

Roof: Asphalt shingles

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures:

None

Major Alterations (*with dates*)*:

None on record

*Based on Property Card and/or observation

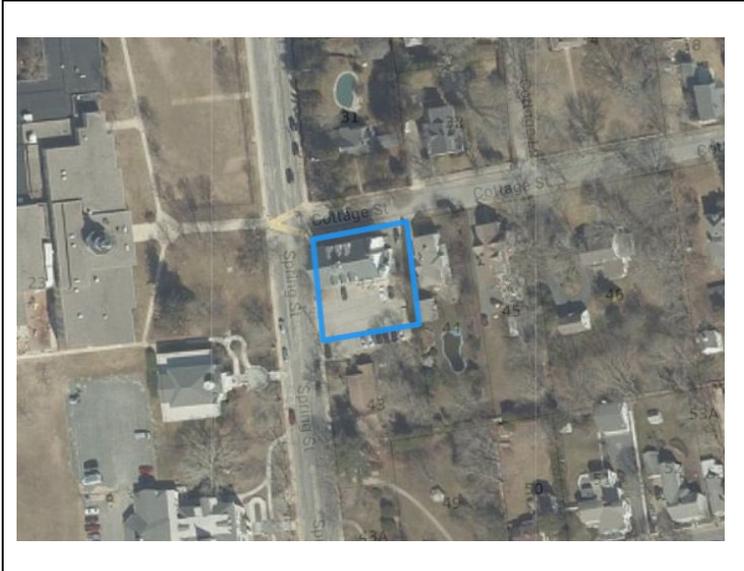
Condition: Good

Moved: no yes **Date:**

Acreage: 0.25 acres

Setting: This Masonic lodge is prominently sited at the corner of Spring and Cottage streets. It represents a bridge between the residential resources to the east and important institutional buildings to the west, including the Marion Town House, Taber Library and Sippican School. The building is sited close to both streets and there is an asphalt parking area south of the building.

Locus Map



Recorded by: Eric Dray, Preservation Consultant

Organization: Sippican Historical Society

Date (*month / year*): February 2023

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

MARION

11 SPRING STREET

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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.

(Reprinted from 1998 version of this Form B, edited and expanded)

Built in ca. 1908-1911, Marion's Pythagorean Hall is a boxy, clapboard-clad, 2½-story building which rises from a granite block foundation to a gable roof with deeply-projecting molded box cornice with partial returns across the gable ends. This is Marion Village's largest example of Colonial Revival-style architecture – in this case, the building's massing and elements represent an early-20th century echo of New England Greek Revival-style meetinghouses, with only the foreshortened Ionic columns atop yellow brick plinths at the main entrance more firmly representative of early-20th century Classical Revivalism. Measuring three-bays by six-bays, the main floor exhibits a recessed center entrance flanked by store fronts. As can be seen with the attached early postcard view (Figure 2), these storefronts are a later addition. Originally, the first story on Spring Street, and partially along the side elevations, were much more transparent with large windows.

Particularly noteworthy is the recessed main entrance which is marked by the aforementioned Ionic columns atop yellow brick plinths. The floor and wall panels of the recessed entry exhibit mosaics depicting Masonic symbols (Photo 3). A comparison of Photo 3 to Figure 2 suggests that the current mosaics are not the original. The fluted columns of this entrance support an entablature that is surmounted by a shallow porch enclosed by an elegant balustrade. Opening on to this porch are tripartite, transom-topped windows flanked by standard size windows. Doric pilasters of slender and more generous proportions accent the edges of the storefronts and upper floor, respectively.

The building elevations are clad in synthetic siding (likely wood clapboard originally). All of the windows have been replaced with modern synthetic windows that have applied muntins which largely match the original muntin patterns. In some case, the arch-topped component of windows has now been infilled.

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, edited)

Since its founding on August 20, 1863, Marion's Masonic organization, Pythagorean Lodge, F. and A. M., has been one of the town's most important social and charitable organizations. The Masonic lodge has significant historical associations with its major benefactor, rubber shoe manufacturing magnate and Marion summer resident, Col. Henry E. Converse. Tracing their heritage back to ancient times, the Masons had a strong belief in brotherhood that respected certain fundamental human rights such as freedom of the press. Since the mid-18th century, eastern Massachusetts has been an important focus for Masonic activities in the United States. Few organizations in 18th century Boston did more to ferment and develop plans for civil disobedience against the agents of the English crown and laws of Parliament than the Masons.

Chartered in 1863, Marion's Pythagorean Lodge was originally housed in a wooden, 2½-story Greek Revival, temple form building located at the Old Landing. Situated across the street from the Ward Delano House (294 Front Street, MRN.123), the Pythagorean Lodge's first home contained Charles Henry Delano's general store on the first floor while the Lodge's business was conducted in the rooms of the second story. The relocation of the Lodge to 11 Spring Street in 1911, symbolized the shift in political power from the Old Landing to Wharf Village which began after the Civil War. For decades prior to the war, a handful of Old Landing-based sea captains, many of them Pythagorean Lodge members, had shaped the policies of the town. After 1870, Elizabeth Pitcher Taber's philanthropic activities, particularly the founding of Taber Academy in 1876, primarily benefited the Wharf Village area.

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The influx of celebrated summer visitors such as President Grover Cleveland and magazine editor Richard Watson Gilder solidified Wharf Village's ascendancy over the Old Landing.

During the fall of 1908, Pythagorean Lodge building committee members announced plans for a new building on Spring Street in Wharf Village. According to an article in the *Wareham Courier* (10/15/1908) "it is intended to have a three-story structure with apartments on the first floor, hall, reception rooms, members' rooms on the second floor as well as a banquet hall and kitchen on the third floor." Approximately one third of the cost of the new Lodge was funded by Marion summer resident Henry E. Converse. A member of the Converse Rubber Company family of Malden, MA, Henry E. Converse owned the estate called The Moorings at Charles Neck Point (house no longer extant). Converse was already a major benefactor of Marion's fire department, having funded the purchase of more up-to-date firefighting equipment. Built at a cost of over \$20,000, the Pythagorean Lodge was dedicated on October 31, 1911.

The Pythagorean Lodge continues to serve the town as a social and charitable organization.

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

Gordon, Edward, MHC Form B, MRN.61, 1998.

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The Register, Maiden Historical Society, No.2, 1912

Tripp, Edmund H. *Reflections on a Town*. Marion: The Sippican Historical Society, 1991.

Wareham Courier: October 15, 1908; Dec.3, 1908; November 2, 1911.

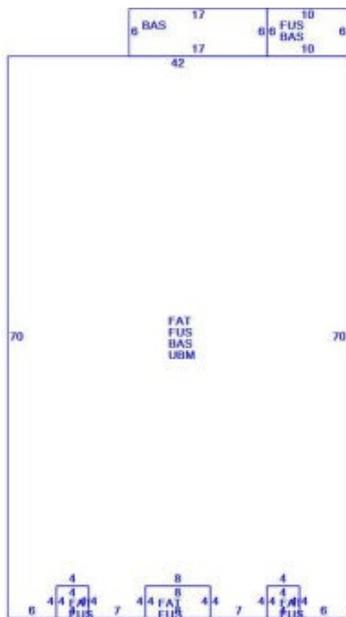


Figure 1. Assessor Sketch.



Photo 2. View from Spring Street, looking northeast.

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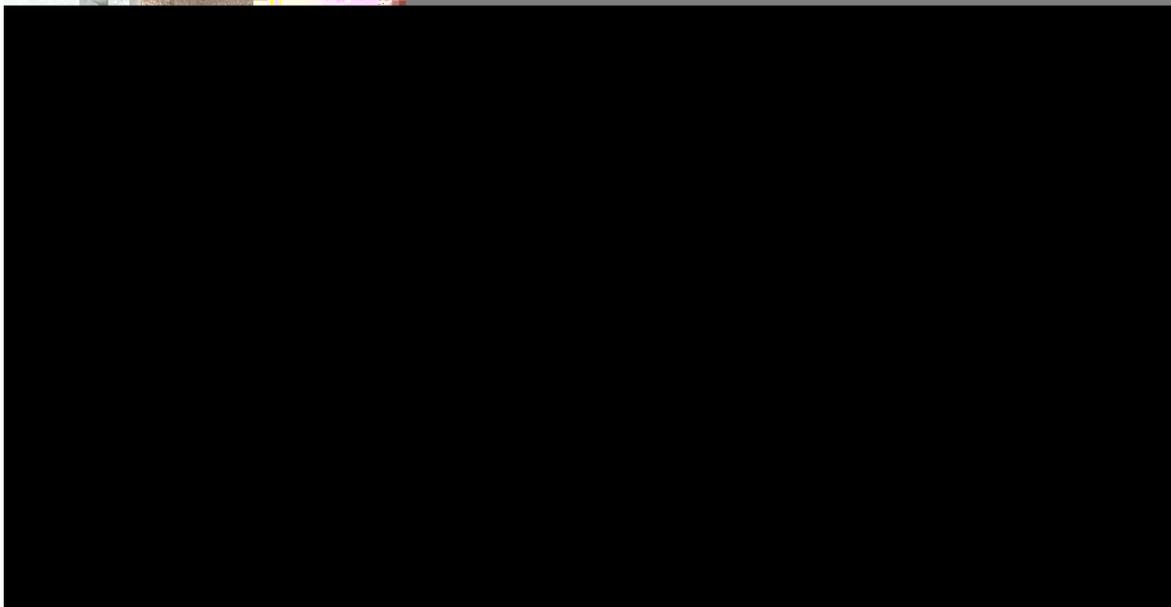


Photo 3. View of front entrance, looking east.



Figure 2. Undated early postcard view (SHS 2004.019.188).

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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).