

1835 STERLING TOWN HALL COMMUNITY CENTER CHARACTER DEFINING FEATURES

Character defining features refer to the significant observable and experiential aspects of a building that define its architectural power and personality. They are critically important considerations whenever repairs or alterations are contemplated. Inappropriate changes to historic features can undermine the historical and architectural significance of the building, sometimes irreparably. Retaining a structure's integrity is essential to eligibility for National Register of Historic Places status and for preservation grants such as Save America's Treasures, the Massachusetts Preservation Projects Fund, and Community Preservation Act funds.

This survey considers the overall shape of the Town Hall and its materials, craftsmanship, decorative details, and various aspects of its site and environment – all elements that contribute to the building's unique character. **All features in the bulleted lists that follow should be retained to preserve the historic integrity and national significance of the 1835 Sterling Town Hall.** Because the building retains original detail and is virtually unaltered on its exterior, nearly all of the original elements are character-defining.

SITE AND ENVIRONMENT

- Facing west across the Common at the historic village center towards the 1841 First Church of Sterling and the 1885 Sterling Library. Sited south (across Maple Street) of the 1838 Universalist Church and north of the adjacent 1850s Commercial Block.



Left: Town Hall (in red box). Right: View of Town Hall, north facade.



Left: Universalist Church at left, Town Hall at right. Right: View of Town Hall, east elevation.

SHAPE AND MASSING

- Rectangular plan with gable roof and pedimented entrance.

STYLISTIC FEATURES

Materials

- Wood
- Granite
- Brick
- Plaster
- Glass

Decorative & Stylistic Details: Exterior

- Entrance portico with deep entablature, fluted Doric columns and corner pilasters
- STERLING TOWN HALL letters at the frieze
- Multi-light transom window over main door



Left: Fluted wood column resting on granite porch at portico. Right: 12 over 12 sash configuration.



Left: Entrance portico with entablature; transom window over main door; centered window at pediment gable. Center: Detail of letters on frieze. Right: 12 over 12 window sash at lower level and 2 over 2 sash at upper level.

- Wood windows with multi-light (12 over 12) configuration at the first level and 2 over 2 (Victorian era) configuration at the second level
- Second level window position at cornice
- Paneled wood doors
- Colonial Revival sign frames flanking main door
- Brick and granite-faced foundation
- NOTE: original shutters were replaced with aluminum shutters, currently in storage

Decorative & Stylistic Details: Interior

- Volumetric space of assembly hall
- Stage and balcony in assembly hall
- Wood columns in ???
- Wood wainscot (beadboard and paneled) and paneled doors throughout
- Original door trim



Left: Stage, beadboard wainscot in assembly hall. Right: Wood columns and paneled wainscot in ??? room.



Left: Paneled wainscot and doors. Right: Greek Revival door casing characterized by channels and round corner medallion.