

# Massachusetts Cultural Resource Information System

## Scanned Record Cover Page

<b>Inventory No:</b>	SBR.42
<b>Historic Name:</b>	Southborough Public Library
<b>Common Name:</b>	Fay, Francis B. Library
<b>Address:</b>	25 Main St
<b>City/Town:</b>	Southborough
<b>Village/Neighborhood:</b>	Southborough
<b>Local No:</b>	54-7
<b>Year Constructed:</b>	
<b>Architect(s):</b>	Cass, Alfred Cookman; Warren, Joseph E.
<b>Architectural Style(s):</b>	Colonial Revival
<b>Use(s):</b>	Library
<b>Significance:</b>	Architecture; Community Planning; Education
<b>Area(s):</b>	SBR.AG: Southborough Town Center SBR.A: Main Street Area
<b>Designation(s):</b>	
<b>Building Materials(s):</b>	Roof: Asphalt Shingle Wall: Brick; Stone, Cut; Limestone; Copper Foundation: Granite; Stone, Cut



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Commonwealth of Massachusetts  
Massachusetts Historical Commission  
220 Morrissey Boulevard, Boston, Massachusetts 02125  
[www.sec.state.ma.us/mhc](http://www.sec.state.ma.us/mhc)

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Friday, July 08, 2016 at 1:26: PM

FORM B - BUILDING

Assessor's number

USGS Quad

Area(s)

Form Number

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

54-7

Marlborough

A

42



Town Southborough

Place (neighborhood or village) \_\_\_\_\_

Southborough center

Address 25 Main Street

Historic Name Southborough Public Library;  
Francis B. Fay Library

Uses: Present town library

Original town library

Date of Construction 1911-12

Source Town Reports

Style/Form Georgian/Classical Revival

Architect/Builder archt: Alfred C. Cass;  
builder: J.E. Warren

Exterior Material:

Foundation granite block

Wall/Trim brick and limestone

Roof asphalt

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures none

Major Alterations (with dates) \_\_\_\_\_

rear addition--1989

Condition excellent

Moved [x] no [ ] yes Date N/A

Acreage 1.7 acres

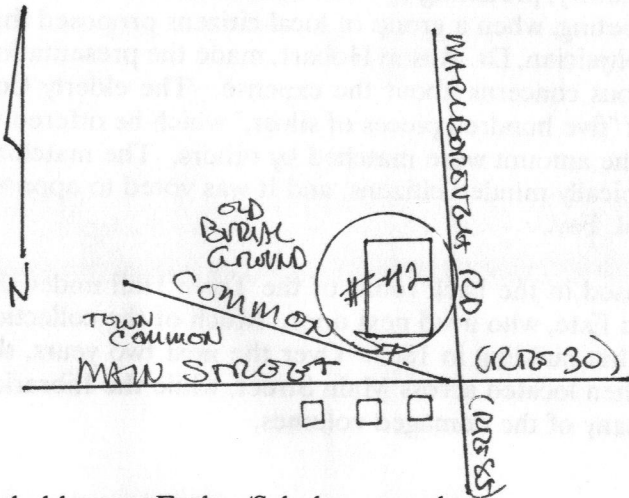
Setting NW corner of Main St. and Marlborough

Rd. (Rtes 30 and 85). Cemetery to west; Part

of St. Mark's School property to north.

Sketch Map

Draw a map of the area indicating properties within it. Number each property for which individual inventory forms have been completed. Label streets, including route numbers, if any. Attach a separate sheet if space is not sufficient here. Indicate north.



Recorded by Topes/Schuler, consultants

Organization Southborough Historical Commission

**RECEIVED**  
 JUL 03 2000

Date April, 2000

MASS. HIST. COMM

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION [ ] *see continuation sheet*

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

Typical of many small-town municipal projects of its era, the Southborough Library is a handsome red brick, flat-roofed building in a hybrid Georgian- and Classical Revival style, with limestone trim. The brick is laid in Flemish bond. The main three-bay, symmetrical facade faces south over a flight of wide granite steps toward Main Street. The wide center recessed entry is set off by a pair of tall Ionic unfluted half columns in antis. The entry retains its varnished oak and 12-light double-leaf doors, now protected by an outer pair of metal-and-glass security doors under a multi-light transom. Above the entry is a carved panel reading "Erected by the town of Southborough, AD MDCCCXI." A tall 15-over-15-sash window is centered in the wall to either side of the entry. Both window sills and lintels are limestone.

The stylish architectural trim includes paired brick pilasters beside the entry, triple pilasters at the front building corners, and a limestone entablature with a wide, three-part frieze. In the center of the frieze is carved "Southborough Library," and at the corners, over the brick pilasters, are carvings of laurel wreaths. Above the frieze at the roofline is a stepped brick parapet, with prominent copper flashing at the base, and limestone capstones.

A long brick addition at the rear of the building, in a variegated Flemish bond, was constructed by the town in 1989. Of the same height as the main building, and with a flat roof, it abuts the original rear stack wing, a two-bay section with large 6-over-9-sash on the sides. The 1989 addition is a six-bay, two-story combination stack- and reading-room on the upper story, with a children's department at the lower, basement level. The windows of the addition are narrow, single-pane fixed windows. The north end wall of the reading room has five 1-over-1-sash windows. The present main entrance projects from the lower, basement story of the west elevation, at the southeast corner of the rear section. It has a modern metal-and-glass door sheltered by a flat-roofed wooden canopy supported on Tuscan corner columns, with a frieze of metopes and triglyphs.

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE [x] *see continuation sheet*

*Explain 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.*

The Southborough Public Library, founded by the town in 1852 as the Francis B. Fay Library, is reputed to be the fourth earliest free municipal library in the country, predating by a few months the Boston Public Library. Its inception took place at an 1852 Town Meeting, when a group of local citizens proposed that the town establish a public lending library. The local physician, Dr. Anson Hobart, made the presentation on the warrant article, but the voters expressed serious concerns about the expense. The elderly Col. Francis B. Fay then rose to speak, holding up a bag of "five hundred pieces of silver," which he offered to donate toward forming a Town Library collection if the amount were matched by others. The matching \$500 was readily pledged by several other philanthropically-minded citizens, and it was voted to approve the proposal, and to name the library in honor of Col. Fay.

A collection of books was quickly acquired, and housed in the back room of the Town Hall under the watchful eye of Southborough's first librarian, Heman Este, who lived next door. Much of the collection apparently survived the fire that destroyed most of that building in 1869. Over the next two years, the library found temporary quarters in the post office, then located across Main Street, while the Librarian and others worked tirelessly to restore and rebind many of the damaged volumes.

[x] Recommended for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. *If checked, a completed National Register Criteria Statement form is attached.*



## INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

Community

Property

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

Southborough

Southborough Public  
LibraryArea(s)  
AForm No.  
42

## HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE, cont.

In 1870, the town received a second gift from Francis B. Fay, this time a thousand dollars. The money was invested, and the interest used to purchase new books. As the library collection grew, it continued to occupy space in the second **Town House** (see Form #30) until the present library building was opened in 1912.

Heman Este served as Librarian until 1879, followed briefly by two others until 1882 or 1883, when the Librarian who was to hold the position for the next three decades, Miss Francena (Fanny) Buck, was hired. In 1890, the aged Col. Fay donated another thousand dollars, providing the beginnings of an endowment for the institution.

The need for a freestanding building to house the library collection was eloquently put forth at a townwide celebration in 1904 by several speakers, but principally by Col. Fay's son, Eugene Fay. In 1908, acting upon the donation by the Burnett family of a parcel of land on Main Street between the Old Burial Ground and Marlborough Road, the Library Trustees voted to construct a new building. The next year, Town Meeting appropriated \$35,000 toward the project, which was initially called Fay Hall. Architect Alfred Cookman Cass was hired to design it, and by the fall of 1912 the construction was completed by J.E. Warren & Co. of Marlborough. At the same time, J. E. Warren, one of the largest construction companies in the area, was also building the 1911 **Fayville Hall** (see Form #263.)

The new library building was formally presented to the Board of Selectmen in September, 1912. Furnishing the library continued for some time, however. Gifts were presented to the town by many of Southborough's prominent citizens, most of them associated with the Burnett and Fay families. Mr. and Mrs. Robert M. Burnett donated a clock, Mrs. Charles Kidder contributed a rug, and Mr. and Mrs. George Peabody Gardner gave a marble statue of Flora, goddess of flowers. George Burnett gave the library his father's favorite portrait of Daniel Webster, and busts of Longfellow and Lowell were given by Waldo B. Fay, headmaster of the Fay School. The Southborough Grange contributed a picture of Lincoln and Washington--a gift which was matched by the Southborough Womans Club, who donated a portrait of Martha Washington.

Fanny Buck retired in 1914, succeeded by her former assistant, Miss Sadie Stivers. Miss Stivers, who upon her marriage became Sadie Hutt, held the position for half a century, retiring in 1966.

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES [ ] *see continuation sheet*

Noble, Richard. Fences of Stone: a History of Southborough, MA. Portsmouth, NH: Peter Randall, 1990.

Public Safety Inspection Cards. Massachusetts State Archives.  
 Town of Southborough: Annual Reports, various years.

Massachusetts Historical Commission  
220 Morrissey Boulevard  
Boston, Massachusetts 02125

Community                      Property Address  
Southborough                Southborough Public Library

Area(s)                              Form No(s).  
A    42

### 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 Forbes/Schuler, Consultants  
*The criteria that are checked in the above sections must be justified here.*

The Southborough Public Library of 1911-12 is eligible for the National Register at the local level under Criterion A for its association with Southborough's community and educational life. It is reputed to be the fourth earliest free municipal library in the country, established by Town Meeting in 1852.

It also fulfills Criterion C as a well preserved example of early-twentieth-century Georgian Revival municipal architecture, designed by Alfred Cookman Cass.

For all the above reasons it is also eligible as a contributing property in a National Register district encompassing the historic residential and institutional meetinghouse center of the town.

The property retains integrity of location, design, materials, workmanship, feeling, setting and association.

(A)

Pi. Sant  
USGS map



City Southborough  
 Street address Main Street  
 Name Southborough Public Library  
 Date: original & present \_\_\_\_\_  
 Present owner Southborough  
 Open to public yes  
 Date 1911 Style Georgian  
 Source of date Plan Records  
 Architect Alfred Cookman Cass

Architectural reason for inventorying:

OR part of Area # \_\_\_\_\_

3. CONDITION Excellent Good Fair Deteriorated Moved Altered Added \_\_\_\_\_

4. DESCRIPTION

FOUNDATION/BASEMENT: High Regular Low Material Granite

WALL COVER: Wood \_\_\_\_\_ Brick Stone Other Limestone Trim

ROOF: Ridge Gambrel Flat Hip Mansard \_\_\_\_\_  
 Tower Cupola Dormer windows Balustrade Grillwork \_\_\_\_\_

CHIMNEYS: 1 2 3 4 \_\_\_\_\_ Center End Interior Irregular Cluster Elaborate

STORIES: 1 2 3 4 ATTACHMENTS: Wings Ell Shed Full story Basement

PORCHES: 1 2 3 4 \_\_\_\_\_ PORTICO \_\_\_\_\_ Balcony

FACADE: Gable end: Ionic Pilasters Front/side Ornament Limestone Wreath ornaments/panels under windows

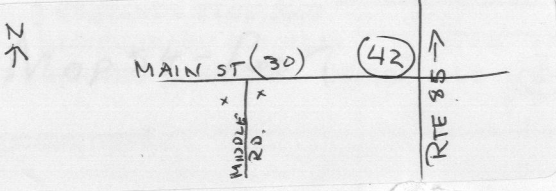
Entrance: Side Front: Center Side Details: \_\_\_\_\_

Windows: Spacing: Regular/Irregular Identical/Varied \_\_\_\_\_

Corners: Plain Pilasters Quoins Cornerboards Brick

5. Indicate location of building in relation to nearest cross streets and other buildings

6. Footage of structure from street 75'  
 Property has 225' feet frontage on street



Recorder \_\_\_\_\_

For \_\_\_\_\_

Photo # 8-10 Date 1971

SEE REVERSE SIDE



RELATION OF SURROUNDING STRUCTURE

- 1. Outbuildings \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. Landscape Features: Agriculture Open Wooded Garden: Formal/Informal  
 Predominant features Stone walls, old cemetery adjacent - trees  
 Landscape architect \_\_\_\_\_
- 3. Neighboring Structures  
 Style: Colonial Federal Greek Revival Gothic Revival Italian Villa Lombard Rom.  
 Venetian Gothic Mansard Richardsonian Modern  
 Use: Residential Commercial Religious Conditions: Excellent Good Fair Deteriorated

GIVE A BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF HISTORIC IMPORTANCE OF SITE (Refer and elaborate on theme circled on front of form)

A Georgian style building built in 1911 to house the public library which is the fourth oldest such collection in the United States. The building is built with limestone trim and pilasters - (1)

BIBLIOGRAPHY AND/OR REFERENCE

(1) HDSC Report 1972

RESTRICTIONS

Original Owner: \_\_\_\_\_  
Deed Information: Book Number \_\_\_\_\_ Page \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ Registry of Deeds

SBR. # 42

BUILDING INSPECTION DEPARTMENT—DISTRICT POLICE

PLAN RECORD

CASE **B** RACK **4** APART. **11** NO. **9108** ✓  
BUILDING **Library** STORIES **2B**  
CITY OR TOWN **Southboro** STREET  
TO BE USED FOR **Library Purposes** CLASS **Misc**  
OWNER **Town of Southboro** **Bldg.**  
ARCHITECT **Alfred Cookman Cass** **Brick**

CERTIFICATE APPROVAL—SPECIFICATION REQUIREMENTS—REFERRED

DATE **Nov. 11, 1910**

INSPECTOR **Penniman**

FORM 41. 5,000. 2-25-10.