

FORM H – PARKS AND LANDSCAPES

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

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

47 90, 47 88, 47 94

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Town: Tewksbury

Place (*neighborhood or village*): Tewksbury Center

Photograph



Address or Location: Main, East & Pleasant Streets

Name: Tewksbury Common

Ownership: Public Private

Type of Landscape (*check one*):

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> park | <input type="checkbox"/> farm land |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> green/common | <input type="checkbox"/> mine/quarry |
| <input type="checkbox"/> garden | <input type="checkbox"/> training field |
| <input type="checkbox"/> boulevard/parkway | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> other (<i>specify</i>): | |

Date or Period: 1860-present

Source: Town Histories

Landscape Architect:

Topographic or Assessor's Map



Location of Plans:

Alterations/Intrusions (*with dates*):

Condition: Fair

Acreage: 1.16 acres

Setting: Located on the northwest corner of Pleasant and Main Street to the south east of Town Hall. The common is flat and divided into two parcels by Main Street. The area is predominately civic with some commercial uses on North and Main Streets.

Recorded by: Julie Ann Larry

Organization: ttl-architects.com

Date (*month / year*): 18 December 2009

INVENTORY FORM H CONTINUATION SHEET

TEWKSBURY

Main, East & Pleasant Streets

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

Area(s) Form No.

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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.

VISUAL/DESIGN ASSESSMENT

Describe topography and layout. Note structures such as bandstands, gazebos, sheds, stone walls, monuments, and fountains. Note landscaping features such as formal plantings, agricultural plantings, and bodies of water. If possible, compare current appearance with original.

The Tewksbury Common is located in Tewksbury Village Center. It is bounded by Main, East & Pleasant Streets. Significant local buildings face the town common including the First Parish Congregational Church to the north on East Street, Tewksbury Town Hall to the west at the corner of Common Street and Town Hall Avenue, and the Tewksbury Fire Station on Pleasant Street at the corner of Town Hall Avenue.

The common now consists of the Triangle, a $\frac{1}{4}$ acre triangular lot between Main and East Streets, and the Common, a rectangular lot of approximately $\frac{1}{2}$ acre between Main, Common, and Pleasant Streets. Two additional areas, one to the north of Town Hall on Main Street and one to the east of Central Fire Station on Pleasant Street contain memorials and landscaping that is in keeping with the character of the two larger parcels.

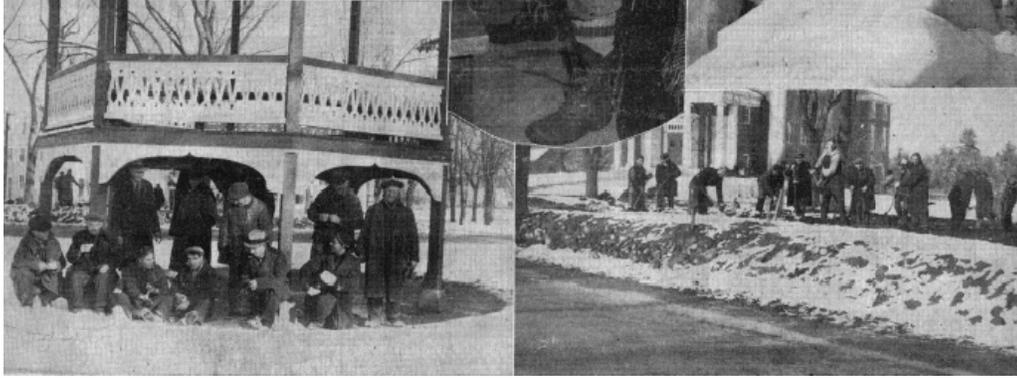
Peripheral parking for the Congregational Church is located along the north side of the Triangle. Parking for the municipal complex is located along the southwestern periphery of the Common.

The **Watering Trough** in the Triangle is a granite trough sheltered by a gable roof supported by wood timbers. The gable roof is sheathed in asphalt shingles. The trough is now used as a planter.

A brick **Planter** with a concrete cap at the corner of Main & East Streets is similar to other planters erected in Town to memorialize local civic leaders. A planting bed is located around the base of the brick marker.

Also located in the Triangle is the **Meeting House Marker**. The marker is flanked by deciduous shrubs. The granite marker has an inset brass plaque that is inscribed with a Pine Tree and the following:

*Near a Pine Tree
Marked R
Stood
The First Meetinghouse
Erected 1736*



Bandstand in the 1930s (left)

The **Tewksbury Common Bandstand** is octagonal in plan with an octagonal hip roof. The bandstand is raised off the ground and supported by eight wood posts. Historically the bandstand was raised high enough off the ground that it could be walked under. Now just a few feet off the ground, the bandstand is reached by a brick and concrete ramp with painted metal rail. The guardrail of the bandstand is composed of jigsawed circles and ribbon-candy-shaped panels. Ornate brackets extend from either side of the eight corner supports.

The **Memorial to the War Dead** is a tri-partite granite war memorial to the Tewksbury soldiers that were killed in WWI, WWII, and Korean Wars. The central panel lists the names of the dead and is topped by an inscribed eagle in flight. Flanking panels have a stars and stripes banding at the top of each panel. The memorial is inscribed:

*Erected by the town of Tewksbury in loving memory of the men of this town
who gave their lives in the service of their country in World Wars I and II*

Three **Flagpoles** are arranged to the north of the Memorial to the War Dead along Main Street.

The **Water – Anne Sullivan & Helen Keller Memorial** is a bronze sculpture set on a marble base depicting Anne Sullivan and Helen Keller at the Keller family's water pump signing W-A-T-E-R. A plaque describes the sculpture. Concrete pavers encircle the sculpture and form a straight path leading to the Main Street sidewalk.

Tewksbury WWII **Veterans Honor Roll** is a tri-faceted inverted pyramid approximately 11'-6" high. The bronze inverted pyramid sets on a polished stone base near the Main Street sidewalk. Some wear from the elements and traffic have affected the bronze.

Korean War Memorial is located on the Common to the east of the **Veterans Honor Roll**. The granite marker is inscribed with the dates of the conflict 1950-1953 on either side of a map showing a divide Korea. Below the map are the statistics of those killed in action, wounded, and missing in action. At the bottom of the marker are the seals of the five armed services: Army, Navy, Marines, Air Force and Coast Guard.

The **Spaulding Bell** is situated in front of the Pleasant Street façade of the Central Fire Station. The bell is suspended from a metal cradle setting on a raised concrete base with a brick border. Concrete pavers encircle the raised base. A flag pole is located to the south of the bell.

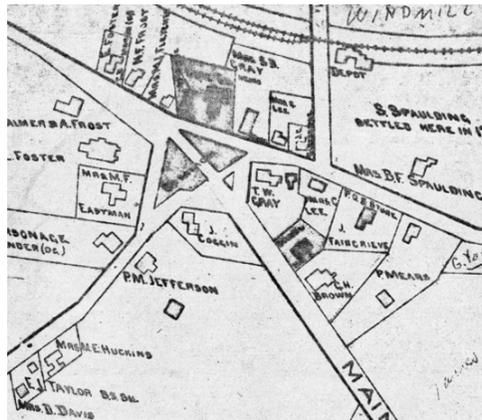
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HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

Discuss history of use. Evaluate the historical associations of the landscape/park with the community.

The town center is located at the intersection of Main and East Streets (west-east) and Pleasant and North Streets (north-south). Originally the main transportation corridor was known as the Boston Road and followed the route now known as Main Street east to East Street, then south along Lee Street until it reemerged east onto Main Street again. The early history of the Town Common is unclear. When the town was incorporated the town center included the meeting house on the north side (1737) of the Boston Road and the burial ground on the south side of East Street (1749). It is likely that Tewksbury's common is not as well formed or extensive as the typical village green because of the Town's beginnings as a part of the Town of Billerica.

Early 19th century maps do not depict a defined town green; they depict a widening of the main road opposite the meetinghouse. By the end of the century the town common is more defined. Two triangular pieces of land bisected by Main Street are depicted on the 1875 and 1889 maps.

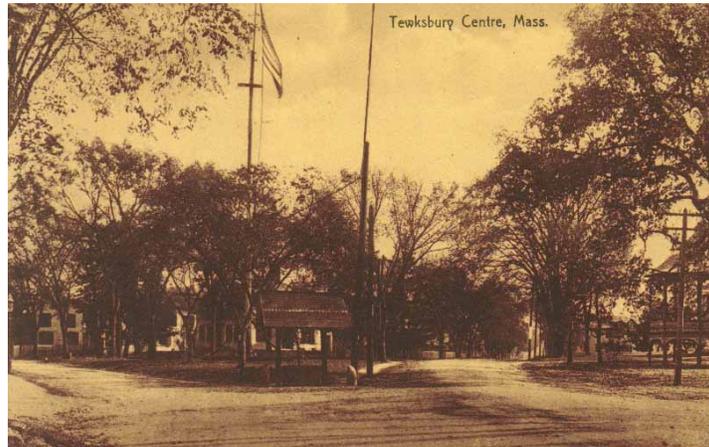


Inset of Tewksbury Centre from the Atlas of Middlesex County 1889

In the mid 19th century the focus of the Tewksbury Common shifted from its Colonial religious and agricultural associations to more civic and social associations, like those in other Massachusetts towns. In the mid-19th century it was common for towns to make improvements to their commons, adding water troughs, town scales, fences, or planting trees. Following the Civil War, many towns installed memorials to the Union Army. The influence of the City Beautiful Movement in the late 1890s and 1900s often resulted in the addition of formal paths, plantings and small scale features like bandstands. The Tewksbury Town Common is typical of the 19th century trends. A Village Improvement Society was founded by Benjamin Spaulding and the committee oversaw the Town Common and the Triangle to the northeast.¹ In 1885 a stone drinking fountain was donated to the Town of Tewksbury by Frederic A Morey, a grocer from Billerica, whose father Thomas was a wood dealer and farmer in Tewksbury. In 1891 the bandstand was constructed slightly west of the existing location. Although sidewalks around the common were present c1891, improvements to the sidewalks were made by the WPA in the 1930s.

¹ 1st Annual Report of the Trustees of Public Reservations, 1891. Boston, MA: George H Ellis, 1892. The report lists in the appendix the statistics of the open spaces in Massachusetts. The Tewksbury Common is listed as 1 ½ acres with shade trees and sidewalks set aside by the Town and under the care of the Village Improvement Society. In addition the report lists The Triangle as another ¼ acre owned by the Town and cared for by the Village Improvement Society.

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Undated photo shows the 1885 stone drinking fountain

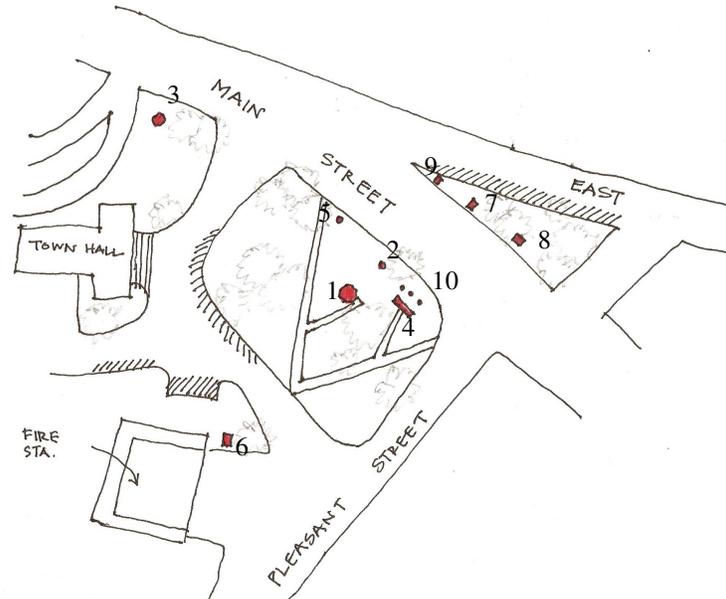


1907 Image of the wood bandstand.

The civic associations of the Tewksbury Town Common includes the siting of the Town Hall, first on the north side of Main Street adjacent to the meetinghouse, and later in the 20th century to the west of the commons. Like many town commons in Massachusetts the Tewksbury Town Common became in the 20th century the setting for memorials to war veterans and notable civic leaders.

The Tewksbury Town Common is also typical for its alterations in the 20th century to accommodate increased vehicular traffic and changing traffic patterns. Main Street (Route 38) has been widened to three lanes at the intersection with North and Pleasant Streets. Common Street was significantly altered, increasing the area of the Common when it was redesigned as a drive way for town hall from a thru street probably c 1986 with the construction of the new Central Fire Station. New traffic patterns and the addition of several small scale features in the vicinity of the common have expanded the common beyond the two 19th century triangular shaped parcels.

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- 1) Bandstand 2) Veterans Honor Roll 3) Water Sculpture 4) Memorial to the War Dead 5) Korean War Memorial 6) Spaulding Bell 7) Watering Trough 8) Meeting House Marker 9) Planter 10) Flag poles

Additions to the Common in the 20th century include two war memorials, sculpture, commemorative markers, flagpoles, shrubbery, paths, and peripheral parking for the municipal complex, including the Town Hall (MHC# TEW.04), Town Hall Annex, and Fire Station.

The Memorial to the War Dead was dedicated on Memorial Day in 1947. It honors the three Tewksbury men who died in World War I and the nine who died in World War II. It was later altered to include a Tewksbury soldier that died in the Korean War.

The Spaulding Bell located in front of the Central Fire Station was re-dedicated to Tewksbury's deceased firefighters in 1986. The bell, cast in 1887, first hung in the Belfry of Tewksbury High School in 1887. It was later removed to the belfry of the Foster School in 1906. The bell is named in honor of Benjamin Spaulding, the founder of the Tewksbury Village Improvement Society.

1986 was the 250th anniversary of the Town of Tewksbury and in celebration the Veterans Honor Roll (MHC#TEW.938) was gifted to the town from local sculptor Mico Kaufman. Kaufman's *Water - Anne Sullivan & Helen Keller Memorial* (MHC#TEW.939) was placed to the west of the common on the north side of Town Hall in 1985.

Mico Kaufman was born in 1924 in Buzua, Romania. At the end of WWII he left Romania for Italy to study at the Academy of Fine Arts in Rome. In 1951 he immigrated to the US first settling in Boston, then Tewksbury. He became a US citizen in 1956. Many of his public sculptures are located in Lowell as well as Tewksbury including the *Blessed Eugene de Mazenod* (1989) at the Oblate Novitiate (MHC# TEW.XX), *Water - Anne Sullivan & Helen Keller Memorial* (1985), *Wamesit Indian* (MHC# TEW.937) on Main Street (1989), *The Muster* (MHC# TEW.936) (1992) at the South Tewksbury Fire Department, *Touching Souls* (MHC# TEW.940) (1993) at the Tewksbury Methodist Church, and the *Veterans Honor Roll* (1986).

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BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

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- _____. *Ye Towne Book*. Tewksbury: Town of Tewksbury. 1934.
- Patton, Harold J. *Ask Now of the Days that are Past*. Higginson Book Co.
- Pride, Edward W. *Tewksbury: A Short History*. 1888.
- Provencher, Shaun. *Terra Firma #6 Common Wealth: The Past and Future of Town Commons*. Boston, Massachusetts: Massachusetts Department of Conservation & Recreation, 2008.
- Map of the Town of Tewksbury 1852. Henry F Walling. Boston, MA
- Atlas of Middlesex County 1875. FW Beers.
- Atlas of Middlesex County 1889. Geo H Walker & Co.
- 1934 Map of Tewksbury.



View of Commons from East Street Veteran's Honor Roll and the brick planter are visible in the foreground, Town Hall is beyond.



View of Commons from East Street the Meetinghouse Marker is visible in the foreground. The Memorial to the War Dead and the three flagpoles are in the middle ground, the bandstand is just to the right. The fire station is visible beyond.

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Veterans Honor Roll



Memorial to the War Dead



Watering Trough



Spaulding Bell

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Planter



Meeting House Marker



Water- Anne Sullivan & Helen Keller Memorial



Korean War Memorial

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Bandstand



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TEWKSBURY

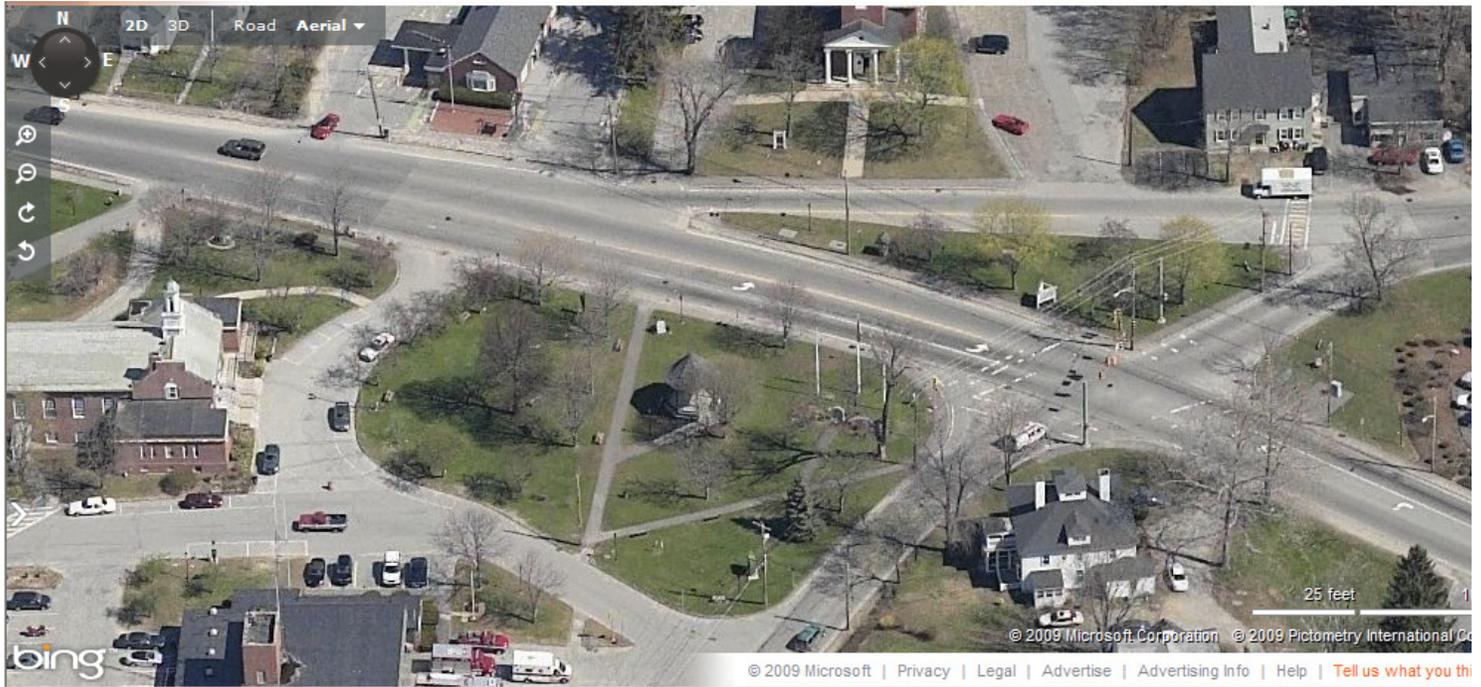
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Form H Data Sheet
Town Common Area A
Tewksbury, MA

	MHC No.	Assess. No.	Resource	Street Address	Date
1	902	47 90	Tewksbury Common Bandstand	Main Street	1891
2	938	47 90	Tewksbury WWII Veterans Honor Roll	Main Street	1986
3	939	47 90	Water Sculpture	Main Street	1985
4	XXX	47 90	Memorial to the War Dead	Main Street	1985
5	XXX	47 90	Korean War Memorial	Main Street	
6	XXX	47 94	Spaulding Bell	Pleasant Street	1887
7	XXX	47 88	Watering Trough	East Street	1885
8	XXX	47 88	Meeting House Marker	East Street	20 th cen
9	XXX	47 88	Planter	East Street	late 20 th cen