

# Massachusetts Cultural Resource Information System

## Scanned Record Cover Page

<b>Inventory No:</b>	SBR.940
<b>Historic Name:</b>	Southborough Town Pound
<b>Common Name:</b>	Southborough Veterans and Citizens Memorial Garden
<b>Address:</b>	Common St
<b>City/Town:</b>	Southborough
<b>Village/Neighborhood:</b>	Southborough
<b>Local No:</b>	54-4
<b>Year Constructed:</b>	c 1750
<b>Architect(s):</b>	Brigham, Trowbridge
<b>Architectural Style(s):</b>	
<b>Use(s):</b>	Abandoned or Vacant; Agricultural; Arboretum or Botanical Garden; Other Governmental or Civic
<b>Significance:</b>	Agriculture; Community Planning; Politics Government
<b>Area(s):</b>	SBR.AG: Southborough Town Center SBR.A: Main Street Area
<b>Designation(s):</b>	
<b>Building Materials(s):</b>	



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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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# FORM F - STRUCTURE

Assessor's number

USGS Quad

Area

Form Number

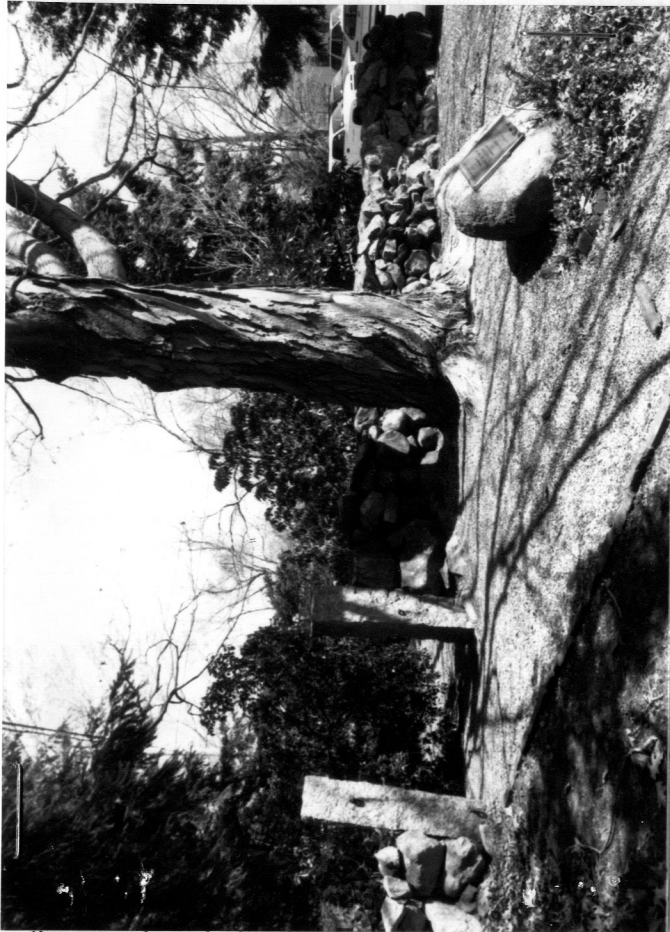
54-4

Marlborough

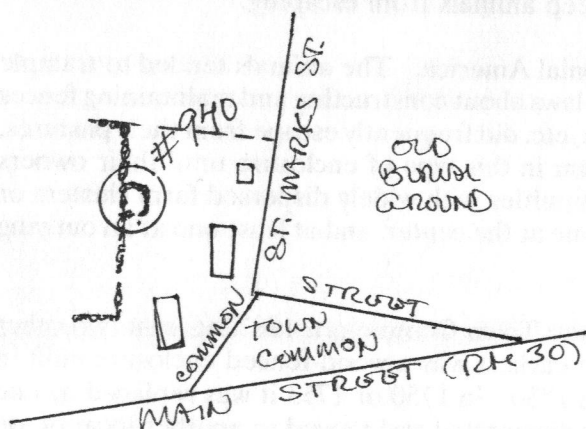
A

940

Massachusetts Historical Commission  
220 Morrissey Boulevard  
Boston, Massachusetts 02125



the inventoried object. Indicate north.



Town Southborough

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

Southborough center

Address or location Common Street

Historic Name Southborough Town Pound

Ownership: ☐ private ☒ public

Type of Structure (check one):

☐ bridge

☐ powderhouse

☐ canal

☐ lighthouse

☐ dam

☐ kiln

☐ fort

☐ gate

☒ other (specify) animal pound

Date of Construction 1750

Source Inscription on plaque

Designer/Sculptor none

Materials fieldstone

Alterations (with dates) gate removed

Interior plantings added--1972

Condition good

Moved ☐ no ☐ yes Date (possibly relocated 1797)

Acreage N/A

Setting Behind Town House, adjacent to

parking lot and playground, abutting cemetery wall-

Recorded by Forbes/Schuler, Consultants

Organization Southborough Historical Commission

Date (month/year) April, 2000

**RECEIVED**

**JUL 03 2000**

## STRUCTURE FORM

DESIGN ASSESSMENT ☐ see continuation sheet

*Describe the design features of the structure, and evaluate it in terms of other similar types of structures within the community.*

It is unclear whether this structure actually dates to 1750, as its plaque says, or to 1797, when an older pound, probably located on the Old Burial Ground and much closer to Main Street, was dismantled and moved to approximately this location. As in many Massachusetts towns, this pound is located on the same lot as the Town Hall. It stands directly behind the building, abutting the west fieldstone border wall of the **Burnett Memorial Cemetery** (Form #803). That wall, in fact, forms the east side of the pound. This is an approximately 35-foot-square structure, with its northeast corner forming somewhat less than a 90-degree angle. All its walls are dry-laid fieldstone, about 3.5 feet high. A narrow opening for what was probably a wooden gate is located near the east end of the south wall, with a pair of rough square granite posts set into the opening. Iron fittings for the gate are still present on the gateposts.

Since 1972, the interior of the pound has been landscaped with large-scale coniferous and broadleaf evergreen shrubs, including azaleas, rhododendrons, and andromedas. A narrow gravel path, edged with brick, encircles a small central mound that is planted with annuals and bulbs each year. A low concrete bench is located in the northwest corner of the garden.

On a small grassed area in front of the pound, just southeast of the gate opening, is a small granite boulder with a bronze plaque, placed there in 1967 at the time the structure was restored. The plaque is inscribed with the following:

Southborough Town Pound, 1750. Dedicated as a Veterans' and Citizens' Memorial Garden, September 30, 1967, by Lt. Gov. Francis W. Sargent. Restored by the Rotary Club of Southborough.

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE ☐ see continuation sheet

*Explain the history of the structure, and how it relates to the development of the community.*

This fieldstone animal pound is a rare survival of a Colonial feature that all Massachusetts communities once had, but which has disappeared from many of them. Usually constructed on common land at the center of a town, some pounds were fenced with wood, but many, like this one, were of fieldstone. Most, as here, were roughly square, with walls high enough to keep animals from escaping.

Livestock running at large was a continual problem in Colonial America. The animals tended to trample and ruin farmers' fields, and most communities passed strict laws about constructing and maintaining fences to keep livestock from wandering. Still, cattle, horses, sheep, etc. did frequently escape from their pastures, and it was the job of the town Pound Keeper to corral them in this type of enclosure until their owners came to fetch them, usually at the price of a fine. In communities with widely dispersed farm clusters or secondary villages, there was often more than one pound--one at the center, and at least one at an outlying location.

According to a committee which studied the evolution of the Town Common in 1887, at least two other pounds were built on the common land at the center. The earliest was a wood-fenced enclosure built in a corner "between paths southeast of the meetinghouse" in 1730. In 1750 or 1753 it was replaced by one of stone, located just north of the first. That one was later dismantled and moved to another location on the common or training field. That relocated pound may have been abandoned as the burial ground expanded, or it may be this one, shown at this location on at least one map, and labeled "1797." The Town did vote to replace the existing pound in 1785, but the vote was not carried out for several years.

Over the years, like many of the stone walls in town, the pound underwent periodic maintenance and rebuilding. In 1870, for instance, it was rebuilt by Trowbridge Brigham, who was paid the substantial sum of \$52.30 for his work. The Pound Keeper was still a local office until the early years of this century.

☒ Recommended for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. *If checked, you must attach a completed National Register Criteria Statement form.*



## INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

Community

Property

Southborough

Town Pound

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

Area(s)  
A

Form No.  
940

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

Southborough Historical Society files.

Town of Southborough: Annual Reports, various dates.

\_\_\_\_\_. Report of the Committee on the Common, 1887.

\_\_\_\_\_. Historic District Study Report, 1972, including fragmentary plans of the town common area.



Massachusetts Historical Commission  
220 Morrissey Boulevard  
Boston, Massachusetts 02125

Community  
Southborough

Property Address

Town Pound

Area(s)  
A

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940

## 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 Town Pound meets Criteria A and C of the National Register at the local level. It is eligible individually as the oldest known engineering structure in town, and as a rare surviving example of a communal fieldstone animal enclosure of the eighteenth century. It is also eligible as a contributing property in a district encompassing the historic residential and institutional meetinghouse center of the town.

While the structure was moved and rebuilt at an early date, and its interior has been landscaped with garden plants, the pound retains integrity of location, design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.