

FORM A - AREA

Assessor's Sheets USGS Quad Area Letter Form Numbers in Area

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

41, 42, 47, 48	Norwood Medfield Mansfield Wrentham	E	See data sheet
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Photograph



Photo 1

Town: Walpole
Place (*neighborhood or village*):
Name of Area: Walpole Town Forest
Present Use: municipal, recreation, forest
Construction Dates or Period: mid-18th cent.-ca. 1960
Overall Condition: good
Major Intrusions and Alterations: see description
Acreage: approximately 365 acres
Recorded by: Kathleen Kelly Broomer
Organization: for Town of Walpole
Date (*month/year*): May 2008; rev. July 2008

Topographic or Assessor's Map

[In this space insert an excerpt from a topographic map or Assessor's map which clearly shows the limits of the Area; if space is not sufficient, use a continuation sheet. See MHC's Guidelines for Inventory Form Locational Information.]

✓ see continuation sheet

INVENTORY FORM A CONTINUATION SHEET

WALPOLE

WALPOLE TOWN FOREST

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

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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, structural and landscape features and evaluate in terms of other areas within the community.

Located off Washington Street and South Streets at the heart of Walpole, the Walpole Town Forest encompasses approximately 365 acres of municipal open space and buildings. The town forest is the largest municipal open space in Walpole. Approximately 195 acres consisting of at least fifteen separate assessors' parcels occupies the **west side of Washington Street**, roughly bounded by Washington Street on the east and southeast; South Street on the southwest; the Neponset River on the west, the former right-of-way of the New York, New Haven & Hartford Railroad (off South Street) on the northwest, the rear lot lines of the Walpole High School, 275 Common Street (see form) and Plimpton School, 319 Common Street (see form) parcels on the north; and the rear lot lines of residential parcels on Pocahontas Street and Washington Street on the northeast. It should be noted that the parcel(s) at the northwestern end of the town forest, between the Neponset River and the playing fields behind the High School and Plimpton School, possess the greatest potential for intact historic archaeological sites of any section of the town forest documented to date. Approximately 170 acres consisting of three separate assessors' parcels occupies the **east side of Washington Street**, roughly bounded by Washington Street on the northwest, residential neighborhoods off South Street and Pine Street to the southwest and south, the town line with Sharon on the southeast, and residential neighborhoods off Common Street and Washington Street on the east and north. School Meadow Brook passes through the town forest between the Neponset River on the northwest and the Sharon town line.

Largely wooded in character, the town forest consists of foot paths, dirt roads, and water features (the Neponset River and School Meadow Brook) through rolling hills. In addition, the town's wetlands map shows the town forest has areas of deep marsh, shrub swamp, and wooded swamp (deciduous). Further study of John Nolen's 1914 plan for the original portion of the town forest (west of Washington Street) is needed to confirm the presence of designed features in the landscape.

The town forest incorporates a variety of historic resources within its boundaries, some of which predate establishment of the town forest in 1916. The Blake Family Cemetery (1789, MHC #801, see photo) is a small family cemetery of five graves located off Common Street near the playing fields behind the High School. Rehabilitated in 1988 after many years of vandalism, the private cemetery now has granite markers set in cement bearing the names of the five individuals buried there. The graves are arranged in a linear fashion, with room for seven burials from left (north) to right (south); marked graves occupy the first, third, fourth, sixth, and seventh plots. Original headstones dated to 1789, 1794, 1796, 1798, and 1839. Headstones that have been recovered are in the possession of the Walpole Historical Society. In the woods southwest of the Blake Family Cemetery, the site of the former Blake-Blackburn barn (late 18th century, see photo), with a portion of the rubble foundation surviving. Serving as an agricultural outbuilding, with a later use as an iron forge, the barn site has archaeological potential. The site of the former Blake-Blackburn House, east of the barn and southeast of the cemetery, requires an archaeological site survey to pinpoint its location.

A second burial location in the town forest is the Abigail Clap Hartshorn-Smith Tomb (ca. 1824, see photo), located on the north side of the driveway leading to the Department of Public Works Headquarters, 1385 Washington Street (see below). This stone tomb has been sealed in concrete and capped with brick in recent decades; surrounding land has been completely leveled. The brick cap incorporates a plaque with an inscription recording the birth and death dates of the deceased, as well as her dates of marriages (see Historical Narrative).

The oldest building in the town forest appears to be the Walpole Water Works Pump Station, 1303 Washington Street (1895, MHC #128, see photo), a rectangular building of red brick and an example of Victorian eclectic institutional construction in Walpole. Recently renovated for use as meeting space (the pumping operations have been shifted to a new brick addition at the rear), the 1895 block is a one-story building, three bays across and approximately four bays deep, with a high hipped roof of slate, a square cupola, and a stone foundation. Original entries, including the double-door entry at the center of the façade, have been infilled with replacement sash, and the location of the principal entry has been shifted to the rear addition. The water works retains its historic brick stack with corbelled cap at the top. An original shed-

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roofed dormer with shallow pitch has been removed. Northwest of the pump station and on the same parcel, the Public Works Superintendent House, 1303 Washington Street (ca. 1900, see photo) is an example of the Colonial Revival-style four-square. The 2½-story dwelling has a cut-stone foundation, vinyl siding, an asphalt shingle hipped roof, and replacement vinyl windows. Originally three bays across with an end-bay entry and two bays deep, the house has an addition of two bays on the facade (east elevation). The original hip-roofed, full-width front porch was extended as part of this addition. To the rear of the pump house is a one-story, four-bay garage (ca. 1920s), constructed of rusticated concrete block with a shed roof. The garage, which is in poor condition, retains original wood overhead doors.

Returning to the northwest end of the town forest, the Massachusetts Chemical Company Dam (1899-1900, see photos), located at the Neponset River west of the Blake cemetery, is constructed of granite block and retains a noteworthy amount of machinery that merits further study. The company's raising of the water level in the river behind the dam created the reservoir (1899-1900, see photo) at White Bridge (see photo). A date for the present bridge has not been determined.

Two monuments in the town forest are located off Common Street behind the Plimpton School. The Memorial Tree Boulder (ca. 1916) originally had a small brass plaque describing the planting of the first pine tree by Calvin Coolidge. This boulder was inscribed by the Walpole Bicentennial Commission in 1976. The Town Forest Monument (1966) is a rectangular granite block placed on end, with a bronze plaque in the lower half. Another granite marker is the American Tree Farm System Sign, 1385 Washington Street (ca. 2000). This hanging sign is suspended from a granite post-and-lintel surround.

In general, the resources described above either contribute to the historic integrity of the town forest, or are of such small scale as to be visually unobtrusive. A prominent building that is incompatible with the historic character of the area is the Department of Public Works Headquarters, 1385 Washington Street (1955, see photo). This two-story concrete block building has a concrete foundation and a flat, tar and gravel roof. Four bays across and two bays deep, the building has a pedestrian entry in the second bay and two oversized garage openings in the third and fourth bays, plus another eight garage bays in the lateral wing. Three other utilitarian buildings, dating from the ca. 1960-2000 period, are located behind the DPW headquarters and are similarly incompatible. At least three prefabricated metal buildings (1986-1990) with metal roofs are situated on the acreage east of Washington Street. These buildings detract from the historic character of the town forest.

Today, management of the Town Forest emphasizes "passive recreation, watershed protection, aesthetic attraction, and the preservation of a healthy forest ecosystem." ["Town Forest History"] A section of the Bay Circuit Trail passes through the Town Forest.

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

Explain historical development of the area. Discuss how this relates to the historical development of the community.

Note: Portions of the following history of the town forest were drafted in 1979 by the Walpole Town Forest Study Committee, Leon C. Lesinski, Chairman, as amended with additional research conducted since 1979. This summary and additional research updates the original MHC inventory form for the Walpole Town Forest, prepared by Ruth Vietze of the Walpole Historical Commission on January 26, 1977.

Preserving and celebrating Walpole's early history as the mid-17th century "sawmill settlement" of Dedham, the Walpole Town Forest was the first conservation area to be set aside by the town of Walpole. The town forest was the third Tree Farm in the Commonwealth recognized by the Massachusetts Forestry Association and the first town forest in Massachusetts to be managed for timber revenue. Conceived at a time when industry had replaced farming as the town's economic base, the town forest represents both the philanthropic contributions to the town made by its prominent citizens, as well as the "environmental vision" of a town planning committee deeply concerned with long-range planning issues in the first quarter of the 20th century.

The concept of a town forest in Walpole originated with Charles S. Bird, Jr., chairman of the town's Park Board, who was impressed with the communal forests he had seen in Europe. Detailed descriptions of these forests are included in *Town Planning for Small Communities* (1917), authored by the Walpole Town Planning Committee under the chairmanship of Bird. At Bird's urging, George A. Plimpton donated fifty-eight acres to the town in 1916, which, when combined with about 100 acres already under town ownership, encompassed the approximately 150 acres set aside as a town forest by vote of Town Meeting on April 12, 1916. Article 16 of the warrant appropriated

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\$1,000, of which half would be used by the town's park commissioners for the development of the town forest, according to plans already prepared. Those plans were prepared by Cambridge-based town planner and landscape architect John Nolen (see biographical information below).

According to *Town Planning for Small Communities*, the idea of communal forests in the United States was advanced by the American Forestry Association, which in the mid-1910s inaugurated a town forest contest, offering to plant fifty acres of town property with three-year-old white pine transplants, 1000 trees per acre, with a 75% guarantee for the city or town that otherwise met the contest requirements, which included ownership of at least 100 acres of land officially set aside as a town forest, and entry to the contest made by July 1, 1916. Though Walpole is one of the communities that entered, it is unclear whether any prizes were ever awarded. In Massachusetts, the city of Fitchburg undertook development of a municipal forest about that time, and the cities and towns of Springfield, Fall River, Cambridge, Winchendon, Andover, Amesbury, Newburyport, Gardner, Brookline, and Mansfield had all begun forestation of watershed areas. [*Town Planning*, 109, 116] The following excerpt summarizes the twelve reasons, detailed in the text, why Massachusetts should have town forests:

The Town Forest has proved a profitable investment in other countries, it represents a local industry, it can be secured at a very small expense and future generations will enjoy the benefits and help pay the bills. It will be a wild park, a bird and game sanctuary, a protection for the water supply and an object of beauty and profit. It will insure us against the high price of lumber in the future, give employment in times of industrial depression and reduce the tax rate in proportion to its size. The reclamation of this waste land is a question of such importance as to demand the thought of every citizen. [*Town Planning*, 114]

The town of Walpole scheduled a dedication ceremony on the original acreage for April 28, 1916. Due to inclement weather, the dedication was postponed until May 5, 1916. The ceremony was attended by the future president of the United States, Calvin Coolidge, then-lieutenant governor of the Commonwealth, who planted a white pine to commemorate the occasion. A large Memorial Tree Boulder (ca. 1916) positioned at the site originally had a small brass plaque describing the planting. This boulder was inscribed by the Walpole Bicentennial Commission in 1976. Also in attendance at the dedication was C. O. Bailey of the State Forest Department, who addressed the assemblage about communal forests in France, Switzerland, and Germany that provided not only recreation opportunities but also wood needed in building, thereby generating substantial revenue for their respective cities and towns.

Charles Bird introduced George A. Plimpton as the principal speaker at the dedication. A well known bibliophile, philanthropist, and the senior partner of Ginn & Company, a textbook publisher based in New York City, Plimpton (1855-1936) was a generous benefactor of the town of Walpole, donating not only the land for the town forest, but also the adjacent High School, 275 Common Street (MHC #143, see form) and the grammar school at 319 Common Street (MHC #182, see form) that bears his name. Plimpton also donated a fountain on the town common in memory of Walpole citizens who served in the French and Indian War (see form for Walpole Center-Common Street Area). He maintained a summer residence at his mother's family home, Lewis Farm, 401 East Street (see form for Lewis Park-Plimptonville Area). [*Collector's Recollections*]

At the dedication ceremony, over eight hundred school children planted the first acre with white pines as part of the reforestation project. In 1966, as part of the 50th anniversary celebration and rededication of the town forest, grandchildren of some of the original planters were in attendance to plant additional trees. A Town Forest Monument (1966) was placed near the spot where Calvin Coolidge planted the first tree.

The town forest committee was composed of Bird, as chairman of the Park Board; John G. Jack, professor of the Department of Forestry at Harvard University; and Alfred MacDonald. Bird engaged the services of George T. Carlisle, Jr., of Forest Hills (Boston), who had general supervision of the planting and served as consulting forester on the project. Carlisle was in the business of providing timber estimates, topographic maps, boundary surveys, management advice, and forest planning and thinning. After consultation with John Nolen, he made the following recommendations to Bird:

I do not recommend the planting of oaks as they are food for the gypsy moths and it would require endless expensive spraying every year. Beech is good, but too slow growing to be much financial value. The white ash would be a fine tree to use in the swampy lands as it is fast growing and has good commercial value. The maples could also be utilized on the moist lands. [Letter to Charles Bird (April 25, 1916)]

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Carlisle was personally involved in the early planting of the town forest. In May 1916, he recommended to Bird that the park commission employ an individual to take charge of future planting, under the supervision of Carlisle, who would make the plans, lay out the work, and make trips to Walpole to ensure the work was properly executed. [Letter to Charles Bird (May 22, 1916)]

The town forest is a continuation of a general plan, adopted in March 1914, to beautify the town of Walpole, secure and improve open space, and guide future development. A five-member committee headed by Charles S. Bird, Jr. commissioned John Nolen (1869-1937) to develop the plan. In addition to designing improvements for the layout and landscaping of Walpole Center, East Walpole, and South Walpole, Nolen recommended the acquisition of land in the Neponset River valley to create the River Valley Park System, a linear park reservation extending through the town from East Walpole to South Walpole. Nolen's drawings for Walpole were published in an eight-page bulletin entitled *Walpole – Plan Today for Tomorrow* (1914), and profiled in Nolen's book, *New Towns for Old: Achievements in Civic Improvement in Some American Small Towns and Neighborhoods* (1927).

In September 1914, Nolen provided a cost estimate to Charles Bird for preparing plans for a town forest. Nolen's plan for the town forest (filed with Nolen's papers at Cornell University) covered the area roughly from Common Street south to South Street, and from Washington Street west to the New York, New Haven & Hartford Railroad right-of-way. The plan called for four miles of roads with paths, an amphitheater for choral singing, pageants, and other town entertainment, and a swimming pool in the Neponset River. An article in *The American City* (August 1916), a town planning publication that was nationwide in scope, described the early work underway in 1916, according to Nolen's plan, as well as provisions for fire protection:

Fifteen acres of white pine and red pine have also been planted. Some of the roads have been established and planted with double rows of Douglas fir, Scotch pine and red spruce. The spruce is large stock intended to define the roads and to lend value to future landscape effect. During the coming winter it is proposed to remove the less desirable growths, such as scrub oak and gray birch, and by improvement thinnings and general cleaning prepare the areas selected for planting in the spring.

In places where there is danger from fires the roads have been laid out 50 feet wide and a 10-foot strip plowed at each side to act as a fire break. The situation of the forest allows the fire hazard to be reduced to a minimum, both by natural protection and by careful arrangement. The river and a considerable width of land separate the forest from the railroad on one side, while the town water mains are laid along the other boundaries. It is intended that there be developed a system of cooperation between the forest fire station, located about three miles from the forest, and the pupils in the High School. On signal from the station a company of boys could reach any part of the forest in twenty minutes.

A Philadelphia native, John Nolen was a graduate of the Wharton School of Finance and Economy at the University of Pennsylvania and studied art and history at the University of Munich (1901-1902) before enrolling at the newly established Harvard University School of Landscape Architecture, from which he received a master's degree in 1905. Nolen established an office in Cambridge, and over the next thirty years designed over 400 projects in the realm of town planning or landscape design for both public and private clients. His work included planning projects for over fifty cities in twenty states, including plans for two entirely new towns: Kingsport, Tennessee, and Mariemont, Ohio. Nolen lectured widely, and his acceptance of a 1912 invitation from Bird & Son to speak in Walpole launched a seventeen-year relationship with the Bird family and the town. In addition to his town plan for Walpole (1913), Nolen's projects in the community include the East Walpole Playground (1913); the grounds for the Walpole High School, 275 Common Street (1914, see form); the grounds of Endean, the estate of Charles Sumner Bird (demolished, project 1914); Memorial Park (1923-1924), incorporating the Swimming Pool and Bath House (1926) and the Nevins Memorial Fountain (1930); and Francis William Bird Park, Washington Street (1924, see form). He also designed the town plan for Cohasset (1920).

Bird's original goal for the town forest was to expand it along the Neponset River to an eventual size of 600-1000 acres. With this amount of forest land, he believed the town could develop significant revenues from its timber resources. The advent of World War I curtailed the complete plan; Nolen's plans for an amphitheater and swimming pool were not realized.

Between the end of World War I and 1939, there seemed to be very little activity related to expansion of the town forest. In 1921, 20,000 small pine trees were planted on the town forest acreage on the east side of Washington Street to help protect the watershed. Use of the watershed and town forest area by the town's Department of Public Works appears to date to 1922, when the barn on the Lowe Farm property (previously acquired by the town) was repaired for storage of road machinery belonging to the Streets Department. Also in 1922, the Water Commissioners and the Board of Selectmen consolidated the positions of the Superintendent of Water Works, the Town Engineer,

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and the Superintendent of Streets into a new position, the Superintendent of Public Works. [“History of the Walpole Water System”] In 1939, Town Meeting voted \$570 for the purchase of 35.7 acres to add to the town forest.

Several historic resources, including potential historic archaeological sites, predate the area’s establishment as the town forest in 1916. These include resources associated with the Blake-Blackburn property (later occupied by blacksmith J. B. Crosman, see below), the Smith property, and the Town of Walpole Water Works. It should be noted that the parcel(s) bounded by the High School, 275 Common Street (see form) and Plimpton School, 319 Common Street (see form) parcels on the northeast, and the Neponset River on the west, possess the greatest potential for intact historic archaeological sites of any section of the town forest documented to date. This section generally relates to industrial activity on upper and lower privileges known collectively as the Blackburn privilege, one of ten distinct locations for water privileges on the Neponset River in Walpole that defined much of the town’s industrial history. A location for grist and saw mills from at least ca. 1742 to 1811, the area later supported a machine factory and cotton yarn factory (ca. 1811-1832) on the upper privilege, being converted to an iron foundry in the mid-19th century. The lower privilege supported the manufacturing of batting, lamp wick, and wood work. Most industrial buildings burned or were removed by the 1870s [DeLue, 252-255], though a house and barn associated with the Blake-Blackburn property reportedly survived into the 1970s (see below). It should be noted further that while the precise location of Walpole’s original 1659 sawmill has yet to be established, the mill site is known to have been located in the town forest, at or near the confluence of the Neponset River and School Meadow Brook.

Blake-Blackburn Property

Three resources identified in the town forest to date are associated with the Blake-Blackburn property, which apparently was not part of the town forest until 1929 and possibly later. In 1756, Aaron Blake of Wrentham acquired rights to the mill pond, dwelling, barn, corn mill, and saw mill then located at what later came to be known as the Blackburn privilege on the Neponset River. The same year, he married Mehetabel (spellings vary) Ellis, with whom he had nine children, born from 1757 to 1775. Blake reportedly purchased the town’s first sawmill, used to cut wood from the Great Cedar Swamp (see above), and expanded his holdings in the immediate vicinity from five to sixteen acres. Blake (d. 1789) was the first individual buried in the Blake Family Cemetery (see also MHC #801), a private cemetery located in the woods behind the High School and Plimpton School parcels and a short distance from the Blake Homestead on old South Street. Also buried there were his wife (d. 1798), one son (Aaron Blake, Jr., d. 1796), a granddaughter (d. 1794) and a daughter-in-law (Elizabeth Blake, d. 1839, wife of Aaron Jr.). Both father and son served in the Revolutionary War from Walpole. Elizabeth Blake sold the surrounding property in 1800, though it is not yet clear when the cemetery passed out of the Blake family. Further research is needed. The cemetery was restored by the Walpole Historical Commission in 1988. Bates Quarry in Walpole supplied the present granite markers and the Boston Edison Co. donated the steel cable that runs through cement posts to act as a fence around the cemetery. Original headstones, which were vandalized and broken before the cemetery restoration, are in the possession of the Walpole Historical Society.

The Blake-Blackburn Barn Site (ca. 1740) consists of remnants of the stone foundation for the barn on the property, reportedly demolished in the 1970s. In the first half of the 20th century, the barn housed the forge for “Peter the Smith,” (born Julius Bergfels Crosman), who operated the Neponset River Forest Forge. Born in Mattapan, J. B. Crosman (1879-1940) was an ornamental iron worker. He was the son of an English father and a German mother, who learned the blacksmithing trade after leaving school at the end of sixth grade. As a youth, he was called Peter due to his great admiration for St. Peter. Locally, Peter the Smith was particularly well known for his iron bird or crane, which was welded to a rock in the Neponset River near his home. The current location of the crane is unknown. Crosman also was known for his poetry, including “The Confessional of Art,” written in 1936 about the iron crane. While the Blake-Blackburn barn housed Crosman’s forge, his workshop was located in the gambrel-roofed end of the accompanying house. The foundation of the house reportedly is situated southeast of the barn site and the Blake Cemetery but has not been located to date. An archaeological survey and mapping is needed. Like the barn, the Blake-Blackburn house dated to the mid-18th century and was demolished in the 1970s, possibly after being burned. According to a historic photograph, the 2½-story house was approximately three bays by two bays with a gambrel roof, and a 1½-story, gambrel-roofed ell with a separate entry.

Elizabeth Blake, the wife of Aaron Blake, Jr. sold the house and barn to Timothy Smith in 1800, who in turn sold the property in 1802 to James Boyden and Samuel Nason, who operated saw and grist mills here. Boyden and Nason sold in 1811 to John Blackburn, a cotton manufacturer, who initially operated a machine factory on the property while his son, George Blackburn, manufactured cotton yarn on the factory’s upper floor. When the factory burned (after 1832), the elder Blackburn returned to farming, while the son went on to manufacture cotton duck in other locations, including Lawrence, Mass. For four years, George ran the Ellis Privilege in Plimptonville. George Blackburn’s daughter, Harriet Blackburn Nevins, funded the construction of Blackburn Memorial Hall, Stone Street (1929-1930, see form

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for Town Center Municipal Area) in memory of her parents, George and Nancy Blackburn. In 1846, John Henry Blackburn, a brother of George, bought Stetson's iron foundry machinery and moved it from Stetson Pond to the Blackburn privilege. Blackburn made stoves, machinery, and other light castings here until the mid-1850s. He briefly worked in partnership with Ollis Clap until 1847. Further research is needed on the history of the Blake-Blackburn property in the second half of the 19th century. In 1899, Massachusetts Chemical Company purchased the Blackburn estate and the land known as the Union Mill, as well as rights and titles to water power at this privilege on the Neponset. The Massachusetts Chemical Company Dam (1899-1900) was built on the site of the Blackburn Saw Mill Dam, which had washed away during a flood in February 1886. Construction of the new dam and activities relating to the company's filling of the reservoir behind the dam adversely affected the operation of the Town of Walpole Water Works (see below) to the southeast. Charles S. Bird, Jr. reportedly owned the Blake-Blackburn property in 1929, at which time it was known as the Blackburn Place. It is not clear whether J. B. Crosman (Peter the Smith) owned the property or rented it during his occupation; also unclear is when the property was sold to the town to be added to the town forest. More research, including in deeds, is needed. Crosman died here in 1940. ["Julius Bergfels Crosman;" "Blake-Blackburn Property;" DeLue]

Smith Property

The Abigail Clap Hartshorn-Smith Tomb, located on the north side of the driveway to the DPW building from Washington Street, appears to date to 1824. It is presumed that the tomb is located on former Smith family land, but deed research is needed to confirm. Abigail Clap (1738-1824) married Benjamin Hartshorn in 1760, and, as a widow, married Jeremiah Smith in 1788. She was the fifth child and second daughter of Lt. Joshua Clap(p) of Dedham and Abigail Bullard of Walpole, who had eight children from 1729 through 1746. One of her older brothers, Ebenezer, also married a Hartshorn, and at least two of his sons, Ebenezer Clapp, Jr. (b. 1755) and Daniel Clapp (b. 1762), married daughters of Aaron Blake (see Blake-Blackburn Property above). Abigail Clap Hartshorn-Smith had at least two children, Abigail Hartshorn (b. 1762) and Lewis Hartshorn (b. 1764). Her father, Joshua Clap(p), born in 1707 and died in 1802, was a justice of the peace and magistrate, deputy to the General Court, and deacon of the church in Walpole, likely the First Parish Church. Since the plaque and possibly the tomb itself appear to be of recent vintage, the remains of Abigail Clap Hartshorn-Smith may have been moved here from another location. Further research is needed.

Town of Walpole Water Works

The Walpole Water Works Pump Station, 1303 Washington Street, was built in 1895 in connection with the opening of the town's municipal water system. Henry P. Plimpton, Thomas M. Crowley, and Arthur N. Cram were the town's water commissioners at the time of construction. Freeman C. Coffin was the engineer, and builders were Eben Fuller and Charles L. Gay. The Public Works Superintendent House, a ca. 1900 residential building on the same property, was once occupied by the director of the town's public works department. The house is still town-owned.

When the Massachusetts Chemical Company replaced the former Blackburn dam downstream with a new dam in 1899-1900 and filled the reservoir behind the dam, the height of the dam caused the water of the Neponset River to rise one to two feet above the level of the town's wells. This was feared to pose a health risk, since the water supply system was a suction system that could result in river water being drawn into the drinking supply. In addition, at certain times of the year, the water backed up and flooded the pumping station, preventing the pumps from working. On November 7, 1900, the Water Commission voted to appoint a committee of five to investigate the problem; Charles S. Bird, J. Edward Plimpton, John A. Way, Robert S. Gray, and Edward P. Stetson served on the committee. The following alternatives were suggested to correct the problem: lowering the level of the dam; raising the level of the wells by filling the surrounding area with gravel; building a dike around the wells and changing the course of Lowe Brook (School Meadow Brook); and letting the water go over the wells in the hope that the wells and water lines would hold tight. When none of these alternatives was deemed acceptable, the town sought an injunction preventing Massachusetts Chemical Company from raising the water level behind the dam at the Blackburn privilege. In 1906, the Massachusetts Supreme Court ruled in favor of the town. [Abbott] Further research on this court case and on the Massachusetts Chemical Company is recommended.

In 1948, the town forest was mapped and evaluated by the New England Forestry Foundation, Inc., based in Boston. At that time, the town forest encompassed 334 acres. The report described the woodland as consisting of hardwood, hardwood and native white pine, and softwood plantations. Several species had been used in reforestation, the most successful being red pine. Red and white oak made up the pure hardwood stands, which were deemed to be growing very slowly and generally of poor form. The softwoods species were found to show excellent growth, and were expected to yield, in a relatively short time, "merchantable sawlogs from thinning." The report recommendations

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noted that the town forest had an estimated 70,000 board feet of merchantable timber, located for the most part east of Washington Street and south of School Meadow Brook, where some 30,000 board feet of mature pine remained after the 1938 hurricane. [Plumb, New England Forestry]

Further research is needed on the operations of the town forest as a tree farm from its establishment in 1916 to ca. 1960, the end date of the current survey. The town of Walpole is a member of the American Tree Farm System. In 1975, according to the preliminary report of the Town Forest Committee, 275,000 feet of lumber was cut and sold for \$5,741.68.

By 1977, the town forest encompassed its present 365 acres. What is commonly referred to as the town forest consists of at least eighteen parcels of land (as identified in current assessors' records) obtained by various methods and purposes. Five parcels were specifically deeded to the town for town forest purposes, by George A. Plimpton in 1916 (one parcel) and 1935 (one parcel), and by Charles S. Bird, Jr. in 1940 (three parcels). Further research is needed to confirm the total acreage and boundaries of these five parcels. Other parcels were obtained for water purposes, through tax takings, and for conservation. The existence or lack of deed restrictions and the long-term lack of specific legal boundaries for the town forest have made it difficult for many years to distinguish between land confined to town forest purposes and land eligible for general use by the town for non-forest purposes. Located within the present boundaries of the town forest acreage is the Department of Public Works Headquarters, 1385 Washington Street, constructed ca. 1955. That construction, in addition to the establishment of the present High School playing fields, is seen as an intrusion in the town forest. An attempt in 1977 to add five more acres to the high school athletic complex from the town forest was defeated following protests led by the Walpole Historical Commission and the Walpole Historical Society. The 1979 preliminary report of the Walpole Town Forest Study Committee urged that the town formally establish the boundaries of the town forest, to prevent further use of the acreage for other municipal purposes. Other recommendations included placing the Town Forest in the care of the Conservation Commission; establishing a management plan; establishing recreational uses; and acquiring additional property.

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See survey final report for complete citations

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INVENTORY FORM A CONTINUATION SHEET

WALPOLE

WALPOLE TOWN FOREST

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

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INVENTORY FORM A CONTINUATION SHEET

WALPOLE

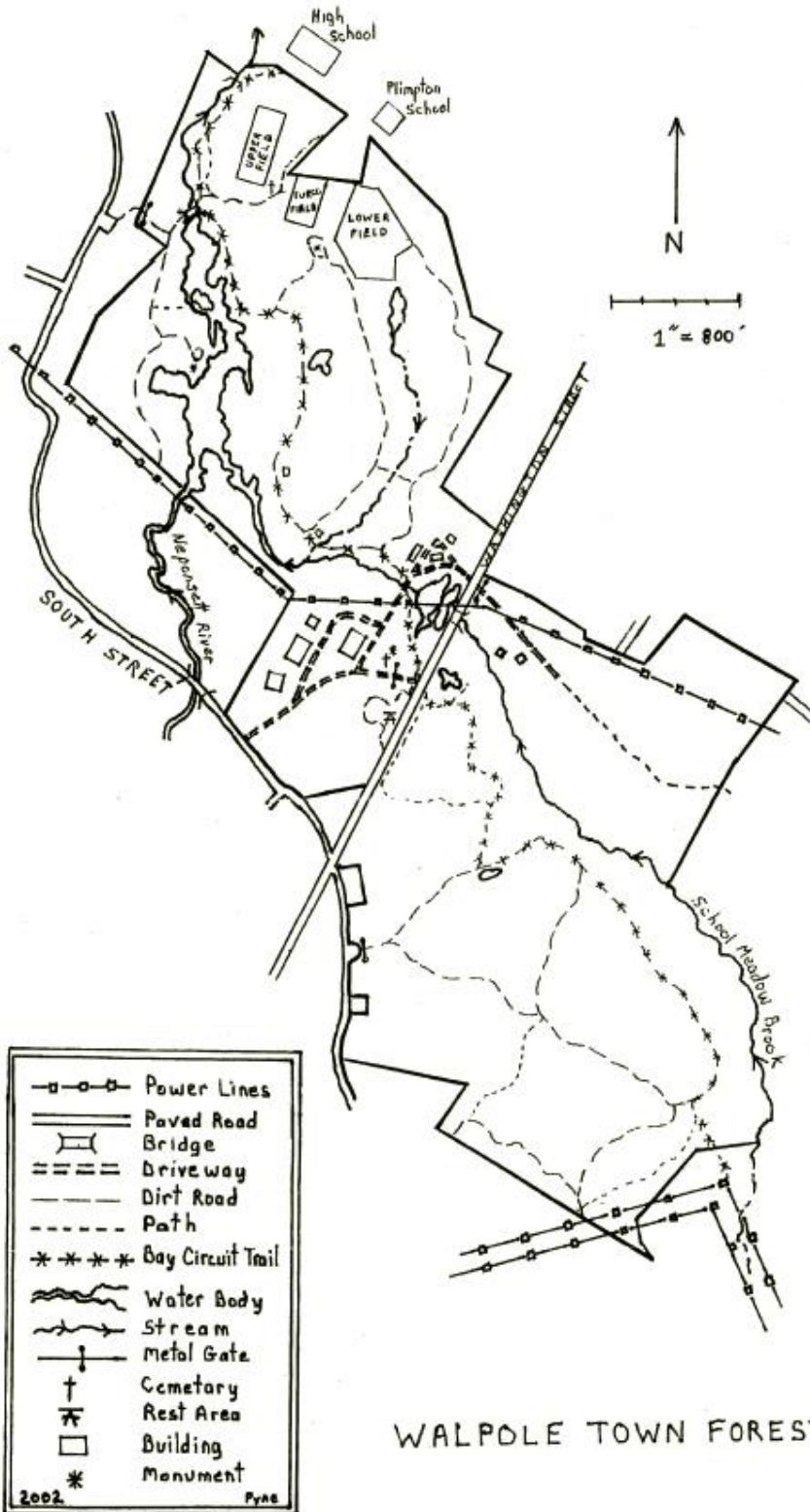
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National Register of Historic Places Criteria Statement Form

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 Kathleen Kelly Broomer

The criteria that are checked in the above sections must be justified here.

Preserving and celebrating Walpole's early history as the mid-17th century "sawmill settlement" of Dedham, the Walpole Town Forest was the first conservation area set aside by the town of Walpole. The third tree farm in Massachusetts recognized by the Massachusetts Forestry Association, the town forest also is the first in the Commonwealth to be managed for its timber revenue. The town forest is the largest municipal open space in Walpole, and retains a number of historic resources and potential archaeological sites associated with various industrial activities at or near the Blackburn privilege on the Neponset River. With a period of significance dating to at least the mid-18th century, the town forest retains substantial significance in the history of Walpole, and appears to meet Criterion A of the National Register at the local level. Resources in the town forest reflect developments in the settlement, industrial activities (including establishment of a municipal water supply and a tree farm), landscape design, town planning, and philanthropic efforts within the town of Walpole from the 18th century through the mid-20th century.

The town forest is a large and complex historic property of multiple parcels acquired over decades. This resource requires further historic research and archaeological field investigation, as noted in several instances in the narratives of the attached inventory form. To be eligible for the National Register, a potential district must retain historic integrity in addition to possessing historic significance. Further study is needed so the historic integrity of the town forest and its various components can be established. Assessment of the town forest's historic integrity as a designed landscape (dating from 1916 onward) in particular is necessary to meet National Register Criterion C. Finally, the history of the place, especially the northwestern end of the forest near the Massachusetts Chemical Company dam, indicates potential archaeological significance that could indicate the district may meet National Register Criterion D.

The town forest abuts the property associated with the George A. Plimpton School, 319 Common Street, which is separately recommended for National Register listing (see MHC #182).