

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICENATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS**1 NAME**

HISTORIC Royalston Common Historic District

AND/OR COMMON
Same**2 LOCATION** The Common, both sides, plus both sides of each approach, thus: for 1000' east on Route 68; for 200' south on the road to Athol; for 300' west on Route 68; for 300' west on North FitzWilliam Road; for 2000' north on Northeast FitzWilliam Rd., including 1000' on ~~NOT FOR PUBLICATION~~ Frye Hill Road.

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN Royalston

VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT
2nd

STATE

Massachusetts

CODE

COUNTY

Worcester

CODE

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

☒ DISTRICT
☐ BUILDING(S)
☐ STRUCTURE
☐ SITE
☐ OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

☐ PUBLIC
☐ PRIVATE
☒ BOTH
PUBLIC ACQUISITION
☐ IN PROCESS
☐ BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

☒ OCCUPIED
☐ UNOCCUPIED
☐ WORK IN PROGRESS
ACCESSIBLE
☒ YES: RESTRICTED
☐ YES: UNRESTRICTED
☐ NO

PRESENT USE

☒ AGRICULTURE
☐ COMMERCIAL
☒ EDUCATIONAL
☐ ENTERTAINMENT
☒ GOVERNMENT
☐ INDUSTRIAL
☐ MILITARY
☒ MUSEUM
☒ PARK
☒ PRIVATE RESIDENCE
☒ RELIGIOUS
☐ SCIENTIFIC
☐ TRANSPORTATION
☐ OTHER:**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME Multiple

STREET & NUMBER The Common, both sides, plus both sides of each approach, thus: for 1000' east on Route 68; for 200' south on the road to Athol; for 300' west on (continued)

CITY, TOWN

Royalston

VICINITY OF

STATE

Massachusetts

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTIONCOURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Worcester County Registry of Deeds

STREET & NUMBER

Main Street

CITY, TOWN

Worcester

STATE

Massachusetts

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE No Title: Various inventories by Massachusetts Historical Commission and the Royalston Village Improvement and Historical Society.

DATE

1971

☐ FEDERAL ☒ STATE ☐ COUNTY ☒ LOCALDEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

Massachusetts Historical Commission

CITY, TOWN

40 Beacon Street, Boston,

STATE

Massachusetts

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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 4 PAGE 1

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY (Continued)

Route 68; for 300' west on North FitzWilliam Road; for
2000' north on Northeast FitzWilliam Road, including
1000' on Frye Hill Road.

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

___EXCELLENT

☒GOOD

___FAIR

___DETERIORATED

___RUINS

___UNEXPOSED

CHECK ONE

☒UNALTERED

___ALTERED

CHECK ONE

☒ORIGINAL SITE

___MOVED

DATE _____

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Royalston Common lies along the crest of a north-south ridge. On all sides is an untouched rural landscape: fields, woods, hills and valleys. In the distance, Mount Monadnock can be clearly seen from the Common. The boundaries of the district were determined by the desire to retain the rural setting of the Common. Thus the district has the 2000' long oval Common at its core and is surrounded on all sides by the immediate open fields and the several approaches that feed into the Common. This includes 300' west and 1000' east out of the Common on Route 68, 2000' of the Northeast FitzWilliam Road plus 1000' up Frye Hill Road, 300' of North FitzWilliam Road and 300' down Athol Road to include the cemetery. The natural edges of the fields determine the extent of open space included.

The historic district is the area known as Royalston Center. Altogether there are forty buildings; thirty-five of them free standing wood frame houses. The five public buildings are the Congregational Church, the Town Hall, the Phineas Newton Memorial Library, the Raymond Elementary School, and the Old School House which has been converted to a Post Office and the home of the Village Improvement and Historical Society with its museum. Twenty-one of the buildings, including all five public buildings, are on the oblong Common. The remaining houses line the five roads that feed into the Common from all points of the compass.

The buildings, the Common and the rural setting have an integrity of form, mass, scale and atmosphere which make the whole greater than the parts. The Common appears now almost as it did in 1840-50's. Since that time, few new buildings were added to the edge of the Common; and those that were, reinforced the shape of the common and did not intrude on the general unity of the Common.

The Rufus Bullock Mansion - This is an extremely interesting house, two houses really, with a store attached, and over the store a beautiful ballroom with a curved ceiling. The mansion, built in 1807, is directly in front of a much older house, built probably about 1764. The walls between them were opened up as doors and halls, and the older smaller house was used principally for the kitchen and pantries. There is a persistent rumor that the mansion was originally three stories high and that it was a stage coach inn. Details of great interest are the bee-hive chimney, the beautiful moulding throughout, and the stenciling. This house was the birthplace of A.H. Bullock, Governor of Massachusetts (1868-88).

The Old School House, built in 1835, Greek Revival style. Now the Historical Society Building and Post Office.

The Lightning Rods, built in 1839, probably by J.E.P. Austin. Modified Greek Revival style with 8 square pillars.

The Columns, built in 1838 by Moses Nichols. Very pure Greek Revival style with four columns.

The Bastille, built in 1830 by the Reverend Ebenezer Perkins. Federal Style. Chippendale balustrade added in 1927.

First Congregational Church, built in 1851 by Chauncey Chase. Greek Revival style.

Town Hall built in 1857 by Chauncey Chase. Mansard style. This beautifully proportioned town house was designed and built by Chauncey Chase, lived next door and who gave the land.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD		AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW		
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1765, 1830-40's

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Royalston Common is an indigenous early nineteenth century prototype of a rural common that has evolved steadily from its original colonial form. In 1752, a ten acre square was laid out by absentee proprietors to straddle a ridge near the center of the township. By 1840, the Common had conformed to the ridge and has remained unchanged to the present time. As such it is recognized by architectural historians and historical surveys as the best example of an early nineteenth century town common in Massachusetts.

Royalston Common's exemplary status is based on three parameters. First, the shape and the appearance of the common has not changed in over a hundred years. The buildings, with four exceptions, were built in the early nineteenth century and have a purity of architectural style. Moreover, the setting of the Common - the approaches to the town, the vistas from the town, and the encircling hills, forests and open fields - is unchanged. As a result, the common appears as it did in the 1840's in its architecture, form, and character. Second, Royalston Common was unhampered in its growth. No unusual internal or external forces influenced its shape. Thus, continuity of development makes Royalston's Common prototypical of an early nineteenth century rural common that has grown from a colonial form. Third, the appearance of the Common is indigenous. All parts are natural and uncontrived, and they developed in response to one another. All buildings were designed and constructed by the local people; their style and locations reflect the interaction with the other buildings and their owners and the topography. Both the parts and the whole are uncontrived - Royalston is not an assimilated museum village, but a natural example still intact. Royalston Common is paradoxically both a prototype and a town with a distinct rural charm of its own.

