

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR NPS USE ONLY
RECEIVED
DATE ENTERED JUN 21 1978
DEC 1 1978

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

1 NAME

HISTORIC CHESHIRE COUNTY COURT HOUSE
AND/OR COMMON THE COURT HOUSE

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER 12 Court Street
CITY, TOWN Keene VICINITY OF
STATE New Hampshire CODE 33 COUNTY Cheshire CODE 005 ✓
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT Second

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE <input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL <input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL <input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT <input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME Cheshire County
STREET & NUMBER 12 Court Street
CITY, TOWN Keene VICINITY OF STATE New Hampshire 03431

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Cheshire County Registry of Deeds
STREET & NUMBER 12 Court Street
CITY, TOWN Keene STATE New Hampshire 03431

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE NA
DATE
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS
CITY, TOWN STATE
FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The two-story Court House rests on a rusticated granite block foundation, some of which was part of an earlier county court records building which occupied the site from 1840 to 1858. Round-headed windows punctuate the wall surface of locally produced brick. The three-bay front (east) facade features an arcaded central entry porch supported by brick pillars and pilasters. A granite belt-course encircles the structure between stories. Second story walls are pilastered with corbelling in alternate bays. The slate-sheathed hip roof has a bracketed cornice and decorative gable wall dormer on the front slope. An octagonal belfry with louvered openings, gilded roof, and weather-vane crowns the structure.

Erected at a cost of "nearly \$28,000" by contractor Joel Bullard of Alstead, New Hampshire, the Court House remains largely in its original condition. Interior features such as iron window shutters, woodwork, and staircases have been retained, although plumbing and electrical installations have been modernized. A rear vault extension was added in 1911-1912.

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 type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1858-1859

BUILDER/ARCHITECT Gridley James Fox Bryant

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Both by its strategic position at the virtual center of the City of Keene, the region's largest community and county seat, and in its formal and even majestic architecture, the Cheshire County Court House is symbolic of the role it has fulfilled for 119 years as a seat of county government. It was built in 1858-1859 (the first foundation stones were laid April 26, 1858 at the southwest corner, and it was occupied by the courts March 15, 1859) from plans drawn by the celebrated Gridley James Fox Bryant (1816-1899), the Boston architect who designed numerous works including city halls, jails, court and custom houses, churches and business buildings in his native city and throughout New England and in other states.

The Cheshire County Court House is one of the striking focal points of Keene's geometrically oriented cultural, business and economic center. Thought to be the oldest regularly used court house in the State of New Hampshire, the building almost ideally illustrates the 19th century concept of a formal monumental style of governmental architecture. Its proportions are in keeping with surrounding structures with which it harmonizes and adds a sense of community stability. The Court House not only preserves some of the best of 19th century architecture, fully documented and by a celebrated designer, but it forms a visual link between the period of its construction and the present. It is a vital part of Keene's Central Square.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Simon G. Griffin. History of the Town of Keene, From 1732..To 1874 (Keene, NH,1904).
 Keene History Committee. "Upper Ashuelot," A History of Keene, NH (Keene, NH, 1968).
 Hamilton Child. Gazetteer of Cheshire County, NH, 1736-1885 (Syracuse, NY, 1885).
 D. Hamilton Hurd. History of Cheshire and Sullivan Counties, NH (Philadelphia, 1886).
 Samuel Wadsworth. "A Chronological Record of Events Pertaining to the Growth and
 Development of the Business Section of Keene, Including Central Square & Vicinity..."
 In Keene, NH, City Government, ~~Fifty fifth Annual Report of the City of Keene.~~
 (Keene, NH, 1928) pp.68-138.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY less than one

QUADRANGLE NAME Keene NH-VT

QUADRANGLE SCALE 15'

UTM REFERENCES

A 1,8 7,2,1,9,5,0 4,7,5,6,9,0,0

B

ZONE EASTING

NORTHING

ZONE

EASTING

NORTHING

C

D

E

F

G

H

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The Cheshire County Court House, facing east, stands on the corner of Court and Winter Streets in Keene, New Hampshire, at the northwest edge of Central Square.

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

David R. Proper, Curator

ORGANIZATION

Historical Society of Cheshire County, Inc.

DATE

April 1, 1977

STREET & NUMBER

51 South Lincoln Street

TELEPHONE

603-352-0170

CITY OR TOWN

Keene

STATE

New Hampshire 03431

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE X

LOCAL

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

[Signature]
STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

TITLE Commissioner, NH Dept. Resources & Economic Development
NH State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE DEC 16 1977

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE 12-13-78

[Signature]
KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

ATTEST: *[Signature]*

DATE 12/12/78

CHIEF OF REGISTRATION