

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

received FEB 25 1983

date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic HILLS HOUSE

and/or common HUDSON HISTORICAL SOCIETY, INC.

2. Location

street & number 211 Derry Road, not for publication

city, town Hudson vicinity of ~~Congressional district~~ (2nd)

state N.H. code 33 county Hillsborough code 011

3. Classification

<b>Category</b>	<b>Ownership</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Present Use</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> educational	<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Hudson School District

street & number Thorning Road

city, town Hudson vicinity of state New Hampshire 03051

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Hillsborough County Courthouse/Registry of Deeds

street & number 19 Temple Street; PO Box #370

city, town Nashua state New Hampshire 03060

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title None has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records

city, town state

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## 7. Description

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**Condition** excellent good fair deteriorated ruins unexposed**Check one** unaltered altered**Check one** original site moveddate n/a

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**Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance**

The Hills House is a large rectangular frame structure with two stories and a high-pitched roof. The walls and roof of the building are interrupted at many points by porches, towers, bays and gables; these give the house a complex plan and silhouette and render it an excellent example of the shingle style.

The principal elevation of the house faces northwest. The main doorway, flanked by side-lights of leaded glass, is sheltered beneath a broad porch which extends the full width of this side of the house; a French window opens onto the porch to the right (southwest) of the main entrance. The first story of the house, beneath the porch, is clapboarded. This elevation is terminated on the left (northeast) by an engaged cylindrical tower which rises from the level of the porch roof through the second story and above the main roof; it is capped by a conical roof covered with black Pennsylvania slate. The porch beneath the tower is enclosed by a quadrant of latticework which leaves an open passageway but provides an impression of support for the upper stages of the tower. The second story of the tower is covered with wooden shingles with square butts and has two banks of windows, each containing three sashes separated by millions, commanding mountain views to the north and west. Between the windows is a lozenge of diamond-patterned shingles, while above them is a half-timbered and stuccoed stage which supports an ovolo-moulded cornice and bears the date "1890."

The right (southwest) end of this elevation is articulated above the porch roof by a shallow three-sided bay window, which in turn is sheltered beneath a projecting roof gable with alternating bands of square and diamond-shaped shingles and with a narrow attic window. The broad plane of the roof is pierced by an eyebrow dormer placed directly above the main entrance and a second-story window, and by a large brick chimney with ornamental coffers in its faces.

Also visible as elements of this elevation are the sides of a porte-cochere which extends from the northeast elevation, and of a leanto which extends from the southwest elevation and carries the roof of that elevation down to the level of the first story.

The northeast elevation of the house is dominated by a projecting second-story element which has shingled walls and is supported on square wooden columns to provide a porte-cochere at the first story level. The room on the second floor is lighted by a Palladian window in its end wall, by rectangular windows in its side walls, and by an elliptical window which is filled with leaded glazing and faces the tower at the north corner of the dwelling. The roof of this projecting element is hipped and slated.

The southwest elevation of the house has a porch at its left (western) corner, covered by the projecting roof of the leanto that continues the plane of the main roof at this corner. Rising from the leanto roof is a wall which is broken by a three-sided bay covered with shingles on its middle face and pierced by windows on the two diagonal faces. The middle face of the bay is ornamented by a cross-shaped pattern of diamond-cut shingles, while above the bay is a projecting roof gable decorated with alternating bands of square and hexagonal shingles. To the right (southeast) of this bay is a second projection which rises from the first story through the main roof and is capped by a second roof gable.

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Extending from the southern corner of the house is a large one-story gable-roofed addition with shingled walls. The southwestern elevation of this wing is composed of a semi-circular bay with a large fieldstone chimney in its center. The chimney, built of materials gathered on the property, rises to the level of the attic of the main house and is tied to the ridge of the wing by a wrought iron rod having ornamental scrolls at its intersection with the chimney stack. The fireplace in this wing is flanked by triple-sash windows.

The southeastern wall of this addition is intersected by a hip-roofed extension which has a semi-octagonal entrance bay at its southern corner.

The eastern corner of the house is marked by an extension covered by a leanto roof with a hip-roofed dormer in its slope. Attached to this extension is a one-story gable-roofed shed which intersects the side of a small carriage house.

A small metal tool shed is located slightly to the east of the Hills House. It was probably introduced in the 1970's and is a non-contributing structure.

## 8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input 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 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 checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
	<input type="checkbox"/> invention			

**Specific dates** 1890 **Builder/Architect** Mr. Ripley of Boston, MA

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Hills House is an excellent example of a shingle style summer dwelling. It was built by a successful native on his ancestral acres in 1890. Attributed to the Boston architect Hubert G. Ripley (1869-1942), who was twenty-one at the time of its design, the dwelling demonstrates the pervasiveness of a domestic style that had earlier been popularized through the commissions of leading architects. Unlike the many examples of the shingle style built by wealthy owners in resort areas, the Hills House was placed in a small New Hampshire town by an owner whose affection for the locale led him to carry out several philanthropic projects there. The dwelling has continued its connection with the welfare of the community through its transformation, after 1966, into an historical and cultural center; its grounds have provided the site for the local high school and serve as an outdoor laboratory for agricultural education.

**Architecture:** The Hills House was built as the summer home of Dr. Alfred K. Hills (1840-1928) and his second wife, Ida Verginia (Creutzborg) Hills. The builder named the estate "Alvirne"--a combination of "Alfred" and "Virginia"--and used it as a retreat from his demanding medical practice in New York City.

The house has been attributed to Hubert G. Ripley, who had graduated from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 1890 and was working for the Boston architectural firm of Robert D. Andrews, Herbert Jaques, and Augustus N. Rantoul at the time the house was designed.<sup>1</sup> Ripley soon left for Chicago to join Charles B. Atwood, chief designer for Daniel Burnham on the Columbian Exposition. Returning to Boston after the exposition, Ripley soon rose to become chief draftsman for the firm of Peabody and Stearns, noted for their major commissions and for their inventive shingle style dwellings. Ripley was a prominent member of the Boston Society of Architects and the author of many articles on architecture and related subjects.<sup>2</sup> Ripley continued to be employed by the philanthropist Hills, designing the Hills Memorial Library (1908) and the Alvirne Memorial Chapel (1909), both in Hudson.

The Hills House is an excellent example of the shingle style, which had been popularized during the preceding decade by Peabody and Stearns, William Ralph Emerson, Arthur Little, John Calvin Stevens, and McKim, Mead, and White. Although much less elaborate than the major domestic commissions of these fashionable architects, the Hills House uses an imaginative assemblage of elements, materials and textures to transform a rectangular hip-roofed structure into a pleasantly complex composition. The house ranks with the finest examples of its style in New Hampshire, most of which are found either in pretentious suburbs or in mountain or seashore resort communities.

<sup>1</sup>The Boston Directory, 1891.

<sup>2</sup>Henry F. Withey and Elsie Rathburn Withey, Biographical Dictionary of American Architects (Deceased), facsimile edition. (Los Angeles: Hennessey & Ingalls, Inc., 1970), p. 513.

Continued...

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

Webster History of Hudson, N.H. 1673/1913, by Kimball Webster, edited by George Waldo Brown, Granite State Publishing Company, Manchester, N.H. 1913

Town if Transition, Hudson, New Hampshire 1913/1977, written by Hudson Historical Society, Inc., edited and published by Phoenix Press, Canaan, New Hampshire.

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property 2.5 ±

Quadrangle name NASHUA NORTH, N.H.

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

### UMT References

A 

1	9	3	0	0	8	8	5	4	7	4	0	8	3	0
Zone			Easting				Northing							

B 

Zone			Easting				Northing							

C 

Zone			Easting				Northing							

D 

Zone			Easting				Northing							

E 

Zone			Easting				Northing							

F 

Zone			Easting				Northing							

G 

Zone			Easting				Northing							

H 

Zone			Easting				Northing							

### Verbal boundary description and justification

See Continuation Sheet

### List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code
N/A			

state	code	county	code
N/A			

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Arlene G. MacIntyre, Clerk

organization Hudson Historical Society, Inc. date August 1982

street & number 18 Ledge Road telephone (603) 882-9522

city or town Hudson state New Hampshire 03051

## 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national  state  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.

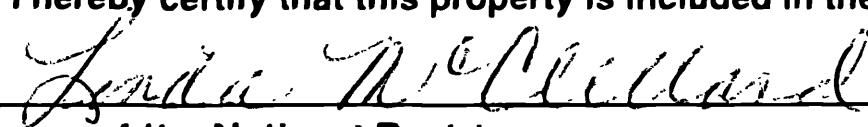
State Historic Preservation Officer signature 

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

date February 8, 1983

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I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

  
Keeper of the National Register

date 4/8/83

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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The amenities which originally made the Hills House an attractive summer home have served to transform it into a focus of community life. At his death in 1928, Hills left a bequest for the establishment of a high school in Hudson. This was eventually built on the grounds of the Alvirne estate, which is now owned by the Hudson School District. The Hudson Historical Society was organized in 1966 and made its first project the restoration of the Hills House. By 1969, the house had been put to use as the Hudson Historical and Cultural Center. Since that time, the building has served the community as an historic house museum, a library, and a center for lectures and classes.

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Verbal boundary description and justification:

Tax Map #29, portion of parcel #19. Boundaries of nominated property indicated on the attached map. The triangularly-shaped 2.5 acre parcel is all of the property once owned by Dr. Hills and part of his summer estate which continues to be directly associated with the house. The balance of the property once owned by Hills, and not included as part of the nominated property is used by the school system for educational programs.

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Photo documentation:

The building has not changed since these photos were taken. (October 1982)

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Hills House/Hudson, NH

SKETCH MAP

