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NPS Form 10-900
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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

NATIONAL
REGISTER

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Milford Town House & Library Annex
other names/site number Milford Town Hall

2. Location

street & number Nashua Street (NE corner of South Street) not for publication
city, town Milford vicinity
state New Hampshire code NH county Hillsborough code NH011 zip code 03055

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	<u>2</u>	<u> </u> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	<u> </u>	<u> </u> sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<u> </u>	<u> </u> structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u>2</u>	<u> </u> objects
			<u> </u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing:
N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

R. Stuart Wallace
Signature of certifying official
NEW HAMPSHIRE

July 28, 1988
Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register. See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register. See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register.
- removed from the National Register.
- other, (explain): _____

Beth K. Savage

12-1-88

[Signature]
Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Government: City Hall

Education: Library

Social: Meeting Hall

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Government: City Hall

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(enter categories from instructions)

Italianate

Second Empire

Late 19th and early 20th American
Movements

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation granite

walls brick, granite

roof asphalt

other wood

terra cotta

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The existing Milford Town Hall building is a union of two significant 19th century brick structures, the Town House and Library Annex. The nominated property constitutes a major focal point in the center of Town and possesses a high level of integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association. Together the buildings occupy a long narrow free-standing block bordered on the north by Middle Street, on the east by Putnam Street, on the south by Nashua Street and on the west by South Street and the oval. A sidewalk surrounds all four sides of the building. Small grassy areas each displaying a cast iron urn are located to each side of the west entrance stairs. The Town Hall, a brick structure decorated with granite trim and capped by an asphalt hip roof punctuated by a variety of dormers and towers, was constructed first. The masonry wall bearing, wood truss roofed building consists of two floors, balcony and basement. The Library, containing three floors and a basement was constructed later and makes use of the east wall of the original Town Hall as a common bearing wall. In contrast to the common brick of the Town Hall the flat-roofed Library is constructed of a glazed brick with molded brick and terra cotta trim. Despite stylistic and finish differences, the repetition of certain key elements from the earlier building such as upper story arches, belt courses and bay arrangement serve to unify the overall design.

West Elevation

The facade is organized into five bays with the first, third, and fifth projecting slightly from the others and further distinguished by a more elaborate beltcourse separating the first and second floors. Owing to the existence of the auditorium and balcony inside, the second floor is somewhat taller than the first floor level.

The slight drop in elevation from south to north reveals a basement level on this elevation not visible on the south side. The foundation level is constructed of staggered rough-face granite blocks with smooth margins. A six pane fixed window occupies the first floor of the foundation level, with a paneled wood and glass door in the second. A small rectangular window lights the fourth while a former window opening in the end bay has been fitted with vents.

A central granite staircase constructed of Milford granite and consisting of eight steps, a landing and a final step provides access to the recessed entrance. Cast iron newel posts at the top and bottom of the stairs support a cast iron railing. A border of recessed brick frames the entrance which is capped by a

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two-tiered brick segmental relieving arch lintel. The central granite keystone is inscribed "1869". A wooden panel fills the segmental arched opening above the entrance. The entrance vestibule is sheathed in square raised panels of wood with beadboard on the ceiling. The wide double doors each feature six panels. Each of the end bays on the first floor of this elevation contain a doublehung 6/6 window with granite sills and stilted segmental brick arch lintels which echo the top of the window. They are supported by corbeled brick impost blocks and above each window is a granite keystone. The second and fourth bays are punctuated by thinner doublehung 4/4 windows with similar segmental arch lintels whose edges are flush with the projecting wall of the adjacent bay.

On the second floor elongated arched windows occupy the central and end bays. Each consists of an arched multi-light upper sash separated by a rectangular wooden panel from the 3 x 2 sash below. A simple granite beltcourse marks the springline of each arch. The arch itself is echoed by a lintel consisting of two courses of header brick with an outer projecting course and granite keystone. The bottom of the windows rests on an elaborate beltcourse consisting of a granite course, several courses of brick laid on end and lengthwise and a dentil course comprised of two brick ends set atop each other. In the second and fourth bays the beltcourse is somewhat simpler, lacking dentils. On the second floor these bays are windowless, outlined by a margin of projecting bricks, as is the central bay.

Above the second story, a projecting cornice alternating wooden brackets and projecting panels encircles the entire building. On this elevation double brackets and a single bracket in profile mark the edges of each bay, spanned by long rectangular panels. A granite panel with raised letters reading "TOWN HALL" is located above the central window.

Marking the southwest corner of the building is a two stage clocktower. The base consists of a steeply pitched mansard roof with straight sides covered in asphalt shingles and punctuated on each side by wooden vents capped by broken pediments with scrolls flanking the base of the dormer. Above a bracketed cornice is a horizontal flushboard square housing four clock faces and capped by a pyramidal roof. A pyramidal roof with finial marks the northwest corner and is fronted by an abstract circular dormer decorated by triangular projections to each side and with scrolls at the base of the surround. Above the central bay is a pedimented dormer with a bracketed cornice supported by paneled pilasters and two bulbous brackets and containing two doublehung 6/6 windows.

Hanging in the Town House belfry is a Paul Revere bell given to the town for its meetinghouse by Perkins Nichols of Boston, a friend of Rev. Humphrey Moore, Milford's first settled minister. Cast in 1802, it was transported to Milford

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from Boston by ox team and hung in the Eagle Hall (Milford's original town hall) in 1808. It was moved to its present location in the Town House in 1871. According to the Town History, there are only eight Revere bells in existence older than Milford's bell. Paul Revere started casting bells in 1792 and cast a total of 135 before his son entered the business about 1809. Of the 135, only 23 have been identified. Milford's Bell was the 56th cast by Paul Revere and is reportedly the only one which has never been repaired.¹

A clock has always accompanied the bell in the belfry. The original clock was replaced in 1887 by a clock dated 1885. One face of the clock was illuminated in 1897, and two more in 1923.²

South Elevation - Town House

The south elevation of the original Town Hall structure combines a symmetrical second floor treatment with a varied pattern of doors and storefronts on the first floor. On the second floor the structure measures nine bays wide. The center three bays, capped by a pediment, project slightly from the two bays to each side and are outlined by a border of projecting bricks. The single bay located at each end of the elevation similarly projects slightly from the adjacent wall surface and is further emphasized by the clock tower previously described at the southwest corner and a pyramidal roofed tower (like that at the northwest corner) at the southeast corner. As on the west elevation, a denticulated brick cornice between the first and second floors decorates the projecting bays while that which transverses the recessed areas is without dentils. Elongated arched windows like those on the facade light the second story. Only the first three bays and the last bay display horizontal wooden panels bisecting the sash. In addition to the granite beltcourse marking the springline a granite horizontal caps all but the end bays.

The continuous doors and storefronts, altered at various times over the years total thirteen openings on the first floor. The central pedimented section is supported on the first floor by two massive granite piers spanned by a granite lintel. Excepting the first and last bays, attenuated cast iron piers resting on rectangular bases and aligned with the sides of the windows on the second floor separate the first floor openings. The capitals of the piers are decorated with alternating teardrop shapes. The first bay (at the left or west) formerly a doorway, is filled with a wooden piece displaying four vertical recessed panels across and smaller panels below. The opening is capped by a stilted segmental arch brick lintel resting on corbelled brick supports in profile and a granite keystone. Two granite steps block the bottom of the opening. The recessed section to the right is occupied by three openings of which two are windows and the last is a doorway. Each of the windows contain 6/6 doublehung sash with recessed panels below. The doorway consists of a horizontal paneled door with an upper glass window and is fronted by granite steps and capped by a fixed 3 x 2 light transom. The first two bays of the central pedimented section contain

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doublehung 6/6 sash windows with a row of square recessed panels below. The center opening in this section features a horizontal paneled and glass door capped by a 3 x 2 transom. The windows/doors in the next three bays were removed in 1980 to allow construction of a new recessed entrance and concrete handicapped-accessible ramp with pipe metal railing. The adjacent bay to the right contains a plate glass storefront window with a 2 x 2 fixed glass transom above. The following bay contains a set of paneled and glass double doors with two tier transom and the end bay is occupied by a transomed single width glass and horizontal paneled door detailing similar to the double doorway on the other end of this elevation.

On the south elevation the bracketed wooden cornice features a single bracket centered over each second floor window interspersed by pairs of brackets. Rectangular raised panels span between the single and paired brackets. Single brackets in profile articulate the edges of the projecting walls. In the pediment, the crown molding of a cyma profile, extends up the raking edges to enclose a typanum with a recessed triangular panel filled with brick. Centered in the panel is a circular opening surrounded by raised brick molding and articulated by four voussoirs. The opening has been filled with a small horizontal window. In addition to the forementioned towers, two paneled brick chimneys pierce the hip roof slope on this elevation; one to each side of the central pediment. Two metal chimney vents rise from the roof ridge.

South Elevation - Library Building

To the east the Library building measures four bays wide, with the first bay acting as a physical connector between the two buildings, but deviating somewhat from the stylistic similarities bonding the two buildings. On the first floor, the first bay consists of an arched opening providing access to the recessed entrance beyond. The opening is outlined by a heavy molded brick surround and capped by a decorative terra cotta panel with raised letters reading "Library". Wooden steps lead to glass and paneled double doors. The vestibule is sheathed in recessed panels; the size of which decrease as they rise. The remaining three bays on the first floor consist of thin paired doublehung 1/1 sash with a row of vertical raised panels below, all set into a molded brick surrounding. Underneath, a row of four glass panes lights the basement level. The surrounding brickwork is laid to simulate a rusticated finish and alternates five courses of brick to one course of recessed brick.

Window treatment of the upper stories echoes the arched window forms of the Town Hall and effectively obscures the fact that the library contains three floors as opposed to the Town Hall's two. The bottom of the second story windows rests on a simple granite beltcourse, which continues the line of the Town Hall's more elaborate brick beltcourse. The first bay contains a single doublehung 1/1 window while the remaining three openings are filled with two 1/1 sashes, separated by a wooden mullion. The window openings on the third story are

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identical in detail to their second floor counterparts though slightly shorter. The spandrels are decorated by vertical wooden panels. In the first bay a smaller 1/1 window rests directly on the third floor window and is capped by a simple granite lintel. On the remaining windows a molded brick surround rises two stories from the second story beltcourse to arch above the third story windows. The lunette area above the 3rd floor windows is constructed of wood.

Above the first bay the cornice follows the line of the Town Hall's before stepping up approximately eight feet at which height it continues across the rest of the facade. A series of three horizontal terra cotta tiles decorate the area above the arches of the third story. The foliate panels are outlined with and connected by a series of bull's eye tiles alternating with tiles incised with lines. Courses of tiles bearing fret designs and "egg and dart" motifs cap the rectangular panels. Above, the molded metal cornice dips slightly in the center.

East Elevation

The east elevation of the library building measures eight bays wide with the first two bays projecting slightly from the rest of the wall surface and occupying approximately one third of the elevation's total width. The detailing of the first two bays repeats the rusticated detailing and molded brick window surrounds seen on the south elevation while translating the double window combinations of the front to attenuated openings a single window wide. On the remainder of the elevation the openings feature simple 1/1 doublehung sash capped by relieving arches and arranged with three groups of two on each of the three floors. Four of the openings contain doorways. A metal fire escape fronts the northernmost two bays. Smaller doublehung windows light the basement, increasing slightly in size in response to the slope of the site.

North Elevation - Library

The rear (north) elevation of the library building consists of three stories and a full basement and is without decorative detailing. The basement level is pierced by four openings of which the first is a doorway and the remaining three are garage bays. The three panel door is capped by a glass transom. The square paneled garage doors each have three rows of glass panes above two rows of square panels and are flanked by brick piers resting on granite bases. A continuous granite lintel caps the basement openings.

On the remainder of the elevation the openings feature simple 1/1 doublehung sash set into segmental arched openings with flush lintels and simple granite sills. There are six regularly spaced windows on the first floor. On the second floor, windows occupy all but the second and third bays and on the third floor there is a window lighting the first and fourth bays, the fifth bay opening has been bricked-in and a thinner window has been inserted to the right of the sixth bay. A vent punctuates the roof above this window.

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North Elevation - Town House

The rear elevation of the Town House measures nine bays wide with the end bays projecting slightly from the remaining wall surface. At the basement level the openings corresponding to the first, third, fifth and ninth bays have been bricked in; some have been fitted with vents. A panel and glass door occupies the second bay, a modern metal door has been inserted in the fourth and both the sixth and eighth bays feature stopped down door openings with panel and glass, and metal doors respectively. A painted-in doublehung 6/6 window with a segmentally arched upper edge pierces the seventh bay. The westernmost bay displays the granite blocks used on the contiguous elevation.

The nine windows on the first floor of this elevation contain 6/6 sash spanned by stilted segmental brick arches with brick impost blocks and granite keystones. On this elevation the first and last bays are the only areas where the beltcourse above the first floor openings is denticulated. The windows on the second story are identical in detail to those on the second story of the south elevation except for the omission of a granite band underneath the bracketed cornice. The roof is punctuated by two pyramidal towers with circular dormers and a pediment with circular opening and echoing those found on the parallel elevation. Three thick paneled chimneys and a thinner plain chimney project from the pediment roof.

Interior Description

At the head of the first staircase, facing the west entrance is an elaborately carved black walnut case five feet high and eight feet wide holding five marble tablets on which are carved the names of those who died representing Milford in the Civil War. Wooden columns with composite capitals, a heavy denticulated cornice, scrollwork and incised details typical of the period decorate the memorial, which is fronted by a cast iron railing. A staircase to each side of the memorial leads to the upper floors, framed by heavy newel posts, turned balusters and wainscoting throughout. Eight foot high wainscoting covers much of the wall area of the first floor. Several four panel doors and paneled glass doors also survive. Dropped ceiling and paneling have been introduced in some areas. The second floor is occupied by two anterooms, one on each side, and a large auditorium. The double staircase continues to the third floor, providing access to the auditorium balcony and two additional small anterooms.

The auditorium area measures approximately 66' x 64'. A large arched stage extends to the east while a balcony spans the rear. The room is lit by four two-story arched windows on the north and south walls, each of which is fitted with four rows of shutters. A fifth window on each side is bisected by the balcony. The hardwood floor has been marked for a basketball court. The walls are sheathed in a vertical board sheathing to a height of about eight feet above the floor surface, above which the walls are plastered. Moldings at a height of

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three feet and eight feet encircle the room. Another molding runs above the top of the arched windows above which is a coved cornice. Two simple moldings outline the ceiling with a plaster medallion located in the center. On the third floor the anterooms remain relatively untouched. One room retains old wallpaper and cornice paper as well as simulated grained door and window surrounds and four panel doors.

Entering the Library Annex from Nashua Street several wooden steps under the archway lead up to the entrance foyer. To the left of the foyer is the original, natural wood stairway leading to the upper floors, to the right is the former library space, now housing the district court and public works department. Unpainted beadboard wainscoting lines the first floor walls while door and window surrounds retain their bulls eye moldings. The rear room features a pressed metal ceiling. The front office is notable for its natural wood mantel capped by a large mirror and decorated by bead moldings and oval medallions above a molded brick fireplace.

Original details surviving on the second floor include the pressed metal ceiling and turn of the century electric fixtures consisting of glass bowls suspended on chains. The doors feature six horizontal panels and natural wood wainscoting surrounds the room. Simple metal columns with Doric-like capitals are evenly spaced in the interior of the room. Original features surviving on the third floor include some cornerblock moldings, horizontal five panel doors and wainscoting. The former Masonic Hall at the rear retains a coved ceiling.

The basement under both buildings has witnessed numerous uses and changes over the years. The granite and brick walls of the cell block remain virtually unchanged from their original construction. Brick relieving arches are evidence of the Town House's original east elevation. The garage bays on the Annex side are ordered by simple metal columns. Throughout this level new sheetrock partitions and concrete block walls dating to 1977 and 1981 alterations have been inserted.

Original Appearance

With the exception of the addition of the Library Annex in 1892 there have been few substantial changes made to the outside of the Town House since its construction in 1869. A wide door was installed into the north side of the basement in 1879. The other basement openings on this elevation have been altered at various times over the years to accommodate changing uses. Historic photographs indicate that at one time there was a window or door opening in each of the nine bays, today four have been bricked in. Early views also indicate that a glass transom initially capped the west entrance and that the doors were flush with the outside wall in contrast to the recessed entrance visible today. The first steps into the post office, when it was in the southwest corner room (1870-1900) were removed and used to partially fill up the former doorway in

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1900; the front doors were changed to open outward in 1904. The door on the north side of the front steps was installed in 1929 to access the basement. The wooden awnings over the sidewalk on the Nashua Street side were built in 1870, replaced in 1893, and removed in 1932.⁴ In 1980 the former store area on the south side was converted into a new main entrance lobby for the building. Several storefront windows and doorways were removed and a recessed, handicapped accessible entrance, lobby and meeting room were created.

Alterations to the exterior of the Library building have also been minimal. Stained glass windows initially lit the third floor, on the south side of the building⁵ and were probably removed when the Masons vacated the space⁶ in 1939. The fire escape on the east side of the building was installed in 1952.

Inside, more extensive alterations have been made over the years. As originally constructed the Town House basement was fitted for two stores, a room for the police and a light and dark cell for prisoners. The north front space was occupied in 1878 by the watch repair and jewelry store of Calvin H. Averill and was accessed through the door around the corner on Middle Street. In 1905 Benjamin F. Foster, Milford's undertaker and auctioneer, held his auctions here. This space was later allocated to the police department and except for a time upstairs, it went back to this space in 1972.⁸ The jail cells are located in back of this room and beyond that area, coal and wood used for heating the building were stored. The coal pile area was later taken by the fire department. The post office, Selectmen's room and three stores were located on the first floor with the auditorium occupying all of the second. Until the construction of the annex, the free library was located to the left of the front door. The post office and telegraph office occupied the southwest corner of the building. The space to the east was occupied by the Shaw Brothers dry goods store initially and in 1878 by H. H. Barber's dry goods. Around the turn of the century the post office shifted to this location and the municipal court was housed in the southwest corner where the post office had been. In 1939 the court moved when a larger room became available in the area now used by the selectmen. The next store contained a clothing store for much of its history, operated by Henry Shaw, John Ober & Co. and Wadleigh and Sargent over the years. The end store contained a grocery store owned by George Melendy, Lyford and Kendall, Hutchinson & Averill and later Jewett & Sears. In 1940 some of the walls of the old post office were removed for construction of a concrete fireproof vault around which town offices were built. Today, much of the first floor has been changed although some original four panel doors, bulls' eye moldings and windows do survive. The area which was historically occupied by storefronts was gutted in 1980 to make an entrance lobby and meeting room. Old brick walls uncovered during demolition were sandblasted and left exposed.

Upstairs, the stage was originally built with four small rooms on each side of the stage, fronted by balconies. In 1902 the stage was widened and deepened and the small rooms and balconies eliminated. At this time the stage was also

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fitted with footlights and permanent scenery, with provisions for raising and lowering the scenery. The clock which was located above the stage was moved to the middle of the front of the main gallery; it has since been removed as has the stage curtain, handpainted by Foster and Hayes of Manchester in 1898 and replacing an earlier curtain. The curtain is now in storage. The clock hangs in a new location in the first floor offices. A large chandelier was originally suspended from the center plaster medallion, equipped initially for gas and later, in 1878 for kerosene and in 1897 for electricity.¹⁰ Four smaller chandeliers which originally hung in each corner of the room, were also removed in 1902.¹¹ The floor was rebuilt in 1906 and again in 1936 when a beech floor was put at right angles to the previous one.¹² Accounts of the building's dedication in 1870 tell us that the walls and ceiling were originally frescoed in various colors with a drab and delicate olive tint prevailing. The high wainscoting of chestnut was initially left in a natural state with black walnut panels and moldings.¹³ Today nearly all of it has been painted over although the windows behind the stage retain their original grained finish. The hall's original wooden settees have long since been removed.

The large front room on the right of the entrance to the annex originally housed the library reading room. Between this room and the back northeast corner room, which was the children's room was the librarian's desk and the balance of the back room was filled with book stacks. After the new William Wadleigh Library was built across the street in 1951, the public works office was established in the former library reading room. Selective Service (1951-1969) and the County Commissioner (1951-1961) occupied the back rooms.¹⁴ Since 1971 the District Court has been located in the rear rooms. Soon, it will be moving from this location, thus breaking a 88 year tenure in the Town House and Annex.¹⁵ Today, public still works occupies the front of this floor.

As originally constructed the entire second floor was devoted to a banquet hall. The kitchen was partially remodeled in 1930 and in 1961 electric stoves replaced the original iron one. This floor was rented to the Kenmore Stamp Company in 1952 and in 1970 Jehovah's Witnesses rented this room for their Sunday services until they built their church.¹⁶ In 1983 this floor was renovated for use by the assessor/planning department.

The upper story was constructed for use by¹⁷ the Masons, Benevolent Temple No. 7, AFAM and was so occupied from 1892 to 1939. An account of the dedication of the hall describes the lodge room as follows: "It is furnished in solid mahogany, and upholstered in old red plush. The carpets in the lodge and ante-rooms are of body brussels of a small and beautifully shaded pattern. The frescoing is well done representing appropriate Masonic emblems and includes two well know scenes in Masonic history. Notable in the furnishings are the rough and perfect ashlar of Milford granite presented by I.H. Carleton. Under the mellowed light of the electric chandelier the hall presents an appearance of refined elegance. The ante-room is finished in oak and is carpeted the same as the main lodge room, a

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massive table occupies the center and an elegant oak framed pier glass occupies one end of the room."¹⁸ Following the departure of the Masons in 1939, this floor saw intermittent use for many years. In 1951 the Kenmore Stamp Company hired the floor and¹⁹ in later years it was used by the Milford Historical Society for its artifacts. In 1987 the Communications Center and its equipment moved to the third floor. Relatively little survives to suggest this floor's former glory. Additional partitions have been constructed and fine woodwork has either been removed or painted.

When the annex to the Town House was constructed in 1892 the fire department occupied the basement level. Today this level serves as headquarters for the ambulance squad.

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FOOTNOTES

1. Winifred A. Wright, The Granite Town: Milford, NH 1901-1978. Canaan, NH: Phenix Publishing Co., 1979, p. 503.
2. Ibid.
3. Wright, p. 503
4. Ibid.
5. "Masonic Dedication" Farmer's Cabinet, April 1892.
6. Wright, p. 506.
7. "Dedication of the New Town Hall, at Milford Farmer's Cabinet, 5 May 1870.
8. Wright, p. 504-5.
9. A. B. Rotch, Pictures of Old Milford, NH with Descriptions and Stories. Milford, NH: Cabinet Print, 1912, p. 41-2.
10. Wright, p. 504.
11. Rotch, p. 47-48.
12. Wright, p. 504.
13. "Dedication of the New Town Hall" op cit.
14. Wright, p. 505.
15. Milford Cabinet. Feb. 17, 1988.
16. Wright. p. 505-6.
17. Wright. p. 506.
18. "Masonic Dedication" op cit.
19. Wright, p. 506.

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

 nationally statewide locallyApplicable National Register Criteria A B C DCriteria Considerations (Exceptions) A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Period of Significance

1869 - 1892

Significant Dates

1869-70

1891-92

Cultural Affiliation

Significant Person

Architect/Builder

Bryant & Rogers (1869-70)

Steck, T. W. (1891-92)

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

The Milford Town Hall is significant as one of the few known New Hampshire examples of the work of prominent 19th century Boston architect, Gridley J.F. Bryant. Constructed in 1869-70 the structure displays a combination of Italiante and Second Empire style detailing unique among Town Halls in the region. Exterior alterations to the building have been limited and allow the structure to retain much of its original integrity.

As has been mentioned, the design for the Milford Town Hall is credited to the Boston firm of Bryant and Rogers. Gridley J.F. Bryant (1816-1899) in particular had established a solid reputation before designing the Milford Town House and by the time of its construction was one of New England's, if not the country's, leading architects. Little is known of his partner, Louis P. Rogers. According to Withey's Biographical Dictionary of American Architects, during the mid-nineteenth century Bryant carried on what was probably the largest and most lucrative practice in Boston, designing numerous works throughout New England. He is probably best known for his design for Boston City Hall (1861-5), an important early monumental use of the French Second Empire Style. Other works include an addition to the Massachusetts State House, the Registry of Deeds Building on Tremont Street (said to have been the first fireproof building in the city), Horticultural Hall, City Hospital, Charles Street Jail in Boston and City Halls in Lynn and Gloucester, Massachusetts. [1]

Because of their similarity in function to the Milford Town Hall, the brick City Halls in Lynn and Gloucester are especially interesting and worthy of discussion. Before its demolition in the 1940s, the Lynn City

 See continuation sheet

9. Major Bibliographical References

- Farmer's Cabinet, Amherst, NH May 5, 1870; Milford, NH, March 12, 1891; April 14, 1892; June 30, 1892.
- Ramsdell, George A. The History of Milford. Concord, NH: Rumford Press, 1901.
- Rotch, A.B. Pictures of Old Milford, NH with Descriptions and Stories. Milford, NH: Cabinet Press, 1912.
- Tolles, Bryant. New Hampshire Architecture: An Illustrated Guide. Hanover, NH: University Press, 1979.
- Withey, Henry F. and Elsie Rathburn Withey. Biographical Dictionary of American Architects (Deceased). Los Angeles: Hennessey & Ingalls, Inc., 1970.
- Wright, Winifred A. The Granite Town: Milford, NH 1901-1978. Canaan, NH: Phoenix Publishing Co., 1979.

See continuation sheet

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository:

Wadleigh Memorial Library
Milford, NH

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property Less than one acre

UTM References

A 1 9 2 8 3 4 6 0 4 7 4 5 7 6 0
Zone Easting Northing

C

B
Zone Easting Northing

D

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The nominated property occupies Lot 178 on Map 16 in the local tax assessor's records with frontage of 156 feet along Nashua Street and Middle Street and a depth of 76 feet along South Street and Putnam Street. Boundaries of the nominated property are highlighted in yellow on the attached sketch map.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes the entire downtown lot that has historically been associated with the property.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Lisa Mausolf / Historic Preservation Specialist
organization Nashua Regional Planning Commission date March 1988
street & number 115 Main Street, P.O. Box 847 telephone (603) 883-0366
city or town Nashua state New Hampshire zip code 03061

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Hall was quite similar in appearance to the Gloucester City Hall, which is still extant today and listed on the National Register. Nearly contemporary with the Milford Town Hall, the Gloucester City Hall was dedicated in 1871. Described as a combination of "French Second Empire and Italian Renaissance"[2], the building consists of two stories and basement and is capped by a hip roof. It displays a rectangular, axial plan, corner pavilions, bracketed cornice, quoins and arched window details. The building's most striking feature is the four stage square brick and wood tower which projects from the center front of the building, rising more than twice the height of the main building. It is capped by a high peaked copper roof and is adorned by a combination of round arches, triangular pediments, pilasters, balustrades and a clock. The tower even displays the same scroll brackets seen decorating the Milford dormers and clock tower. Like the Old Boston City Hall, the building illustrates well the elaborations Bryant was capable of as an architect when given a generous budget to expend.

The Milford Town Hall is the third (known) building in New Hampshire with which Bryant was associated. In 1858-9 Bryant designed the Cheshire County Courthouse in Keene.[3] The two buildings are quite similar in terms of their massing; each is two stories with basement and capped by a hip roof with tower. Both exhibit a main entrance on one of their narrow elevations, accessed by a stone staircase. Like the Keene structure, the Milford building displays Italianate features such as wooden cornice brackets, round-arch windows, recessed wall panels and belt courses. Variations include the location and elaboration of the tower and the various dormers, pediments and roof masses which protrude from the Milford structure's roof. Bryant's second New Hampshire commission relates to the State House in Concord which underwent extensive alterations in 1866 based on Bryant's designs.[4] These alterations, incorporating elements of the French Second Empire style, included a mansard roof, portico, quoining, second story arched windows, cupola and gilded dome patterned after the Hotel des Invalides in Paris. Less ornate elements of this mode are similarly seen in the Milford building.

Among the region's town halls, Milford's is unique in terms of its decade of construction and stylistic details. Statewide it is one of a select grouping of public buildings blending French Second Empire and Italianate detailing, including the aforementioned Cheshire County Courthouse and the Exeter Town Hall (listed on the National Register). The Exeter Town Hall is also quite similar to the Milford Town Hall in mass and proportion and displays arched window openings, pediment dormers and a

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large octagonal cupola. Constructed in 1855, the building predates Milford's Town Hall by nearly 15 years. It is interesting to note that the Exeter Town Hall was designed by Boston architect Arthur Gilman (1821-1882) who collaborated for a time with Bryant. [5]

Ground was broken for the Town House on May 6, 1869 and the cornerstone was laid with Masonic ceremonies on July 3 of the same year. The building committee consisted of William Ramsdell, C.S. Averill and R.R. Howison. The structure was designed by the Boston firm of Bryant and Rogers and built by Albert Currier of Newburyport, Massachusetts at a cost of approximately \$55,000. I.H. Carlton of Milford executed the marble work for \$336. The building was dedicated on April 27, 1870. [6]

At town meeting in 1891 \$15,000 was appropriated for the building of the Library Annex on the east side of the Milford Town House. A committee consisting of John McLane, Frank W. Richardson, and Ezra C. Towne was established to take charge of the work. The library building was designed by T.W. Steck of unknown origin. Jere Driscoll of Wilton was the builder. Frescoing (now gone) was the work of John Gannon of Manchester. [7] The Masonic Hall was formally dedicated in April 1892 and the library was dedicated on June 28, 1892.

The Library Annex freely combines qualities of various late 19th and early 20th century styles including the Romanesque Revival and Sullivan-esque modes. This three story flat-roofed building remotely evokes a sense of the Sullivan-esque style skyscrapers of the era and is regimented into three distinct zones - ground stony, intermediate floors and roof. Molded brick and terracotta, increasingly popular during this period, embellish the building. The windows on the upper two floors of the facade are arranged in vertical bands ordered by two story arches. Belt courses, rustication and recessed panel spandrels further articulate the structure. The combination of these mid 19th century elements in a three story flat roofed building form to serve a library use is without parallel in the region.

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FOOTNOTES

1. Henry F. and Elsie Rathburn Withey, Biographical Dictionary of American Architects (Deceased). Los Angeles: Hennessey & Ingalls, Inc., 1970.

2. Massachusetts Historical Commission, "Gloucester City Hall - National Register Nomination", n.d.

3. Bryant Tolles, New Hampshire Architecture: An Illustrated Guide Hanover, NH: University Press, 1979, p. 140.

4. Lisa Mausolf, "Concord Civic District - National Register Nomination", August 1983.

5. Tolles, p. 39.

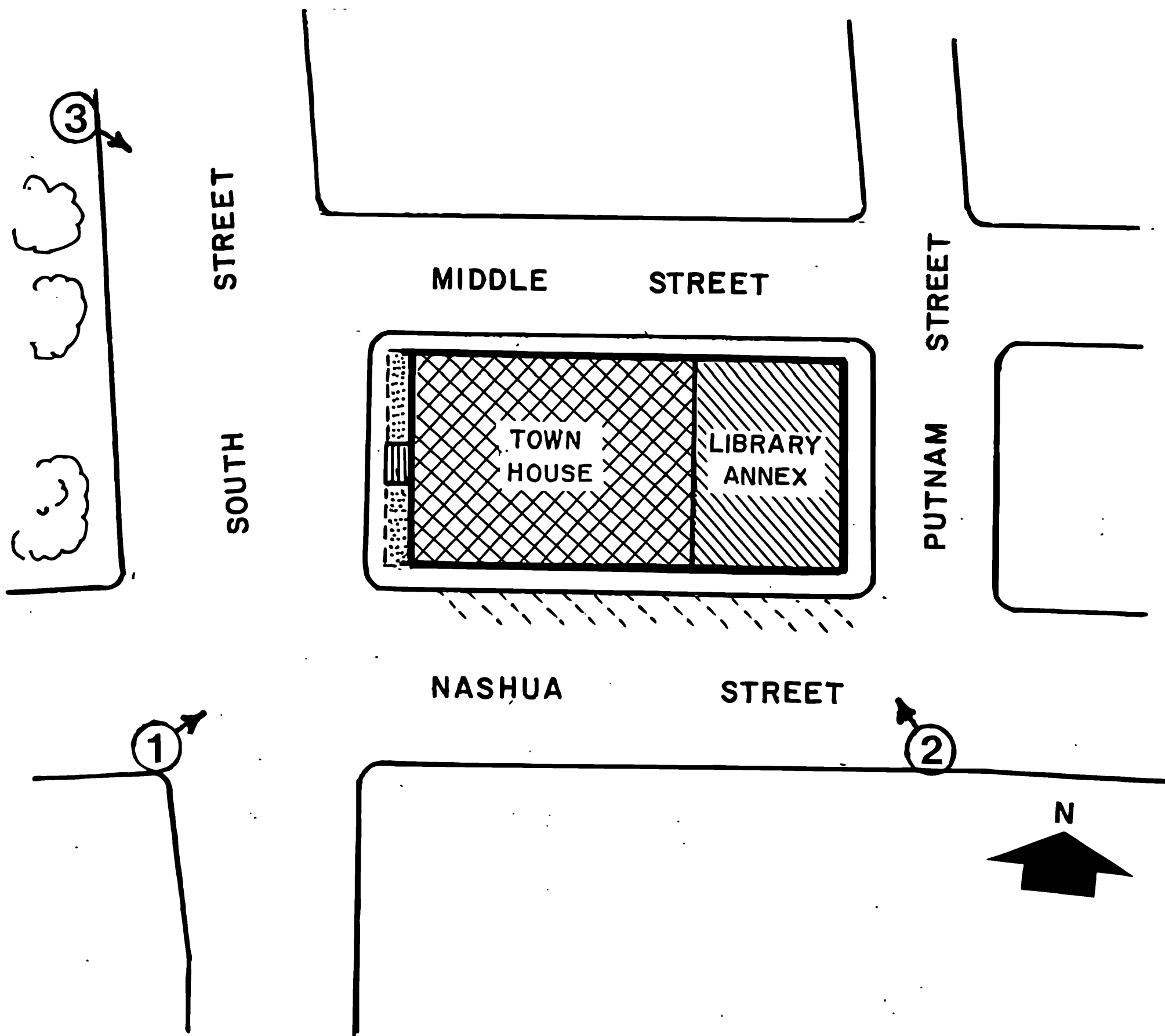
6. "Dedication of the New Town Hall, at Milford", Farmer's Cabinet (Amherst), 5 May 1870.

7. "Masonic Dedication: Benevolent Lodge, A.F. and A.M. and King Solomon Chapter, Dedicate Their Hall", Farmer's Cabinet (Milford), 14 April 1892.

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MILFORD TOWN HALL
MILFORD, N.H.

Approx. Scale: 1" = 50'

NOTE: Circled numbers indicate location from which accompanying photographs were taken.

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Section number _____ Page _____ Accompanying Documentation

PROPERTY OWNER LISTING

Town of Milford
Town Hall
Nashua Street
Milford, New Hampshire 03055