

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For HCRS use only

received SEP 2 1980

date entered 2 5 1981

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

1. Name

historic

Samuel Tenney House

and/or common

2. Location

street & number

65 High Street

___ not for publication

city, town

Exeter

___ vicinity of

congressional district

First

state

New Hampshire

code

0330

county

Rockingham

code

015

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

Bonnie D. Griswold

street & number

65 High Street

city, town

Exeter

___ vicinity of

state

New Hampshire

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc.

Rockingham County Courthouse

street & number

Hampton-Exeter Road

city, town

Exeter

state

New Hampshire

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

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one	
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> original site	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> moved	date <u>1893</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed			

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Samuel Tenney house is a framed structure of two full stories with a partial third story, treated as a gable-roofed clerestory, rising above the central portion of the building. Two chimneys set against the end walls of the house provide fireplaces in the four main rooms; the third story was unheated. Extending behind the main block of the house is a two-story gable-roofed wing.

The front section of the house is the original portion. Measuring 22 by 48 feet, it is supported on a stone foundation with split granite blocks above grade. The facade has five-bay fenestration on the first and second stories, while the third story, which measures 22 by 30, is three bays wide.

The central doorway, which projects boldly from an otherwise flat facade, is framed by fluted Doric pilasters and a full Doric triangular pediment with carefully-detailed triglyphs and mutules. The typanum of this pediment is decorated with applied wooden tracery adapted from Plate XIV of William Pain's The Practial Builder (London, 1774; Boston, 1792), while an incised guilloche which decorates the soffit of the doorway architrave derives from other plates in the same book.

The first-story windows of the main house are embellished with double architraves having slightly projecting "ears" at the top; above the architraves are pulvinated friezes of an ogee profile and fully-developed cornices with highly complex crown and bed mouldings. The second-story windows have no friezes or cornices, but the centers of their horizontal architraves are decorated with wooden three part keystones. The corners of the main house and the clerestory have wide corner boards treated as attenuated Tuscan pilasters. Much of this detailing is similar to features of the First Parish meeting house in Exeter (1799) and the second Phillips Exeter Academy (1794; burned 1870), both of which were designed and constructed by the same builder-architects who erected the Tenney house.

The third story of the Tenney house, which rises above the central three bays of the original portion of the structure, is capped with a gable roof which is treated as a closed pediment on the facade. In the tympanum of this pediment is an arched window that lights a low attic. Flanking the central clerestory are two low-pitched hip roofs that cover the outer bays of the second story; these are surrounded at their eaves with delicate lattice balustrades having small urn finials at their corners. Similar urn finials crown the peak of the clerestory roof and the lattice balustrade on the sides of the front porch.

The front section of the house was built about 1800, and is shown on the 1802 map of Exeter drawn by Phineas Merrill. The house was originally located on Front Street, next to and just north of the First Parish meeting house. In 1893 the Rockingham County Commissioners built a county court house on that site, and the front section of the house was moved to its present location at 65 High Street. The present back wing of the house was added at that time.

The back wing measures 30 by 22 feet, with an attic under a gable roof. On all three sides of the wing is a first floor porch, the back portion of which is enclosed with windows. There is also a second floor enclosed sleeping porch at the rear of the wing, and a full basement beneath the entire house. The ground slants to the south, so that the rear basement entrance is at ground level.

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 type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/ humanitarian
<input checked="" 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 1798c., 1893 **Builder/Architect** Ebenezer Clifford & Bradbury Johnson

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

This building, built about 1798, is not only a fine architectural example of the period, but also was built by, and was the home of Judge and Mrs. Samuel Tenney, both of whom were significant contributors to our heritage.

Architecture: The master carpenter for the Tenney House was Ebenezer Clifford working with Bradbury Johnson. Clifford was an Exeter resident and not only was a builder but also an experimenter, having built and used a diving bell in the Exeter river. He lived at that time in the Gilman Garrison House now owned by the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities. Clifford and Johnson also built the First Parish Church of Exeter, the Second Phillips Exeter Academy main building, and the Atkinson Academy building. Their work as builders and architects was the subject of a Master's thesis for the University of Delaware by James Garvin, who is now Curator for the New Hampshire Historical Society. The thesis has frequent referrals to the Tenney House.

The over all architectural design of the house is unique, with its three story central portion. So far as this writer knows, there is no other example of this precise style now extant in New England. Even so, there is a direct similarity between the Tenney House and the First Parish Church in the treatment of the second floor window trim of each building.

Of special interest is the front doorway. Here the detail is carefully designed, according to the Doric order, with fluted columns, delicate capital carvings, triglyphs, mutules under the cornice, and a second set of mutules under the pediment. Two other rather unusual features are the guilloche pattern just over the door and the compass curve pattern on the tympanum of the pediment.

The lattice work balustrade at the roof level above the second floor of both sides of the house, with urns at the corner posts, adds greatly to the over all design.

The Tenney House is also significant in revealing the influence of English architectural guidebooks on New England architecture during the early Federal period. The design of the facade probably derives from one or more plates in Volume I of James's Plans, Elevations, and Section, of Noblemen and Gentlemens Houses (London 1767), a copy of which was owned by Ebenezer Clifford. Much of the detailing of the house, on the other hand, was inspired by William Paine's The Practical Builder (London 1774; Boston, 1792), which was probably the volume advertized as "Paine's Architecture" in the catalogue of Lamson and Odiorne's Exeter bookstore in 1794. The use of these two volumes in the design of a house shows how local builder-architects creatively combined suggestions from abroad and adapted them to the scale, requirements, and aesthetics of the small New England village.

Historic: The original builders and owners of the house were Judge and Mrs. Samuel Tenney. Mrs. Tenney, daughter of Samuel Gilman, used her first name Tabitha for her writings, and wrote two or more published works, the chief of which was Female Quizotism which sold out several editions. Judge Samuel Tenney, a graduate of Harvard in 1772, was trained as a doctor, and served as a physician at the Battle of Bunker Hill, and throughout the Revolutionary War as a surgeon. He later served the town of Exeter as Selectman and Moderator, and was appointed Judge of Probate for Rockingham County in 1793. From 1800 to 1807 he served as Representative from New Hampshire in the United State Congress. Judge Tenney also wrote articles for the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, The Massachusetts Historical Society and the Massachusetts Agricultural Society. He died in 1816.

9. Major Bibliographical References

C.H. Bell, History of the Town of Exeter, 1888, Pages 99, 101, 126, 382.
 William G. Perry, M.D., Exeter in 1830, 1913, Illustration in front and page 32
 American Guide Series, New Hampshire, 1938, page 116
 M.J. Tenney, The Tenney Family, 1891 page 57

-continued-

10. Geographical Data

~~ACREAGE NOT VERIFIED~~

~~UTM NOT VERIFIED~~

Acreeage of nominated property Less than 1/2 acre

Quadrangle name Exeter NH - Mass.

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UMT References

A

1	9	3	4	1	8	3	0	4	7	6	0	2	4	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 Block 23; Parcel 008: Town of Exeter Tax Records

The property nominated is a "L" shaped residential house lot located on the corner of High and Gardener Streets with the address of 65 High Street. The lot on High St. is

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

state code county code

state code county code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title James V. Griswold

organization date February 12, 1980

street & number 65 High Street telephone 603-772-3289

city or town Exeter state New Hampshire 03833

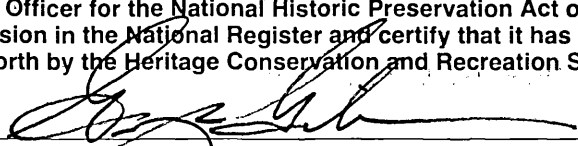
12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

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 Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature



Commissioner, Dept of Resources & Economic Development

title NH State Historic Preservation Officer date August 5, 1980

For HCERS use only

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

 date 11/25/80

Keeper of the National Register

Attest: date

Chief of Registration

FHR-8-300A
(11/78)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

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CONTINUATION SHEET SIGNIFICANCE ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 2

The house was later occupied by the Hon. Tristram Shaw who also was a Representative to the United States Congress from 1839 to 1843.

This historical information is from the History of Exeter by C.H.Bell, published 1888, and Exeter in 1830 by William Gilman Perry, M.D., originally published in 1913.

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MAJOR
BIBLIOGRAPHICAL

CONTINUATION SHEET REFERENCES ITEM NUMBER 9 PAGE 2

Bryant F. Tolles, Jr., New Hampshire Architecture, 1979, page 53
James Paine, Plans, Elevations, and Sections of Nobleman and Gentlemens Houses,
London, 1767
William Pain, The Practical Builder, (London 1774, Boston, 1792)

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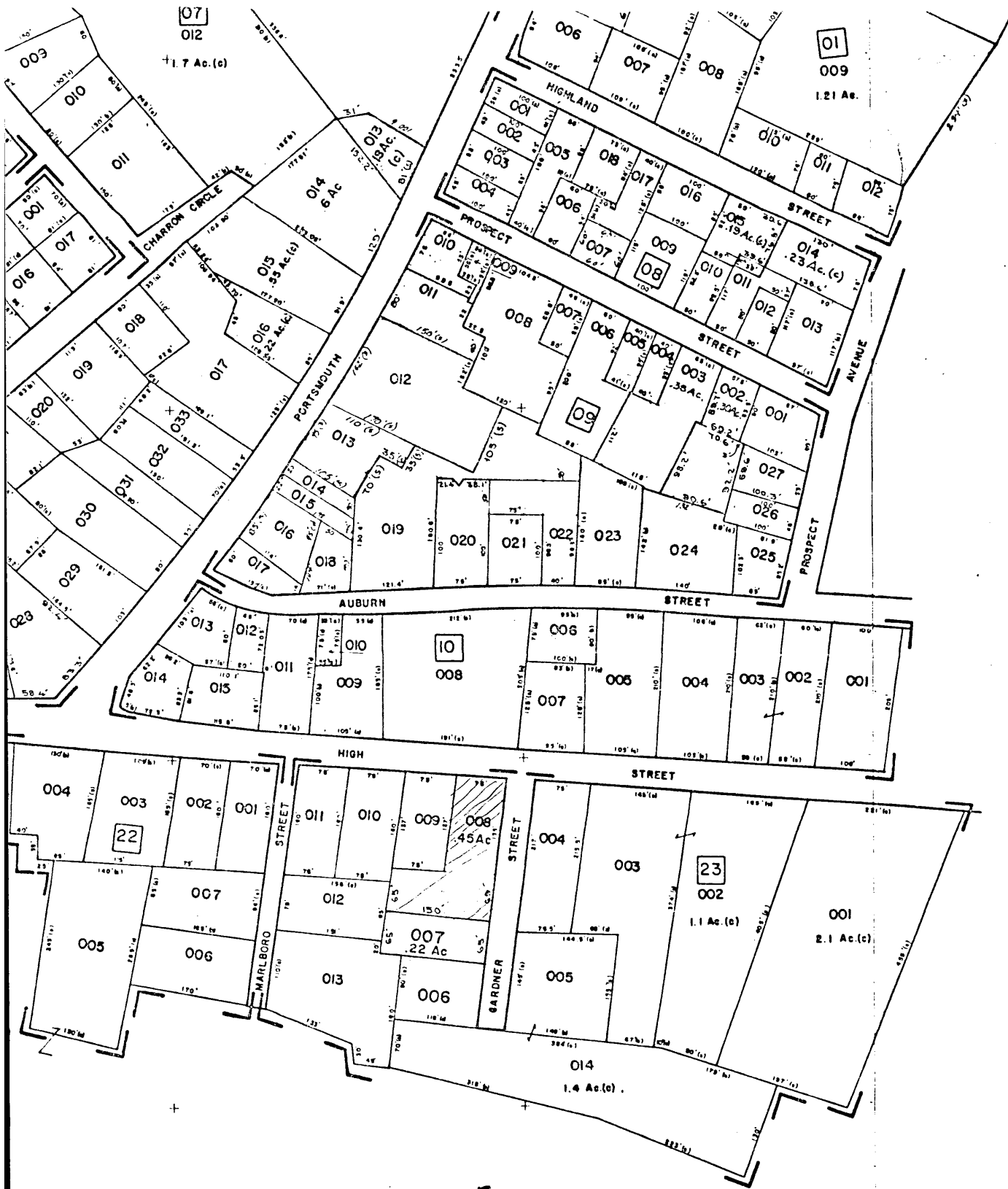
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GEOGRAPHICAL
CONTINUATION SHEET DATA ITEM NUMBER 10 PAGE 2

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION:

75 feet on High and 137 feet on Gardener. The lot facing Gardener is 69 feet on Gardener and 145 feet deep. Both lots approx. rectangular.



SEE MAP
09 - 01
1" = 200'

TOWN OF EXETER, N.H.
TAX MAP.
BLOCK 23
PARCEL 008



DR. SAMUEL TENNEY HOUSE
65 HIGH STREET
EXETER, NEW HAMPSHIRE
03833

SEP 2 1980