

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

For HCRS use only

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

received MAR 12 1982

date entered

APR 19 1982

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

1. Name * First Congregational Church of Boscawen

historic CONGREGATIONAL MEETING HOUSE

and/or common FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF BOSCAWEN (preferred)

2. Location

street & number King Street
Junction of U.S. Route #3 and U.S. Route #4 not for publication

city, town Boscawen vicinity of congressional district Second

state New Hampshire code 33 county Merrimack code 013

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name First Congregational Church of Boscawen

street & number PO Box

city, town Boscawen vicinity of state New Hampshire 03303

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Merrimack County Registry of Deeds
Merrimack County Courthouse

street & number PO Box #248, North Main Street

city, town Concord state New Hampshire 03301

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 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 Boscawen Congregational Church is a rectangular framed structure with a gable roof and a low three-stage steeple. The building measures 44 by 70 feet and stands on a high brick foundation which provides a basement that serves as the Boscawen town hall. This hall is lighted by windows on the east and west sides, and is entered by two doors on the east elevation. The brick basement extends beyond the rear (north) wall of the frame building, and this extension is covered by a low-pitched wooden roof covered by asphalt shingles.

The main wooden structure is two stories high on the front (south), and is treated as a single story on the side (east and west) elevations. Though built in 1799, the structure was thoroughly remodelled in 1839 when it was turned 90° from its original orientation; today it reflects the Greek Revival style on both the interior and exterior. The entrance is on the south gable end of the structure, and is reached by a broad flight of seven steps of hammered granite. The doorway, flanked by two windows which light a vestibule, consists of a flat entablature supported by two Doric pilasters. The architrave and frieze of the entablature are unornamented, while the cornice is capped by a Grecian ovolo moulding. The doorway enframingment encloses a pair of modern six-panel doors.

On the second floor of this elevation are three windows which light a small chapel that served as a gallery or choir loft until it was enclosed as a vestry in 1896. These windows, like those on the first floor, have 12/12 sashes, flat side casings ornamented with applied fillets, and flat top casings with small crown mouldings.

The front elevation of the building is treated as a temple facade, having Doric pilasters, with recessed panels in their shafts and moulded capitals, at each corner of the building. These pilasters support an entablature which embraces three sides of the building and consists of a plain shallow architrave, an unornamented frieze, and a moulded cornice. The entablature extends across the gable of the facade, creating a triangular pediment. Both the tympanum of the pediment and the walls of the building are clapboarded.

The side (east and west) elevations of the building each have three widely-spaced windows bearing 16/16 sashes. Their casings match those on the facade. The rear of the structure has a shallow shed-roofed extension behind the dais and reading desk, and a 12/12 window in the gable to light the attic.

Centered on the ridge at the front of the building is a three-stage steeple in the Greek Revival style. The lowest stage is square and fully enclosed except for a small 6/6 window in its north (rear) face. Each of the other faces of this stage have a projecting rectangular panel in the center and four applied vertical fillets on each side of the panel. This stage is capped by a full moulded cornice above which rise two steps, suggesting a stereobate, which support the belfry stage above.

The belfry has an opening on each face, flanked by vertical casings with recessed central panels. Each corner of the belfry is ornamented by a Doric pilaster with a recessed panel in its shaft. These support a broad, plain architrave, above which is a cornice having curved wooden corbel ornaments as bed mouldings and an ogee crown moulding. Above the belfry rises an octagonal spire with a stepped base, a finial, and a weathervane in the form of an arrow.

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CONTINUATION SHEET #1-DESCRIPTION ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 2

The building has three chimneys, one near each of the front corners and the third rising against the outside of the rear (north) wall of the structure.

The interior of the church is finished predominantly in the Greek Revival style; its present woodwork dates from a major remodelling in 1839. Both the main auditorium and the front vestibule are wainscoted with painted plaster walls above. The auditorium has slip pews divided by two aisles that extend forward from the two vestibule doors. Door and window casings are flat, and some have square corner blocks with round bosses at their centers. Some of the woodwork at the north end of the auditorium, in the area surrounding the dais, is in the colonial revival style and dates from 1929 when the present organ was installed in the building. The desk on the dais is veneered in mahogany and includes two supporting Doric columns; it is a good example of the Empire style.

Original appearance: Upon its completion in 1799, the Boscawen building was a typical New England meeting house of two stories. The pulpit stood against one of the long elevations, with the principal entrance opposite. The pews were of the box type and were privately owned by the subscribers who had erected the structure at their own expense. The building stood broadside to the main road (present U.S. Route #4), much as it does today, but its entrance then faced west. On the north gable end was a two-story enclosed porch surmounted by belfry and spire, while on the south was a similar porch, without a spire but with a second flight of stairs leading up to the galleries.¹

The frame of the present structure survives almost intact from 1799. In the attic, particularly, the roof trusses remain essentially unchanged. They are king-post trusses in which diagonal struts extend from the king-posts down to the chords below and up to the rafters. Additional diagonal struts extend between the rafters and the chords below. The rafters are doubled and are connected to one another by short struts; the upper rafters are notched to receive the purlins. Roof boards run from ridge to eaves.

In 1839 the meeting house assumed the form of a church building. The entrance was now placed in a narrow end, beneath a tower built on the roof. At this time the entire structure was turned 90° so that the narrow front would face the road (present U.S. Route #4). This major alteration saw the transformation of the interior essentially to its present appearance.

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CONTINUATION SHEET #2-DESCRIPTION ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 3

Following this extensive change, the proprietors of the building voted to protect the structure by requiring that town meetings, traditionally held in the meeting house, be convened elsewhere. This request was followed until 1847, when the town petitioned to be allowed to raise the structure four feet and construct a town hall in the deepened basement. This was agreed to, and the present flight of granite steps was provided to give access to the raised doorway. In 1860, a group of citizens finished the basement in a more elegant style and gave it the name of "Merrimack Hall."

The building assumed a late Victorian appearance in 1896 when the choir loft above the vestibule was enclosed for use as a vestry. The 1839 window sashes of the building were replaced with stained glass windows and a similar window, which still remains, was placed between the vestry and the main auditorium. Doors were removed from the ends of the pews and stored in the attic, the auditorium was carpeted and painted with graining on the woodwork and frescoes on the plaster.² The exterior stained glass windows, in their turn, were so damaged by a hurricane in 1938 that they were removed, stored, and replaced by clear glass windows similar to those installed a century earlier.

In 1940, because rerouting of U.S. Route #3 (Daniel Webster Highway) to the east of the building threatened to undermine the back of the structure, the church was again turned 90° to face the new intersection of Routes 3 and 4. This reorientation necessitated the reconstruction of the Boscawen town hall beneath the framed structure.

¹ Charles Carleton Coffin, The History of Boscawen and Webster, From 1733 to 1878. (Concord, N.H.: Printed by the Republican Press Association, 1878), pp. 157-158.

² Agnes Pillsbury, The Story of Boscawen Church. (Concord, N.H.: Printed by W.B. Ranney Company, n.d.), pp. 59-60.

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 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 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 1799, 1805, 1807 **Builder/Architect** See below

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

SIGNIFICANCE, architecture:

The Boscawen Congregational Church is significant as an eighteenth-century structure which, through a series of reorientations and remodellings, has retained its usefulness for religious and civic purposes down to the present day. Although remodelling of 1839 removed all evident traces of the structure's early appearance as a meeting house, these changes were carried out with sufficient care to give the structure renewed importance as a good example of Greek Revival religious architecture. Today the building is one of a number of fine Greek Revival churches in the upper Merrimack Valley of New Hampshire, but is unusual among this group in continuing the old meeting house tradition of serving the needs of both a religious society and a town. The remarkable tenacity of the people of Boscawen in continuing to utilize this structure is evinced in the care through which the building has been preserved even under the necessity to turn it twice and to build and then rebuild the town hall beneath the building. Today the structure is one of only a few New Hampshire structures which serve both religious and civic purposes in the traditional manner of the eighteenth-century meeting house.

9. Major Bibliographical References

- Coffin, C. The History of Boscawen and Webster, New Hampshire. Concord: Republican Press Assoc., 1878.
- Colby, V.L. Memorabilia for Posterity the Rev. Dr. Samuel Wood. Concord: Villiage Press, 1972.
- continued

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property approx. 1

Quadrangle name Penacook, N.H. Quadrangle scale 1:62500

UMT References

A	<u>1</u> <u>9</u>	<u>2</u> <u>8</u> <u>6</u> <u>8</u> <u>1</u> <u>5</u>	<u>4</u> <u>7</u> <u>9</u> <u>9</u> <u>7</u> <u>0</u> <u>0</u>	B	<u> </u> <u> </u>	<u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u>	<u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
C	<u> </u> <u> </u>	<u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u>	<u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u>	D	<u> </u> <u> </u>	<u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u>	<u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u>
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Verbal boundary description and justification: The property is bounded on the north by land of the Old Ambrose Tavern, on the west by King Street (US Rte. #4), on the east by D.W. Highway (US Rte. #3) and on the south by the property of Roger Sanborn. Tax map #81D, lot #21.

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

state <u>N/A</u>	code	county	code
state	code	county	code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Ronald W. Reed, Member Board of Trustees,
First Congregational Church

organization of Boscawen date April 21, 1981

street & number RFD #5, Box #12 (Penacook) telephone (603) 796-2183

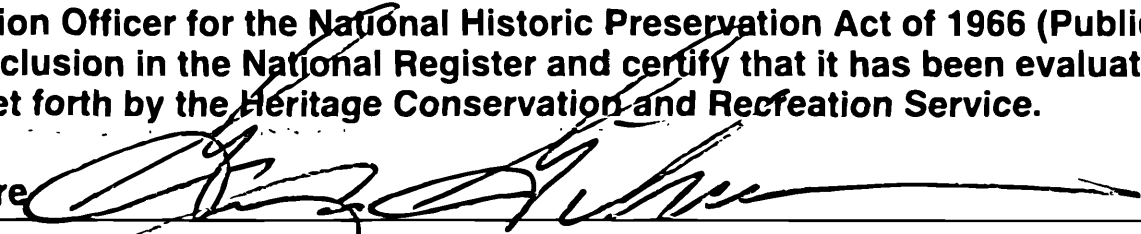
city or town Boscawen state New Hampshire

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 February 23, 1982

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

William H. Brannan

date 4.19.82

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

FHR-8-300A
(11/78)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
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MAJOR
BIBLIOGRAPHICAL

CONTINUATION SHEET #3-REFERENCES ITEM NUMBER 9 PAGE 2

Pillsbury, A. The Story of the Boscawen Church. Concord: W.B. Ranney Co., 1940

Federals Writer's Project, New Hampshire. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1938

Various Deeds and Records on file at the Registry of Deeds in Concord, N.H., and
with the Church in Boscawen, N.H.

FHR-8-300A
(11/78)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

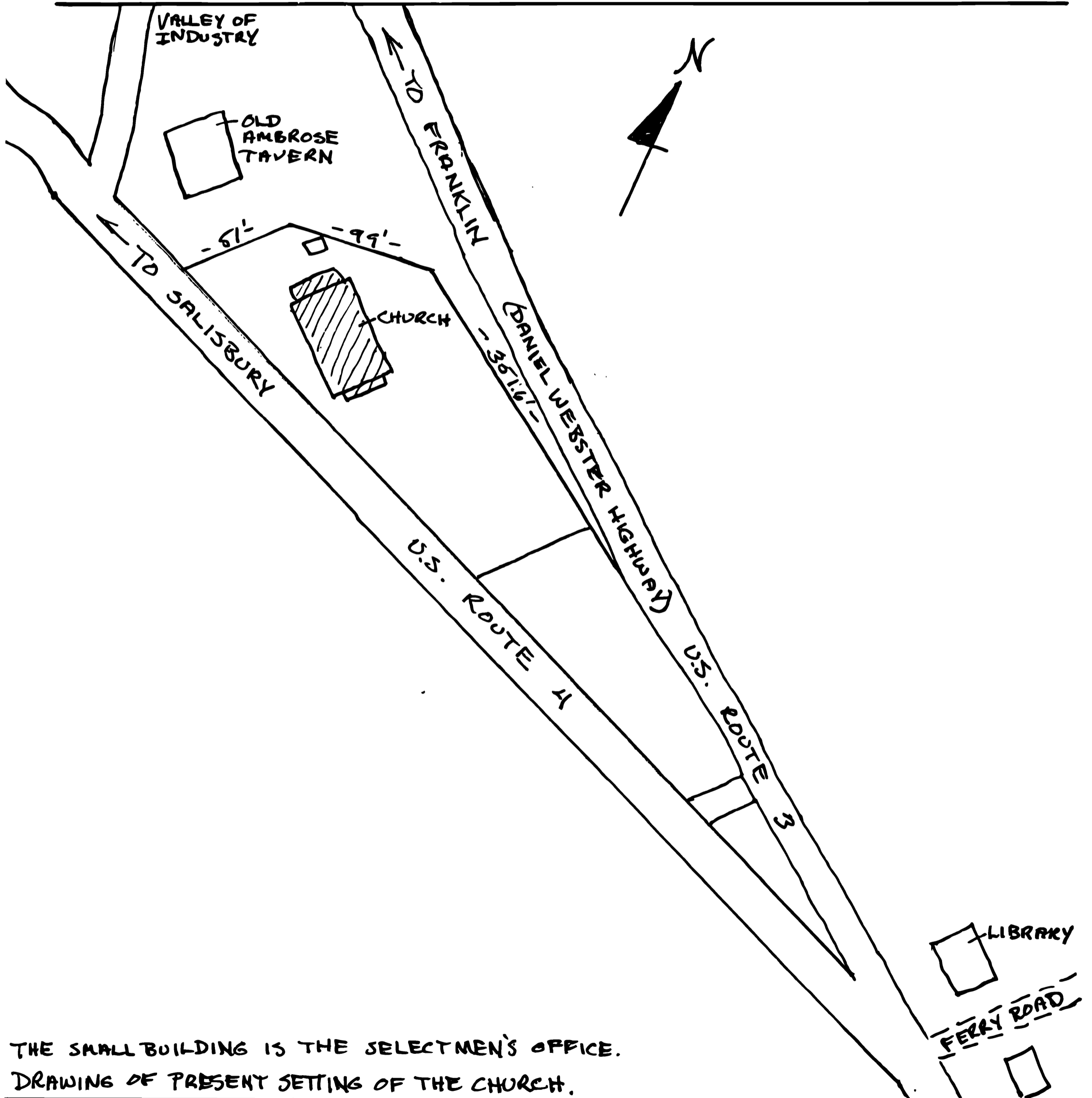
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CONTINUATION SHEET #4-SKETCH MAP

ITEM NUMBER

PAGE 1



THE SMALL BUILDING IS THE SELECTMEN'S OFFICE.
DRAWING OF PRESENT SETTING OF THE CHURCH.