

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

FOR NPS USE ONLY
RECEIVED FEB 19 1980
DATE ENTERED DEC 8 1980

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

1 NAME

HISTORIC

New Durham Meetinghouse and Pound

AND/OR COMMON

The Old Meetinghouse and Pound

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

Old Bay Road

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

New Durham

VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

First

STATE

CODE

COUNTY

CODE

New Hampshire

33

Strafford

017

3 CLASSIFICATION

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

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Town of New Durham

STREET & NUMBER

Town Hall

CITY, TOWN

New Durham

VICINITY OF

STATE

New Hampshire

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Strafford County Registry of Deeds

STREET & NUMBER

Strafford County Justice and Administration Building, County Farm Road

CITY, TOWN

STATE

Dover

New Hampshire

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

None

DATE

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input 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 New Durham Meetinghouse is situated on a granite ledge in a densely wooded area of New Durham Corner, the site of the original town center. It was built on high ground in order to make it easier for the townspeople to protect themselves and their horses from marauding Indians "who had been known to attack gatherings of voters or worshippers, or to steal their horses while the hymns were being sung."¹

The building is one story high, 35' x 42', three bays by four bays. The rear wall (west elevation) contains a large sliding barn door, probably added c. 1908. The walls are covered with unpainted, weathered clapboard. The door and window treatment is extremely simple; the windows are boarded up. Little of the interior has survived intact, though most of the original pulpit, the built-in bench at the front of the hall, and some of the wainscoting remain. The building is in a deteriorated condition and must be repaired soon if it is to be saved.

The original plans called for the Meetinghouse to be "two stories high, the posts to be 20 feet long with proportionable timber fit for such a building," and it was to have 25 windows.² It was built on a random rubble stone foundation (and granite ledge), of post and beam construction; the walls were plastered inside and clapboarded outside. It was not until 1791 that pew privileges were sold and built by the owners. In 1792, a pulpit was built and a porch added.

The entrance is in the east facade, and the pulpit opposite on the west end. This is common to most meetinghouse construction and contrary to English church practice. The building remained in this format until 1838 when it was reduced to one story and the porch was removed. An external chimney and a wood stove were added around this time.

The cattle pound, built in 1809, is located about 100 yards southwest of the Meetinghouse. It is approximately thirty feet square, built of heavy random fieldstone rubble; some of the stones are huge. The entrance is an opening approximately six feet wide on the east side. The walls are still standing so that the enclosure is intact, though there has been minor deterioration resulting in some displaced stone rubble. Rotting wood in one corner suggests that at one time there was a rough shelter of some kind. The present structure still conforms remarkably to

1. New Durham Town Records, 1765-1979
2. Ibid

(See Continuation Sheet #7-1)

FHR-8-300A
(11/78)

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HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

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the original stipulations for "the walls to be six feet thick at the bottom and two feet thick at the top, thirty foot square." 3

New Durham's first burial ground is also located on the Meetinghouse lot, somewhere west of the Meetinghouse and north of the Pound. Apparently the graves were not marked with headstones, as there are none extant. Also located to the rear of the Meetinghouse at one time, was an old gun house which contained a cannon for artillery training. The cannon was removed and used during the Revolutionary War and the gun house subsequently disappeared.

The surrounding area is now completely overgrown. The property has not been maintained in recent years, and the natural environment is in a state of neglect.

The site may have some archaeological potential.

3 New Durham Town Records, 1765-1979

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 checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> /GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)		
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION				

SPECIFIC DATES

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The New Durham Meetinghouse was built in 1770 on a rocky ledge at what has been traditionally known as New Durham Corner. New Durham Corner was the center of the town and a regular way station for teamsters going north and south. At that time, the town center consisted of two hotels, two stores and the meetinghouse. With the arrival of the railroad around 1850, the center shifted to "The Plains," about two miles northeast on Old Bay Road).

New Durham's original contract stipulated that the town must build a meetinghouse within six years of the granting of the Charter (granted in 1762), and it was not until 1768 that it was voted to start its construction. The settlers had to fulfill other conditions of the land grant as well, including the clearing of a certain number of acres, building their own houses, and making roads, so it is not surprising that they were content to hold their first meetings at private houses at the Corner. Although the basic structure of the Meetinghouse was finished in 1770, it was not until 1772 that the first meeting was held there. Even then, perhaps because there were no heating facilities or proper pews, the town meetings were usually adjourned to a local tavern.

The Meetinghouse was used extensively for religious as well as secular purposes until 1819 when the town's first church was built on the Ridge. It was the scene of many revivalist meetings and the first place in which Benjamin Randall, founder of the Free Will Baptist Church, preached in New Durham. After 1819 the town used the Meetinghouse infrequently and finally in 1835, it was voted not to repair the building. At this time the townspeople were considering the expense of a new site and new town hall, but other needs took precedence and the idea was abandoned. Instead, in 1838, it was decided to cut the building down to one story and repair it, resulting in its present format of one story, three bays by four bays.

By 1908, a new town hall had been erected in "The Plains." At that time, the old town meetinghouse and lot were sold to Zanello Berry, who used it as a barn. Mr. Berry also repaired and maintained the Pound. The property was donated to the

(See Continuation Sheet #8-1).

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Jennings, Ellen Cloutman, A History of New Durham, New Hampshire. New Durham New Hampshire, 1962

Sinnott, Edmund W., Meetinghouse and Church in Early New England. New York, New York: McGraw Hill Book Company, 1963.

UTM NOT VERIFIED

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY less than 1

ACREAGE NOT VERIFIED

QUADRANGLE NAME Alton Quad

QUADRANGLE SCALE 15 Minute

UTM REFERENCES

A 19 3277210 48098510
ZONE EASTING NORTHING

B
ZONE EASTING NORTHING

C

D

E

F

G

H

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Tax Map Reference Number: Map #7, Parcel #30. A rectangular lot approximately 560 feet by 440 feet by 520 feet; bounded on the north by Old Bay Road; west by property of Gertrude Murray (7-21) and Joseph and Alvira Beaulieu (7-15) south by Herbert and

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

Stella Hume (7-16); and east by Dennis and Barbara Gerry (7-19), David and Sheryl Gray

(7-18) and Sidney White (7-17).

STATE

CODE

COUNTY

CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Gretchen Langheld, Preservation Advisor

ORGANIZATION

DATE

Strafford-Rockingham Regional Council

June 20, 1979

STREET & NUMBER

TELEPHONE

1 Water Street

(603) 778-0885

CITY OR TOWN

STATE

Exeter

New Hampshire

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

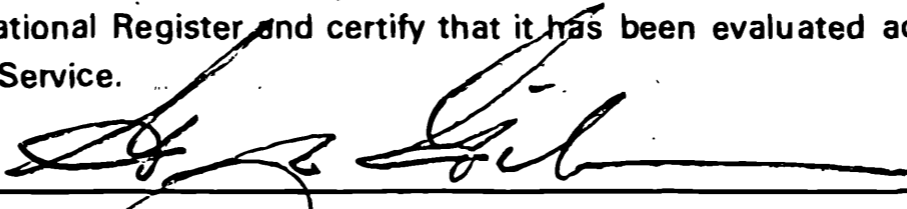
NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL X

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



TITLE Commissioner, NH Dept. of Resources & Economic Devt. DATE January 4, 1980

NH State Historic Preservation Officer

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

[Signature]
KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

12/8/80

ATTEST:

DATE

CHIEF OF REGISTRATION

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town in 1979 by his descendants. Since its acquisition by the town there has been a growing community interest in adaptive re-use of the building, but no concrete plans have been formulated.

The old Meetinghouse is an excellent example of frontier construction. Its stark simplicity is typical of early meetinghouse architecture; its very plainness speaks eloquently of the convictions of the first settlers, who were determined to root out all vestiges of idolatry and popish practice from their places of worship. It was clearly meant as a simple place for the community to meet, an edifice neither sacred nor purely secular.

The Meetinghouse stands today in an unspoiled natural setting and, in spite of its deteriorated condition, serves as an isolated reminder of New Durham's past.