

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

For NPS use only

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

received **NOV 7 1983**
date entered

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

1. Name

historic GREENFIELD MEETING HOUSE

and/or common GREENFIELD MEETING HOUSE

2. Location

street & number Forest Road n/a not for publication

city, town Greenfield n/avicinity of

state N.H. code 33 county Hillsborough code 011

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A	<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 Town of Greenfield, New Hampshire

street & number Francestown Road

city, town Greenfield n/avicinity of state New Hampshire 03047

5. Location of Legal Description

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

street & number 19 Temple Street

city, town Nashua state New Hampshire

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Hist. Survey of Greenfield, NH has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date Spring, 1981 federal state county local

depository for survey records Southwest Region Planning Commission

city, town Keene state New Hampshire

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"/> n/a moved	date <u>n/a</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed			

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Present: Situated on a grassy knoll, with numerous shade trees, overlooking the village center, the Greenfield Meeting House is a two story, rectangular structure measuring 42' x 68'. The wood-frame structure is sheathed with white clapboards and topped by a gable roof of gray slate, upon which sits a belfry tower slightly inset from the south facade. The south facade which faces the village center is characterized by two bays each containing a two tiered six panel door on the ground floor, and rectangular stained glass windows on the second. The front doors are framed in a plain trim, topped by partial entablatures, and each is parenthesized by a pair of tin lanterns suspended by iron brackets. A single 16/16 double hung window framed in plain trim and a moulded head is located in the gable itself.

The belfry tower consists of a 12' x 12' square base sheathed in white clapboards and topped with a two foot railing adorned with turned finials at each corner. A two stage octagonal belfry rises from the base to a total height of 22 feet above the ridge pole. The lower stage is again trimmed by a short railing with finials at each of the eight corners. An octagonal copper dome crowns the belfry above which rises a weathervane consisting of an arrow with wrought iron ornamentation. Other belfry details include working clocks (black with gold colored roman numerals and hands) on the south, east and west sides of the tower base, a double hung 16/16 window with entablature in the north side of the tower base, rectangular louvered covers in the openings of both octagonal belfry stages, and semicircular louvered fans over the upper stage belfry openings.

The east and west side of the building itself are essentially identical with the exception of the appendages described below. Each side consists of four bays, the southernmost of which are somewhat narrower than the other three, manifesting the later addition of the vestibule. The four rectangular, 16/16 double hung windows on each side of the ground floor are framed in plain trim and accentuated by black louvered shutters. Evidence that the original window openings were lowered by some two feet is clearly visible in the original trim over each, which has been filled in with clapboards. The four second story windows are of stained glass and rectangular in shape. A steel bulkhead giving access to the basement is located between the first two bays on the east side of the building. On the west side, an enclosed entry way measuring approximately 4' x 6' is located between the two northern most bays. This windowless appendage is sheathed in white clapboards and covered by a gable roof. A full pediment encloses the gable under which is the door itself.

The north end (rear) of the building is distinguished by a small (12' x 4') single story attached shed at ground level, which is also sheathed in white clapboards. A metal fire escape to the second story is located to the east of the shed, while a single flu exterior, brick chimney rises the full height of the building to the west of the shed. A 6 foot diameter, circular, stained glass window is located at the second story level directly in the center of the north end, while in the gable is located a 16/16 double hung window similar to the one in the south facade.

Original appearance and alterations: The original appearance of the building (1795) was different from its appearance today. When built, the structure faced east. "There were two porches, one on the eastern side and one on the west, with two doors of entrance in each. The structure was also shorter by the length of the present vestibule and no belfry or steeple relieved the outline."¹

1) Hopkins, Doris E.; Greenfield, New Hampshire, The Story of a Town 1791-1976; Milford, N.H.; Wallace Press, Inc.; 1977; pp. 22-23.

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Continuation sheet #1 - DESCRIPTION

Item number 7

Page 2

The belfry was added in 1825 when a tower was built outside the east end of the building, a typical practice at the time. There is no record of the designer or builder of the tower.

Another major change occurred in 1848 when a second floor was added at the level of the previous gallery to provide separate meeting rooms for the church (upper) and town meetings (lower). In 1867, the entire building was turned ninety degrees to face the developing village center. At the same time the building was lengthened by the addition of the vestibule, the lower portion of the tower was moved away, while the upper portion and belfry were placed on the roof of the new vestibule. The building was also raised two feet with the first floor remaining at its original level. It was at this time that the ground floor windows were lowered.

The clock, manufactured by E. Howard Co. of Boston, was installed in 1891. In 1975 the town rejected a proposal to electrify the clock, opting instead to have it repaired and continue to operate by its original works.

The memorial stained glass windows were installed by the church in the upper story in 1904-1905.

In 1946-47, a new concrete foundation was excavated and built to provide a kitchen and dining/meeting room in the basement. The rear fire escape was also added at this time to comply with fire regulations in public buildings.

The shutters on the ground floor windows, which had been removed in 1925, were restored in 1952.

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/
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates 1795, 1867 **Builder/Architect** Hugh Gregg (frame)

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Greenfield meeting house has undergone an architectural evolution which, at each stage, has typified the development of meeting house architecture in central New Hampshire. Now considered to be the oldest structure in the state which retains the traditional meeting house use as a place for both secular and religious meetings, the Greenfield structure epitomizes the architectural evolution of its own community and of the Contoocook River Valley region of New Hampshire.

Architecture: The Greenfield meeting house was raised and finished between 1795 and 1799. As was typical practice in the New Hampshire townships that were granted by a group of private landowners called the Masonian Proprietors, the meeting house was located as close to the geographical center of the town's lands as possible. This decision compelled the inhabitants to clear a lot which was in a rough and wooded condition, but placed the town's public structure at a site which would be relatively convenient to all.²

As was also typical of this section of the state, the Greenfield meeting house was a rectangular building with the main door in one of the long sides and with "porches" or enclosures containing the gallery staircases at each gable end of the building. Following common practice in meeting house construction, the inhabitants of Greenfield copied a pattern established by a similar structure in a neighboring town--in this case, the town of Temple, some nine miles distant.³ The frame of the meeting house, undoubtedly of local workmanship, was supplied for £75 by local inhabitant Hugh Gregg.⁴ The use of twin "porches" or stair enclosures, as seen in Greenfield, was "so densely concentrated ... within the Contoocook (River) zone that at the beginning of the nineteenth century it was possible to ride north from Brookline (N.H.) to Bridgewater and pass through seventeen contiguous towns and see sixteen twin-porch meetinghouses."⁵ In basic form, then, the Greenfield meeting house was typical of a dominant regional building tradition. While the town records do not reveal the identities of the joiners who finished the interior of the building, it may be assumed that these men likewise worked in a local idiom, perhaps following the distinctive style of the Dunlap family, who fashioned⁶ the pulpit of the nearby Temple meeting house of 1783, or of their circle of apprentices.

As the Greenfield meeting house was typical of its locale and era in original design, it remained typical as it began to reflect the changing fashions of the early nineteenth century. In 1825 the town voted to replace the eastern porch with a belltower crowned by the two-stage belfry and lantern still seen on the building. A bell was obtained by subscription and hung in the belfry to summon people to town meetings and religious services.⁷ The belfry is of a simple but characteristic Federal-style design which reflects the aesthetics of the early nineteenth century as fully as the earlier double porches had represented the late eighteenth century.

In keeping with the mid-nineteenth-century tendency toward smaller church auditoriums with "slip" rather than box pews and reading desks rather than pulpits, the Greenfield meeting house was remodelled again in 1848. At that time, the old gallery was removed and the auditorium was provided with a full floor at the level of the former gallery. The first

9. Major Bibliographical References

Hopkins, Doris E.; Greenfield, New Hampshire, The Story of a Town 1791-1976; Milford, N.H.; Wallace Press, Inc.; 1977.
Library of Congress No. 76-45233.

10. Geographical Data

Acreege of nominated property 1.80

Quadrangle name Peterborough, N.H.

Quadrangle scale 1:62500

UTM References

A

1	9	2	6	5	6	7	5	4	7	5	9	1	6	0
Zone			Easting				Northing							

B

Zone			Easting				Northing							

C

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D

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H

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Verbal boundary description and justification: Lot #6, Map V-2, Greenfield Property Tax Map. Lot has frontage of approximately 275 feet on Forest Road and a depth of 250 feet. Bounded on the west by Bennington Road, on the east by Francestown Road, and on the north by the Greenfield Cemetery. The nominated property is the parcel of land which has always been associated with the building to the present time.

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

state	n/a	code	county	code
state	n/a	code	county	code

state	n/a	code	county	code
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11. Form Prepared By

name/title David M. Edkins, Regional Planner

organization Southwest Region Planning Commission date May 26, 1983

street & number 28 Mechanic Street telephone 603-357-0557

city or town Keene state New Hampshire 03431

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 *Alma Wilma*

Commissioner, Dept. of Resources & Economic Development

title NH State Historic Preservation Officer date OCT 28 1983

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

for Delores Byers
Keeper of the National Register

Entered 12/8/83
date 12/8/83

Attest: _____ date _____

Chief of Registration

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Continuation sheet #2 - SIGNIFICANCE

Item number 8

Page 2

floor thus created was given over to town uses, while the new second floor became a church room.

The final step in the transformation of the meeting house to a more typical nineteenth-century design occurred in 1867. In an attempt to provide the building with a church-like facade that would face the growing village, the entire building was turned 90° so that the narrow end with the belltower would face the town center. By extending the walls of the main building forward to encompass the lower section of the belltower, the town acquired a structure which betrayed no outward traces of its late-eighteenth-century origin. Rather, with its heavy cornice and simple door and window detailing, the building appears as a late Greek Revival-style church. Thus, the structure was transformed from a relatively simple meeting house to a mid-nineteenth-century public building through a series of steps which successively revealed the taste and needs of several generations. The building represents several eras of New Hampshire history and serves as a physical symbol of the evolution of a single community.

¹James L. Garvin, "The Range Township in Eighteenth Century New Hampshire," New England Prospect: Maps, Place Names and the Historical Landscape (The Dublin Seminar for New England Folklife, Annual Proceedings, 1980), pp. 62-64; Greenfield (New Hampshire) Town Records, I:66-67, 101.

²Greenfield Town Records, I:101, 104, 111, 143.

³Ibid., I:106; Peter Benes, "Twin-Porch versus Single-Porch Stairwells: Two Examples of Cluster Diffusion in Rural Meetinghouse Architecture," Old-Time New England 69 (Winter-Spring 1979), pp. 44-68.

⁴Greenfield Town Records, I:106.

⁵Benes, "Twin-Porch versus Single-Porch Stairwells ...," p. 56.

⁶The Historical Society of Temple, New Hampshire, A History of Temple, New Hampshire, 1768-1976 (Dublin, N.H.: William L. Bauhan, 1976). p. 292.

⁷Henrietta M. Hopkins and Ruth W. Ledyard, A Brief History of Greenfield, New Hampshire, 1791-1941 (n.p., n.d.), pp. 19-20.

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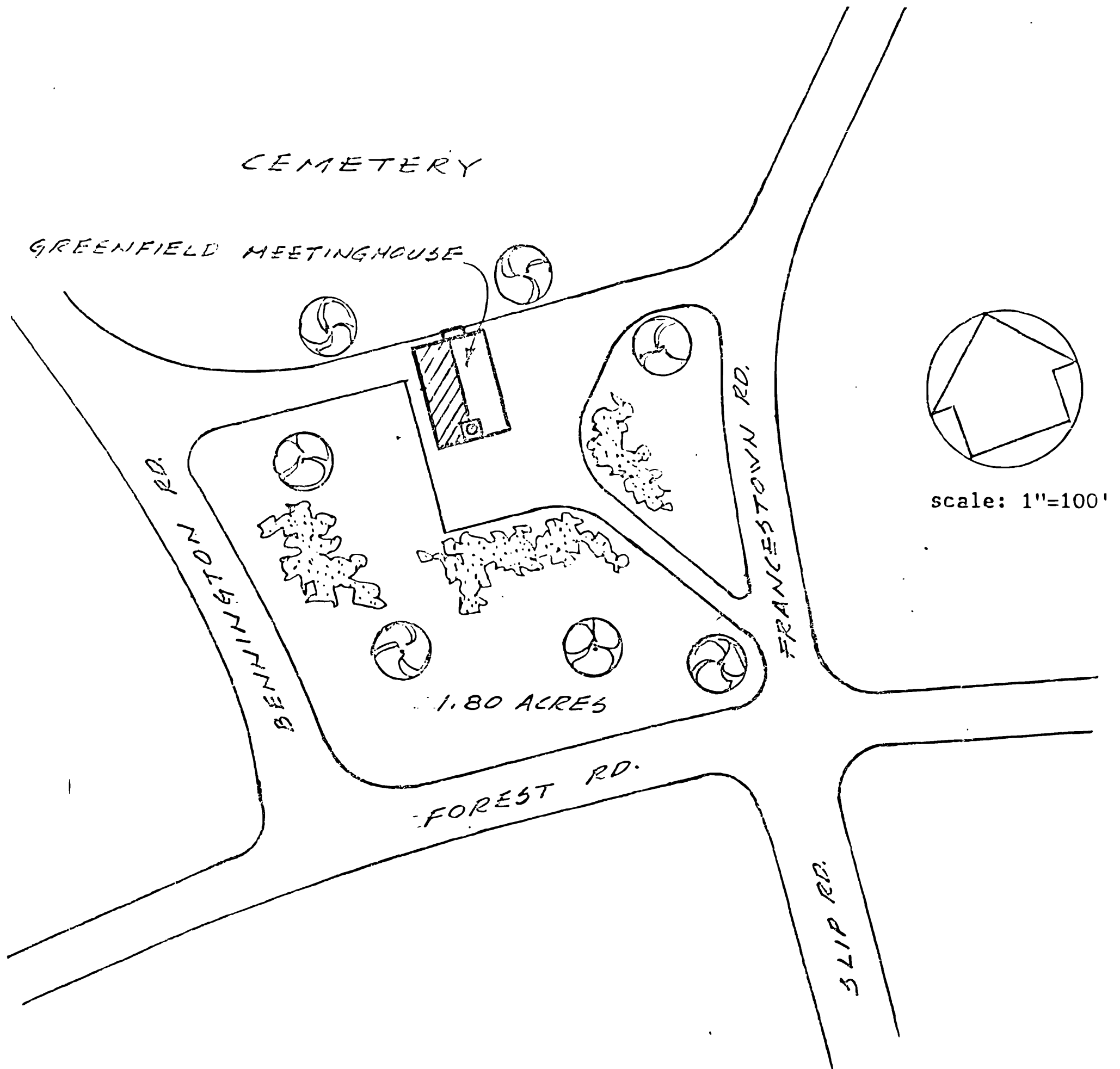
received

date entered

Continuation sheet #3 - SKETCH MAP

Item number --

Page 1



GREENFIELD MEETINGHOUSE
Greenfield New Hampshire