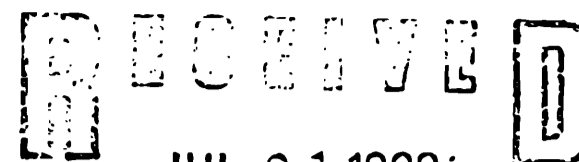


MAR 30 1990

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service



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 Loudon Town Hall
other names/site number Loudon Town House, Loudon Meeting House

2. Location

street & number corner, Clough Hill Road and Youngs Hill Road
city, town Loudon
state New Hampshire code NH county Merrimack code NH 013 zip code 03301

3. Classification

Ownership of Property: private, public-local (checked), public-State, public-Federal
Category of Property: building(s) (checked), district, site, structure, object
Number of Resources within Property: Contributing 1, Noncontributing buildings, sites, structures, objects, Total 0

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.
Signature of certifying official: [Signature] Date: July 26, 1990
State or Federal agency and bureau: NEW HAMPSHIRE

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:
[checked] 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:)
Signature of the Keeper: [Signature] Date of Action: 9/5/90

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Government / city hallReligion / religious structure

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Government / city hallReligion / religious structure

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

Greek Revival

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation Granitewalls Weatherboard

roof Metalother

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The Loudon Town Hall stands at its original location on its own lot at the north corner of the intersection of Clough Hill Road and Youngs Hill Road in the Town of Loudon. The Greek Revival style wooden building consists of a two and a half story, gable roofed main block, with a two stage belfry tower, which sits astride the roof ridge above the main facade, the southeast gable end. (Both the main block and the tower have post and beam frames.) The building is set close to Clough Hill Road, with the southwest lateral facade facing that road, and with the southeast gable end facing Youngs Hill Road across a parking lot and a long lawn. In its present state, the building is designed to serve two separate functions, both governmental and religious, with the first story serving as the Loudon town hall and the second story housing the Loudon Center Free Will Baptist Church. The building retains its basic integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association. The exterior has seen little change since 1847, save for the installation of stained glass in the second story windows and of emergency exits on the northeast side. The town rooms appear today virtually as they did in 1892, while the church rooms have not changed greatly since 1923.

The main block, rectangular in plan, is set on a foundation that has been partly replaced. The older cut granite block foundation can still be seen on the southeast and northwest gable ends and at the easterly ends of the lateral southwest and northeast facades. But, much of the foundation on the southwest (Clough Hill Road) facade has been replaced by concrete blocks. And most of the foundation on the northeast side is now poured concrete. The foundation is interrupted on the southwest by a small screened vent and on the northeast by a small metal grill, which ventilate the low inaccessible space beneath the first floor of the building. The main block walls are clapboarded with sillboards. The front (south and east) corners of the main block and the main facade, the southeast gable end, are distinguished by tall pilasters. The pilasters embrace each corner, while two intermediate pilasters divide the southeast gable end into three bays. The pilasters have bases formed by projections of the sillboards and moulded capitals. The capitals, however, stop short of the main block cornice. But, above them, vertical rectangular panels, of the same width as the pilasters, do rise to the cornice. The less seen pilaster on the northeast facade side of the east corner is narrower than the other pilasters and is topped by a simple board, not a panel, between the

 See continuation sheet

8. Statement of Significance

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

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria A B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)
Politics / Government

Period of Significance
1779-1940

Significant Dates
N/A

Cultural Affiliation
N/A

Significant Person
N/A

Architect/Builder
unknown

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

The Loudon Town Hall is significant under Criterion A in the area of Politics and Government as one of the oldest town halls in Merrimack County and as a good example of these centers of local government. Erected in 1779 (although not completed until 1791), the Loudon Town Hall housed all Loudon town meetings from September 1779 through March 1981 and all elections in Loudon from September 1779 to the present. It also housed the town's only office, used for selectmen's meetings and the storage of town records, from 1850 through 1976. The building's history is somewhat unusual, as it has continued also to serve a local church throughout its history, although, since 1847, the town and church functions have been housed on different floors. (Although the building has been used, at least in part, for religious purposes since its construction, it remains eligible for the National Register under Criteria Exception A, as its primary significance derives from its historical importance in Politics and Government.) The building's period of significance begins with its construction and its first use for a town meeting in 1779, and ends in 1940, the arbitrary fifty-year cutoff date.

The Loudon Town Hall is locally significant in Politics and Government, having served as the town hall and therefore the seat of local government through two centuries. It is the only structure ever built in Loudon to house town meetings and elections. And, from 1850 through the mid 1970's, it was the only building in Loudon erected to house any municipal offices. Having retained its integrity from its period of significance, the Town Hall continues to convey the character and associations of its historic use and functional type.

Merrimack County was settled in the 18th century, the area being granted as townships to various groups of proprietors. Typically, when the population in a township had grown large enough, the township was incorporated as a town and given the right of self government. Twenty-two of the present twenty-seven municipalities in the county were incorporated as towns by the end of the 18th century. (Two small townships

See continuation sheet

9. Major Bibliographical References

Loudon Town Hall

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE FINANCIAL AFFAIRS OF THE TOWN OF LOUDON FOR THE YEAR ENDING MARCH 1, 1892 (Concord:N.H. Democratic Press Co., 1892)

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE FINANCIAL AFFAIRS OF THE TOWN OF LOUDON FOR THE YEAR ENDING MARCH 1, 1893 (Concord: N.H. Democratic Press Co.,1893)

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE FINANCIAL AFFAIRS OF THE TOWN OF LOUDON FOR THE YEAR ENDING FEBRUARY 15, 1897 (Concord:The People and Patriot, 1897)

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE FINANCIAL AFFAIRS OF THE TOWN OF LOUDON FOR THE YEAR ENDING FEBRUARY 15, 1904 (Concord: Ira C. Evans, 1904)

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE TOWN OF LOUDON FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR ENDING FEBRUARY 15, 1915 (Concord: Ira C. Evans, 1915)

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:

Loudon Town Offices

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property approximately 1.0 acre

UTM References

A 19 302920 4800400
Zone Easting Northing

B _____
Zone Easting Northing

C _____

D _____

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundary of the nominated property is described as follows; beginning at the south corner of the nominated property at the intersection of Clough Hill Road and Youngs Hill Road, the boundary proceeds northwest along the right-of way of Clough Hill Road to a point 22 feet west of the Loudon Town Hall; then proceeds northeast on an arbitrary line, parallel to the

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundary of the nominated property was drawn to include the Loudon Town Hall and that portion of the town owned lot which retains its integrity and is visually associated with the Town Hall. All of the property included in the nomination has been historically associated with the Loudon Town Hall since its construction. Excluded from the nominated property are two

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title David L. Ruell

organization _____

date February 28, 1990

street & number 16 Hill Street

telephone (603) 968-7716

city or town Ashland

state New Hampshire zip code 03217

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capital and the cornice. The rear (north and west) corners of the main block are trimmed by cornerboards. (The sillboards project at the base of the cornerboards on the north corner, but not on the west corner.) Three facades, the southeast gable end and the lateral northeast and southwest facades, share a box cornice with mouldings and frieze, that is pedimented on the southeast gable. The horizontal cornices of the lateral facades and the pediment have very narrow friezes, while the raking cornices of the pediment have somewhat wider, but still narrow, friezes. The rear northwest gable has close verges with friezes and returns of the lateral cornices. The gable roof is sheathed with corrugated metal and is protected by three lightning rods on the ridge. The roof is interrupted by the belfry tower at the southeast end and by a simple brick chimney with corbeled cap on the northeast slope below the tower.

The main facade, the southeast gable end, is divided into three bays by the pilasters. The central bay, which is slightly wider than the two side bays, contains the main entry, double six panel doors in a wide plain frame with wooden sill and plain upper and lower cornerblocks. The entry is served by granite block steps, a wide upper step surrounded on all three sides by a lower step. Above the entry, large cutout painted wooden letters, mounted on narrow strips of wood, spell out the date "1779" and the tilte "Loudon / Town Hall". The windowless second story of the central bay has similar painted letters on narrow wooden strips which announce the "Loudon Center / Freewill / Baptist Church". (A spotlight is mounted on the horizontal pediment cornice above the central bay, and electric meters are mounted on the pilaster to the south of the central bay.) The first story of the two side bays each contain a twelve over twelve sash window in a plain frame with sill and upper cornerblocks. Beneath the first story windows are mounted flower boxes with scalloped upper edges, each supported by two curvilinear sawn wooden brackets. The northerly first story window now has a metal framed one over one sash storm window mounted over it. The second story of the two side bays each contain a stained glass window set in an older plain wooden frame with sill and upper cornerblocks (like the first story window frames). The rectangular stained glass windows of the second story, on all four facades, have the same geometric and floral pattern incorporating a large semicircular arch and four small trefoil arches in the design. The clapboarded, pedimented southeast gable is windowless.

The five bay Clough Hill Road facade, the southwest lateral facade, has five first story twelve over twelve sash windows, all in plain wooden frames with sills. The second story has four stained glass windows in similar plain wooden frames with sills, placed directly above the four westernmost first story windows. The road facade also has painted wooden signs announcing the Free Will Baptist Church, its pastor, and the hours of its services. A relatively plain rectangular sign is mounted on the wall (above a smaller

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painted wooden sign) between the two easternmost windows of the first story. A more ornate sign, with scrolled base and top, hangs from a metal bracket mounted on the south corner pilaster. Four small spotlights are mounted on the cornice of the southwest facade.

The northeast lateral facade has a five bay first story, with four twelve over twelve sash windows, in plain frames with sills, like their counterparts on the southwest facade. (The easternmost window now has a modern, metal framed, one over one sash, storm window.) The second bay from the west in the first story is now occupied by a side door for the town hall, a six panel door with plain frame, that is reached by a long, L-shaped, wheelchair ramp. The ramp has plain wooden posts and railings, and a plywood floor. From the door, a level section of the ramp extends perpendicularly out from the building to the northeast. The ramp then turns to the southeast and parallels the northeast facade of the building as it slopes gently to the ground to the southeast. On the northwest side of the end of the level section, four board steps with board sidewalls descend to the ground to the northwest. The second story of the northeast facade has four stained glass windows in plain frames with sills, corresponding to the four stained glass windows of the southwest facade, and like them, placed above the four westerly bays of the first story. The five bay second story also has a fire escape door between its two central windows. The plain framed six panel door opens onto the upper board floored landing of the metal fire escape. The landing and the metal grate steps that descend along the wall to the northwest of the landing share a simple metal railing. The landing is supported by a tall metal round metal post with a metal brace, and the steps are supported by another round metal post. The metal stairway does not reach the ground, the two lower steps of the fire escape being separate concrete steps. A small spotlight is mounted on the northeast cornice and a large modern light fixture is mounted on the east corner pilaster.

The two bay rear northwest gable end has five windows in plain frames with sills, two twelve over twelve sash windows in the first story, two stained glass windows in the second story, and a smaller nine over six sash window (for the attic) in the gable.

The square two stage belfry tower sits astride the roof ridge, with the front of the tower base set only slightly back from the plane of the main block's southeast gable end. The base is clapboarded with cornerboards and, on the lateral southwest and northeast sides, sillboards. The base is topped by a box cornice with mouldings and narrow frieze. The only opening in the tower base is a plain framed six over three sash window in the rear northwest wall. (The window was once a six over six sash window, but four panes in the lower sash have been replaced by a large single pane.) The smaller belfry stage is sheathed with flush boarding and trimmed by corner

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pilasters with moulded capitals and by a wide box cornice with mouldings, deep frieze, and architrave. In each face of the belfry is a large rectangular opening in a plain frame with upper cornerblocks. Through the openings can be seen the bell and its framework. These openings are now filled by wire mesh, supported in part by a light vertical timber in the center of each opening. The belfry's very low pitched pyramidal roof is surrounded by a wooden railing with plain top and bottom rails and corner posts with simply moulded caps. Set behind each corner post is a lightning rod. Rising from the center of the belfry roof is a tall pyramidal wooden spire with simple corner mouldings, that is topped by a wooden globe and an arrow shaped metal weathervane.

The westerly four-fifths of the first story is devoted to a large meeting room, the town hall proper. The easterly fifth of the first story is occupied by three smaller rooms, an entry hall in the center, the selectmen's office in the east corner, and the stairhall to the second story church rooms in the south corner. The entry hall has a board floor with plastic runners in the center. The plaster walls have vertical beaded board wainscoating topped by simple moulded rails. Boxed corner posts are found in the south and east corners of the room. The plaster ceiling has a central light fixture. Plain frames surround the doors, the double six panel exterior doors in the center of the southeast wall, the large wide six panel door to the town hall in the center of the northwest wall, and a wide four panel door, with three pane transom window, to the church stairhall at the west end of the southwest wall. The southwest wall also features a cork covered bulletin board and electric switch boxes.

The board floor of the town hall proper is interrupted by small concrete floors around the large furnaces in the south and east corners, and by a raised platform covering the entire northwest end of the room. The walls are plastered above vertical beaded board wainscoating, topped by wide moulded rails at the window sill level. (The window sills project slightly down into the wainscoating rails.) The ceiling is covered by moulded wooden panels. The long panels, which run southeast-northwest, are arranged in four rows, the division of the rows corresponding to the transverse beams hidden in the ceiling. The presence of the beams is indicated by three long metal tie rods that help to strengthen them. Each tranverse tie rod slants down from the ceiling at each end to wooden blocks between the rod and the ceiling at each end of the flat central portion of the tie rod (which contains a turnbuckle). The ceiling beams are also each supported by two wooden posts, which are placed symmetrically, giving the room two rows of three posts each. The posts have chamfered edges. Indeed, the chamfers on the posts are so deep that the posts, while square at the tops and bottoms, are essentially regular octagons in their central chamfered sections. Nine electric light fixtures are mounted on the ceiling.

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The board floor of the town hall's northwesterly platform is raised one and a half feet above the main floor. Three quarters of the platform front (which is set just behind the room's two northwesterly posts) is covered by vertical beaded boarding topped by a moulding. But, the westerly quarter of the platform has been extended two feet into the hall. This projection has a board floor and a front of vertical beveled boarding topped by a moulding. The platform is reached by four separate sets of steps, a single step at the southerly end with a vertical beaded board front (served by a moulded hand rail mounted on the wall), a plain board single step near the southerly post, two wide board steps around the northerly post (served by a moulded hand rail supported by the northerly post and its own simple post), and a single step with vertical beveled board front at the northerly end (served by a simply moulded hand rail mounted on the wall). On the front edge of the platform, at the northerly and southerly ends, are wooden railings, each having a simple moulded rail and square end posts with chamfered edges and moulded caps.

The furnaces in the south and east corners of the room are set on squares of concrete floor. Rising from the top of each large round metal furnace is a round metal hot air tube, which rises through the ceiling to heat the church auditorium above. From the back of the south corner furnace, a stove pipe rises to near the ceiling, then runs to the northeast (parallel to the southeast wall) to the east corner, where it is joined by a stovepipe from the east corner furnace before it turns to enter the chimney through a brick faced panel in the southeast wall.

In the center of the southeast wall is the six panel door to the entry hall, set in a plain frame with splayed jambs. To the north of the entry hall door is the plain framed four panel door to the selectmen's office. The twelve over twelve sash windows that light the hall are all deeply recessed, with wide sills, splayed jambs, and plain frames that rise from the wainscoting to the ceiling. There are four such windows in the southwest (Clough Hill Road) side wall, three in the northeast side wall, and two in the northwest rear wall. The northeast wall now contains, in the second bay from the west, a six panel exterior door, also deeply recessed with splayed jambs, plain frame, and an exit light on the doorhead. Built against the northeast wall, to the east of the door and actually covering part of the next window, are two voting booths with plywood side and rear walls, and sliding curtains on their fronts (but no ceilings). Each voting booth is equipped with a plywood writing shelf and an electric light mounted on the rear wall. Nine more voting booths stand on the platform against the northwest rear wall. These booths have plain vertical board side walls and swinging board or plywood doors on their fronts. They have no ceilings and use the northwest wall of the room as their rear walls. Each is equipped with a wooden writing shelf and an electric light mounted on a side wall.

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As the voting booths are built in front of the northerly window in the northwest wall, the lower portion of the window is covered by boards mounted to the frame, which protect the privacy of the voters.

The selectmen's office in the north corner of the first story has a board floor and plaster walls with wainscoating of the same design as seen in the town hall, with vertical beaded boarding and heavy moulded rails. In the north corner of the room is a chimney projection covered by plaster with a plain baseboard, a plain chair rail and a simple ceiling moulding. (Electric baseboard heaters have been installed along the southeast, northeast, and northwest walls.) The ceiling is covered by moulded wooden panels like those of the town hall ceiling, again running southeast to northwest. Hanging on chains from the ceiling is a fluorescent light fixture. The outer northeast and southeast walls each contain a twelve over twelve sash window, with splayed jambs, wide sill, and a plain frame rising from the wainscoating to the ceiling. At the east end of the northeast wall, three short modern prefabricated wooden cabinets, with double single panel doors, ornate hardware, and moulded bases, are mounted one above the other, on the wall. Four more such cabinets, are mounted high on the northwest wall, in two stacks of two cabinets each. Between these last prefabricated cabinets and the chimney projection in the north corner, the northwest wall features a high plain wooden bookcase, mounted some four feet above the floor and rising to the ceiling. At the south end of the northwest wall is the plain framed four panel door to the town hall. Set against the southwest wall are two large metal safes. A plain wooden bookcase (rising to the ceiling) is set on the eastern safe in the south corner. Another prefabricated cabinet, like the wall mounted cabinets, is set on the western safe. Two high rails with coathooks are mounted on the southwest wall to the west of the bookcases.

The first story of the stairhall in the south corner of the building has a corridor from the entry hall door along the northwest side of the stairhall to three steps, which lead up to the lower landing filling the southwest end of the stairhall. From this lower landing, a long stairway rises along the southeast wall to the second story. Beneath the long stairway on the southeast side is a small storage room. The lower stairhall has plaster walls with baseboards, which rise along with the steps and the stairs. The lower corridor and the landing have linoleum floors and share a plaster ceiling with a small light fixture. But, above the long southeastern stairs, the lower stairhall opens directly above into the second story. At the northeast end of the lower corridor is the plain framed four panel door, with three pane transom window, to the entry hall. In the lower corridor's southeast wall is a plain framed four panel door to the small storage room under the stairs. (The storage space has a board floor, unfinished board walls with exposed studding, and a pitched board ceiling.

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It is lit by the lower portion of a twelve over twelve sash window, here untrimmed, in the southeast wall.) The steps between the lower corridor and the landing, and the stairs from the landing to the second story, both have risers and treads with moulded nosings (partly covered by rubber treads) and share the same balustrade, with turned newelposts topped by turned caps, round balusters, and and simply moulded handrails. The long stairs are also trimmed by a stringboard with simply moulded lower edge. The landing is lit by a twelve over twelve sash window in the southwest wall, whose plain frame rises from the baseboard to the ceiling. A boxed corner post appears in the south corner of the landing, while a plain triangular wooden shelf is mounted in the west corner of the landing. The upper portion of the twelve over twelve sash window in the southeast wall of the first story, which projects above the baseboard beside the long stairway, is given a plain frame. A modern chairlift is mounted on the stairs, beside the balustrade, from the landing to the second story. And a simply moulded handrail is mounted on the southeast wall alongside the long stairs.

The westerly four fifths of the second story is again devoted to a large meeting room, here the church auditorium. In the south corner of the second story is the upper stairhall, part of which has been partitioned off as a closet. The rest of the second story, that is to say, the area above the entry hall and the selectmen's office in the first story, is devoted to a large anteroom for the auditorium.

The upper portion of the stairhall has an L-shaped landing to the southwest and northwest of the stairs from the lower landing to the second story. The upper landing is protected from the open stairway by a continuation of the stairway balustrade, complete with turned newelposts, round balusters, and moulded rails. The southwest end of the upper stairhall landing, the area directly above the lower landing, has been partitioned off to create a long narrow closet. The partition, built behind the southwesterly upper balustrade, is of vertical beaded boarding. The northwest and southeast walls of the upper stairhall, are plastered with plain baseboards. A light fixture hangs by a chain from the high plaster ceiling. The area is also lit by a plain framed second story stained glass window in the southeast outer wall. The northeast wall of the upper stairhall is actually a wall of doors and windows. Two pairs of two-leaved five panel doors, in a simply moulded frame, span the entire width of the wall. One set of doors is found at the upper end of the stairs from the first story, the other set at the end of the upper stairhall landing. Both open into the anteroom. Above the doors are two large ten pane transom windows (one above each set of doors), which share a simply moulded frame and fill most of the wall up to the ceiling. The upper stairhall landing to the northwest of the stairs is now used for storage and is therefore hidden from the stairway by composition

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board behind the balustrade and by hanging curtains on a metal frame that extend a few feet above the balustrade. At the southwest end of this part of the upper stairhall landing is the plain framed door of vertical beaded boarding, which serves the closet. The closet is lit by a plain framed four pane casement window in the beaded board partition overlooking the stairway. (The closet has a linoleum floor, three original walls of plaster with plain baseboards, the newer northeast wall of vertical beaded boarding, and a high plaster ceiling with central hanging light fixture. The northeast wall contains the plain framed four pane casement window and the untrimmed vertical beaded board door. Three plain wooden shelves and a single moulded rail with coathooks stretch the entire lengths of both the southeast and the southwest walls.)

The anteroom shares a continuous linoleum floor with the upper stairhall landing. Its southwest wall (the northeast wall of the upper stairhall), with its two double leaved five panel doors, and two ten pane transom windows, all in simply moulded frames, essentially appears the same in the anteroom as it does in the stairhall. The other three walls of the anteroom, and the chimney projection in the north corner, are plastered with plain baseboards. The high plaster ceiling has a hanging light fixture, two small holes for the bell ropes, and a simply framed, recessed board trapdoor to the attic. The southeast wall contains a plain framed stained glass window. High moulded rails with coathooks are found on the southeast and northeast walls, and plain chair rails appear on the southeast and northwest walls. Mounted onto the coathook rail and the chairrail of the southeast wall is a felt covered bulletin board. At the southwest end of the northwest wall is the entry to the church auditorium, double four panel doors with tall moulded panels and a plain frame. Set to the north of the doors, near the northwest wall, is a cast iron stove on a metal floorpad. The stovepipe rises from the back of the stove, then runs horizontally to the chimney in the north corner of the room.

The church auditorium has a hardwood main floor, covered by plastic runners in the aisles, and interrupted by an ornate round metal flue grate (for the hot air from the first story furnaces) in both the south and east corners. The walls are sheathed with pressed metal above vertical beaded board wainscoating with moulded rails that also serve as the window sills. The upper pressed metal walls are covered with a pattern of diamonds, the diamonds alternately containing fleur-de-lis and cross shaped ornaments. The walls are topped by coved pressed metal cornice, ornamented with mouldings, foliated decoration, and small trefoil arches. The pressed metal ceiling is mostly devoted to square panels, each with moulded edges and an ornate design featuring fleur-de-lis and trefoils. All of the panels are separated by beaded mouldings. In the center of the ceiling, a larger square panel, surrounded by a heavy moulding with foliated ornament,

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contains a round panel with ornament radiating from the light fixture hanging from the center of the panel. The ceiling also has four other electric light fixtures, two incorporating ceiling fans, each mounted in the center of a square panel, of the same design as the other square panels. The ceiling is bordered by a wide strip of pressed metal covered with small bumps and a quite elaborate central band of foliated ornament. This outer border is separated from the square panels by a heavy foliated moulding, like that surrounding the central square.

In the center of the southeast wall of the church auditorium is the plain framed, double, four paneled doors to the anteroom. The deeply recessed windows of the church auditorium all have stained glass (of the pattern already described on the exterior), wide sills, and moulded frames (with square upper cornerblocks) which rise from the wainscoating to the pressed metal cornice. The southwest and northeast walls each contain four such windows, while the northwest wall has two windows. Mounted between the two central windows of the southwest wall is a round metal clock with a simply moulded round frame. Between the two central windows of the northeast wall is the fire escape door, a deeply recessed, six panel door with moulded side trim and a segmental arched doorhead ornamented by a simply moulding and a small metal cross. In the center of the northwest wall, behind the pulpit, a curtain, with a cross mounted on it, hangs from the wall. Flanking the curtain are two simple wall mounted electric lights and two Gothic arched wooden hymnboards. (Modern speakers for the sound system are mounted on the southeast, southwest and northwest walls.)

The four rows of slip pews are divided by a central aisle and are separated from the walls by side aisles. The two central rows flanking the central aisle are set parallel to the northwest and southeast end walls. But, the two outer rows of pews are angled slightly to face the pulpit platform in the center of the northwest wall. The thirty-six wooden pews (nine in each row) each have a broad wooden side (sometimes cushioned), a broad pew back topped by mouldings, an ornate curvilinear sawn pew end with incised ornament on the aisle, and a curvilinear sawn armrest separating it from the adjoining pew. Each pew is also supported by a simple central wooden brace on the back.

In the center of the northwest end of the room is the pulpit platform, while the north corner of the room is occupied by the choir platform. The carpeted floors of both platforms are raised about a foot and a half above the main floor. The two platforms both have vertical beaded board fronts. The south and east corners of the pulpit platform are slightly curved. Two slightly curved carpeted steps, with sidewalls of vertically beaded boarding topped by moulded copings, are placed at the two corners. Flanking the top of each set of steps and set into the pulpit platform front, are

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short square posts, ornamented by chamfered edges and moulded wooden and marble caps. (On the north side of the east corner steps, the sidewall and the flanking post were eliminated, as here the choir platform front butts up against the pulpit platform steps.) The furniture on the pulpit platform, the pulpit and chairs, is all movable. The choir platform, filling the north corner to the northeast of the pulpit platform, projects further into the room than the pulpit platform. Unlike the pulpit platform, whose beaded board front rises only to the floor level, the choir platform has a taller beaded board front, which rises above the floor to form a low wall with a top moulding and a crowning brass rail, with a short hanging curtain. The low wall is straight on its southwest side, at its junction with the pulpit platform, but is curved on its southeast side, beside the pulpit steps and on the main front of the platform facing the pews. At the northerly end of the platform front are two slightly curved carpeted steps, set against the northeast auditorium wall, and flanked on the southwest by a sidewall of vertical beaded boarding with simply moulded coping, like the sidewalls of the pulpit platform steps. Flanking the top of these steps and set at the end of the low choir platform wall and brass railing is another, albeit taller, square wooden post with chamfered edges and moulded wooden and marble cap. The furniture on the choir platform, chairs and an organ, is movable, as is the piano found on the main floor in the west corner of the auditorium.

The trapdoor in the anteroom ceiling opens into the unfinished attic above the entire main block. The attic has an unfinished floor of exposed beams and posts and the laths of the second story ceilings. The gable end walls are unfinished board ceilings with exposed framework and studding. Four massive queenpost trusses, each composed of a tie beam, two queenposts, a collar beam, two rafters, and two long braces from the tie beam to the queenposts, span the attic. The trusses are connected to each other and to the posts in the gable end walls by horizontal beams, with braces, that give some additional structural support in the longitudinal (northwest-southeast) direction. The rafters of the trusses and the endwalls support heavy exposed purlins and the double pitched board ceiling of the attic. The attic is lit by an untrimmed nine over six sash window in the northwest end wall.

The belfry tower, which was built after the main block, is supported by a heavy timber frame, placed on the original main block frame. Two heavy sills stretch from the plate in the southeast gable end wall to the tie beam of the easternmost roof truss. From these inserted sills rise the four heavy cornerposts, with braces, of the tower frame. The attic opens directly above into the tower base, with its exposed framework, unfinished board walls with exposed studding, and low pitched pyramidal board ceiling with exposed rafters and beams. From a small board landing

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near the attic's trapdoor at the southeast end of the attic floor, a plain wooden ladder rises to a narrow landing formed of two planks that stretch across the tower base. From this landing, another plain wooden ladder rises to a small board trapdoor in the tower base ceiling. The tower base is lit by an unfinished six over three sash window in the northwest wall.

The trapdoor in the tower base ceiling opens into the belfry. The belfry's metal covered floor is pitched on all four sides to allow drainage and is interrupted by the board covered trapdoor. The belfry has unfinished board walls with exposed framework and studding, and a low pitched pyramidal board ceiling with exposed rafters and beams. In each wall is a large un-trimmed rectangular opening, now divided by a vertical timber which helps to support the wire mesh filling the opening. In the center of the belfry, the bell and its metal framework, sits on two heavy horizontal beams supported by the tower frame. The bell is labeled with its maker "William Blake & Co. of Boston" and its date "1878".

The grounds included in the nominated property are bounded on the southwest by Clough Hill Road, on the southeast by Youngs Hill Road, on the northeast by a steep wooded bank and a stone wall, and on the northwest by the town garage and its parking lot. Around the town hall, the grounds are a relatively flat lawn. Southeast of the building is a level parking lot (mostly graveled). Southeast of the parking lot is a long field that slopes down to Youngs Hill Road. A wide asphalt paved walk leads from the gravel parking lot to the main entry steps of the town hall. A small section in the north corner of the parking lot is paved. From that paved parking area, a paved walkway heads northwest for a short distance before splitting, with a walk going to the town hall wheelchair ramp, and another walk heading towards the rear of the town garage. The steps on the wheelchair ramp descend to another paved walk that goes to the side door of the town garage. Near the south corner of the town hall stands a tall metal flagpole. And near the base of the flagpole is the Loudon Time Capsule, installed in 1976 beneath an inscribed granite marker with a concrete surround. A few boulders and granite blocks are found on the rear lawn, northeast of the building. A fringe of trees grows along the top of the steep wooded bank marking the rear of the nominated property and along the fieldstone wall that runs from the east corner of the parking lot to Youngs Hill Road. (The stone wall has two right angle bends in its course.)

The Loudon Town Hall began its career as the meetinghouse for the Town of Loudon. The frame was raised in the summer of 1779.¹ The first recorded

¹ Henry J. Osgood, "An historical sketch of the building and repairing of the Loudon Meeting House from 1773 to 1878" (1878), (manuscript, Loudon Center Free Will Baptist Church, Loudon, N.H.) unpagged

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town meeting in the building was held in September of that same year.² But, as was often the case with early meetinghouses, the completion of the building took several years. Not until 1791 was the interior considered finished.³ And some work was still needed on the stair towers as late as 1794.⁴ There are no views available of the meetinghouse as it appeared in the late 18th century or early 19th century. But floor plans and some descriptions do survive.⁵ From these materials, it is clear that the building was a standard late 18th century meetinghouse, similar to many New Hampshire town meetinghouses of the period. The two and a half story, gable roofed main block had a porch, a two story stair tower, in the center of each gable end. Doors appeared in the center of the main block's road (southwest) facade and in the road facades of the two porches. The interior of the main block was one large two story space. Box pews covered the main floor, and a high pulpit beneath a sounding board was found in the center of the northeast wall, opposite the main entry. A gallery with more pews at the second story level surrounded the main space on the northwest, southwest, and southeast sides.

The meetinghouse was transformed in 1847 by the division of the main block into two stories, with a town hall in the first story and a church in the second story.⁶ These renovations are not completely described in the surviving records. But we do know that the work, done under the supervision of Ira Osgood,⁷ included the installation of the belfry tower, new windows, lightning rods, and a new entry in the southeast gable end.⁸ Although not specifically mentioned in the surviving contemporary documents, we can safely assume that the renovations included the removal of the old main entry and the porches, and the placement of the pilasters and the pedimented cornice on the new main facade, the southeast gable end.

The exterior appears today virtually as it did in 1847, although there

2. "Loudon Clerk's Book of Records No. 1" (manuscript, Loudon Town Offices, Loudon, N.H.), p.51

3. Osgood, "An historical sketch...."

4. "Loudon Clerk's Book of Records No. 1", pp. 172-173

5. "Loudon Clerk's Book of Records No. 1", p. 127; Osgood, "An historical sketch...."; Henry Osgood, "A plan of the floor of the Meeting House as built in 1791", dated April 1, 1878 (copy, Loudon Center Free Will Baptist Church, Loudon, N.H.); Henry J. Osgood, "History of Loudon" in D.H. Hurd, ed., HISTORY OF MERRIMACK AND BELKNAP COUNTIES, NEW HAMPSHIRE (Philadelphia: 1885), pp. 490-491

6. Osgood, "History of Loudon", pp. 491 and 493; "Town Book No. 8, 1837-1855" (manuscript, Loudon Town Offices, Loudon, N.H.) pp. 249-251

7. Osgood, "An historical sketch...."

8. untitled report of building committee, dated January 15, 1848 (copy, Loudon Center Free Will Baptist Church, Loudon, N.H.); "Town Book No. 8, 1837-1855", pp. 250-251

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have been a number of minor changes. A chimney was built in 1848,⁹ and the chimney or chimneys have been periodically rebuilt since then, most recently in 1981.¹⁰ (There may have been more than one chimney, or the chimney may have changed its location, as a late 19th century engraving of the building shows a chimney at the northwest end of the building.¹¹) The belfry lacked a bell unit¹ one was donated in 1878, and hoisted into place in June of that year.¹² The late 19th century engraving of the building, the oldest available view, shows that the belfry tower once had two railings, a lower railing around the belfry and the surviving railing on the belfry roof.¹³ The lower railing was probably removed in the early 20th century, as it does not appear in a 1946 photograph of the town hall,¹⁴ and is not remembered by the older church members.¹⁵ The corrugated metal roof was apparently installed in 1916.¹⁶ The 1922-23 renovation of the church included the addition of stained glass, in place of multipane clear glass sash, in the second story windows.¹⁷ (But the window frames and positions did not change.)¹⁸

In the last fifty years, the most significant exterior change has been the addition of emergency exits on the northeast lateral facade. A side door for the first story town hall was installed, apparently in the 1950's,¹⁹ and equipped with a ramp for the handicapped in the mid 1980's.²⁰ Around 1982, the church installed a fire escape and a second story door to serve it.²¹ The other recent changes have been less conspicuous. In the 1950's, double

9. "Town Book No. 8, 1837-1855", p.259

10. "Record Book of the Free Baptist Church Society, Loudon, N.H., 1927-1982" (manuscript, American Baptist Churches of N.H., Concord, N.H.), pp. 281-283

11. "Belknap Association of Free Baptist Churches at Loudon Center, N.H., September 22, 23, and 24, 1896", program (Laconia, N.H.:1896), cover

12. "Records of First Baptist Society in Loudon and First Freewill Baptist Society, 1817-1883" (manuscript, Bernice Sanborn, Loudon, N.H.), unpagged, minutes of February 4, 1878 meeting; Osgood, "An historical sketch...."

13. "Belknap Association of Free Baptist Churches at Loudon Center"

14. ANNUAL REPORT OF THE TOWN OF LOUDON FOR THE YEAR ENDING DECEMBER 31, 1946 (no publication data), photograph in unpagged section

15. Interviews of Clayton Currier and Guy Deering by David Ruell, December 5, 1989

16. ANNUAL REPORT OF THE TOWN OF LOUDON FOR THE YEAR ENDING FEBRUARY 15, 1917 (Concord, N.H.:1917), p.20; "Record of the First Freewill Baptist Society in Loudon, 1883-1926" (manuscript, American Baptist Churches of N.H., Concord, N.H.) p.121

17. "History of the First Church of Loudon", dated 1923 (manuscript, Loudon Center Free Will Baptist Church, Loudon, N.H.) unpagged

18. "Belknap Association of Free Baptist Churches at Loudon Center...."

19. Interview of Robert McLaren by David Ruell, February 21, 1990

20. Interview of Roger Maxfield by David Ruell, February 21, 1990

21. Interview of William Frost by David Ruell, December 5, 1989

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doors replaced a wide single door in the main entry.²² (The new entry, like the old entry was given a plain frame.²³) Dated photographs show that the upper railing on the belfry lost its diagonal struts sometime between 1946 and 1979.²⁴ Wire mesh was installed in the belfry openings to keep out birds, probably in the 1970's.²⁵ The belfry window was repaired, with a larger pane replacing four small panes, in 1989.²⁶ In 1974, the weathervane had become dilapidated, so it was replaced by a reproduction.²⁷ Storm windows appeared on the two first story windows of the selectmen's office in the 1960's or 1970's.²⁸ And flowerboxes decorated the two first story southeastern windows about 1982.²⁹ Portions of the foundation were replaced with concrete in 1952 and again in the early 1970's.³⁰ A wall sign for the church was mounted on the road facade in 1964,³¹ and another church sign was hung on the south corner about 1981.³² Large letters giving the building's name and date were placed above the main entry in 1973,³³ and similar letters spelling out the church name were placed on the second story in 1985.³⁴ Small spotlights were mounted on the cornice in the 1970's or 1980's,³⁵ and a large light on the east corner in the 1980's.³⁶ Today, the exterior retains much the same appearance it had in the late 19th century engraving, and probably appears today as it did in 1847, save for the loss of the lower

22. Interview of Bernice Sanborn by David Ruell, December 13, 1989; interview of Clayton Currier by David Ruell, January 2 and 20, 1990; interview of Robert McLaren by David Ruell, February 21, 1990

23. "Belknap Association of Free Baptist Churches at Loudon Center...."

24. ANNUAL REPORT OF THE TOWN OF LOUDON FOR THE YEAR ENDING DECEMBER 31, 1946, photograph in unpagged section; ANNUAL REPORT OF THE TOWN OF LOUDON FOR THE YEAR ENDING DECEMBER 31, 1979 (Concord:1980), cover

25. Interview of William Frost by David Ruell, December 5, 1989

26. Ibid.

27. "Record Book of the Free Baptist Church Society, Loudon, N.H., 1927-1982", p.228; interview of Clayton Currier by David Ruell, January 2, 1990

28. Interview of Roger Maxfield, Robert Ordway, and Robert McLaren by David Ruell, February 21, 1990; interview of William Frost by David Ruell, December 5, 1989

29. Interview of William Frost by David Ruell, December 5, 1989

30. ANNUAL REPORT OF THE TOWN OF LOUDON FOR THE YEAR ENDING DECEMBER 31, 1952 (Concord:1953), p.10; interview of Roger Maxfield by David Ruell, February 21, 1990

31. "Record Book of the Free Baptist Church Society, Loudon, N.H., 1927-1982", pp.177-178

32. Interview of William Frost by David Ruell, December 5, 1989

33. Interview of Guy Deering by David Ruell, December 5, 1989

34. Interview of William Frost by David Ruell, December 5, 1989

35. Interview of Roger Maxfield, Robert Ordway, and Richard Malfait by David Ruell, February 21, 1990

36. Interview of Roger Maxfield by David Ruell, February 21, 1990

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belfry railing and the installation of the second story stained glass windows, and of emergency exits on the seldom seen northeast facade.

The internal layout of the Town Hall dates primarily from the 1847 renovation of the building. The report of a town committee to the March 1847 town meeting on the proposed renovation speaks of a meeting room for the Free Will Baptist church in the second story and of a stairway and an entry at the southeast end of the first story.³⁷ The town voted in 1850 to finish a room in the east corner of the first story as a town office.³⁸ So, the layout of the first story has apparently not changed since 1850. It is not clear, however, which architectural elements of the town portion of the first story date from the mid 19th century remodeling, as the details of a late 19th century renovation are not all known. The town voted to repair the town hall in March of 1889,³⁹ but reconsidered that vote at a special meeting in April.³⁹ The March 1890 annual town meeting appointed a committee to study the town hall.⁴⁰ The committee reported at the annual meeting in March of 1891 that the foundation and chimney needed \$100 worth of repairs, and that \$350 should be spent on the "Inside" for "new floor, new plastering & sheathing, platform & desk & painting and furniture".⁴¹ The town meeting approved the report and appropriated the requested funds to make the repairs and alterations.⁴² The remodeled town hall was dedicated on February 10, 1892.⁴³ And the town appropriated more money in March of 1892 to pay for a cost overrun on the project and to buy more furniture.⁴⁴ But, save for the committee's initial recommendations, we have no description of these renovations. That brief report suggests that the town hall floor and platform date from this renovation. But, the meaning of the ambiguous phrase, "new plastering and sheathing" is unclear. "Sheathing" could well refer to the paneled ceilings of the town hall and the selectmen's office, but it could also describe just the wainscoting in the two rooms. It is also unclear to what extent the entry hall was included in the 1891-92 renovations, although the town report does refer to the purchase of lumber for the entry floor.⁴⁵ In any case, it does seem

37. "Town Book No.8, 1837-1855", pp.250-251

38. "Town Book No.8, 1837-1855", pp. 325 and 333

39. "Town Book No. 10, 1880-1900" (manuscript, N.H. Division of Records Management and Archives, Concord, N.H.), pp. 231,239,243, and 245-246

40. "Town Book No. 10, 1880-1900", pp. 269-270

41. "Town Book No. 10, 1880-1900", pp. 306-307

42. "Town Book No. 10, 1880-1900", pp. 306-308; The People and New Hampshire Patriot (Concord), March 19,1891, p.5

43. The People and New Hampshire Patriot February 11, 1892, p.5; February 18,1892, p.5

44. "Town Book No. 10, 1880-1900" pp.337 and 341

45. ANNUAL REPORT OF THE FINANCIAL AFFAIRS OF THE TOWN OF LOUDON FOR THE YEAR ENDING MARCH 1,1893 (Concord: 1893), p.6

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that there have been few important changes in the entry hall, the town hall, and the selectmen's office since the 1891-92 renovations. The entry hall has probably been left virtually unchanged. But, the town hall has seen a few alterations. According to a story told to an older church member, the posts in the town hall were installed to supplement the tie rods supporting the upper floor, after the floor settled somewhat, startling the churchgoers at a service in the church auditorium.⁴⁶ And the posts, with their deep chamfers, do appear to be late 19th century in character. But, another church historian has stated that the both the posts and the tie rods date from the installation of the upper floor in 1847.⁴⁷ In 1892, the town paid for a "railing" for the town hall, possibly the railings on the platform.⁴⁸ Two furnaces were installed in the corners of the town hall in 1903,⁴⁹ and were replaced in 1960 by two new furnaces.⁵⁰ The new furnaces required the installation of concrete floors beneath them in 1961.⁵¹ Voting booths were installed in 1914 to comply with a new state law.⁵² The number of voting booths increased as the town's population grew.⁵³ Two voting booths for the handicapped were installed on the main floor in the mid 1980's.⁵⁴ Electric lights were first installed in 1936.⁵⁵ The northerly end of the platform was extended slightly to the southeast at some unknown date. Some of the steps serving the platform also appear to be later additions. In the 1950's, the side door was placed in the northeast wall. The selectmen's office has also seen a few changes, most required by the need for storage space. A safe was purchased in 1896⁵⁶, and a second safe was installed in the 1960's

46. Interview of Clayton Currier by David Ruell, December 5, 1989, January 2, 1990

47. E.K.J. (Everett K. Jenkins), supplemental notes attached to Henry J. Osgood "An historical sketch of the building and repairing of the Loudon Meeting House from 1773 to 1878" (manuscript, Loudon Center Free Will Baptist Church, Loudon, N.H.) unpagged

48. ANNUAL REPORT OF THE FINANCIAL AFFAIRS OF THE TOWN OF LOUDON FOR THE YEAR ENDING MARCH 1, 1893, p.9

49. ANNUAL REPORT OF THE FINANCIAL AFFAIRS OF THE TOWN OF LOUDON FOR THE YEAR ENDING FEBRUARY 15, 1904 (Concord:1904), p.12; "Record of the First Freewill Baptist Society in Loudon, 1883-1926", pp. 66, 68-69

50. "Record Book of the Free Baptist Church Society, Loudon, N.H., 1927-1982", p.158

51. "Record Book of the Free Baptist Church Society, Loudon, N.H., 1927-1982", p.161

52. ANNUAL REPORT OF TOWN OF LOUDON FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR ENDING FEBRUARY 15, 1915 (Concord: 1915), pp. 21-22

53. Interview of Clayton Currier and Guy Deering by David Ruell, December 5, 1989

54. Interview of Roger Maxfield by David Ruell, February 21, 1990

55. ANNUAL REPORT OF THE TOWN OF LOUDON, NEW HAMPSHIRE FOR THE YEAR ENDING JANUARY 31, 1937 (Concord: 1937), p.32

56. ANNUAL REPORT OF THE FINANCIAL AFFAIRS OF THE TOWN OF LOUDON FOR THE YEAR ENDING FEBRUARY 15, 1897 (Concord: 1897), p.5

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or 1970's.⁵⁷ Bookcases were built, and, around 1981, several prefabricated cabinets were mounted on the walls.⁵⁸ Electric baseboard heating was installed, probably in the 1970's.⁵⁹ The chimney has been replaced as recently as 1981,⁶⁰ work that may have included changes to the walls enclosing the chimney. Basically, however, the governmental rooms of the Loudon Town Hall, the town hall proper and the selectmen's office, must appear today much as they did in the last decade of the 19th century.

The church portions of the building have seen two major renovations since the 1847 remodeling of the entire building. Extensive repairs and changes were made in 1878, but they are not recorded in any detail in the surviving accounts.⁶¹ The renovations of 1922-23 are described in more detail and are remembered by the older church members.⁶² The secondary spaces, the stairhall and the anteroom, are perhaps less changed than the church auditorium. The lower hall, lower landing, upper stairhall, and anteroom all received linoleum floors in 1966.⁶³ The balustrade of the stairs and upper stairhall appears to be late 19th century in character and might have been part of the 1878 remodeling. The chairlift was installed in 1982.⁶⁴ The stained glass windows in the upper stairhall and the anteroom date from the 1922-23 renovations.⁶⁵ The closet was created by partitioning off part of the upper stairhall at some unknown date. In the 1930's or 1940's, the upper stairhall saw the installation of kitchen appliances, a sink in the closet and a stove and shelves on the upper landing. Composition board and a hanging curtain were installed to hide this kitchen area from the stairway.⁶⁶ These kitchen appliances were removed about 1982.⁶⁷ The two-leaved doors and large transom windows between the

57. Interview of Robert McLaren, Roger Maxfield and Robert Ordway by David Ruell, February 21, 1990

58. Interview of William Frost by David Ruell, December 5, 1989

59. Ibid.

60. "Record Book of the Free Baptist Church Society, Loudon, N.H., 1927-1982", pp. 281-283

61. Osgood, "History of Loudon"; Osgood, "An historical sketch...."; "History of the First Church of Loudon"

62. "History of the First Church of Loudon"; interviews of Clayton Currier and Guy Deering by David Ruell, December 5, 1989

63. Interview of William Frost by David Ruell, December 5, 1989; "Record Book of the Free Baptist Church Society, Loudon, N.H., 1927-1982", pp. 186 and 188

64. Interview of William Frost by David Ruell, December 5, 1989; "Record Book of the Free Baptist Church Society, Loudon, N.H., 1927-1982", p. 290

65. "History of the First Church of Loudon", unpagged

66. Interview of Bernice Sanborn by David Ruell, December 13, 1989

67. Interview of William Frost by David Ruell, December 5, 1989; "Record Book of the Free Baptist Church Society, Loudon, N.H., 1927-1982", p. 293

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upper stairhall and the anteroom predate the 1922-23 renovations⁶⁸ and may well be part of the 1878 remodeling. The double doors from the anteroom to the auditorium were installed in the 1922-23 remodeling to replace an earlier entry.⁶⁹

The 1878 renovation of the auditorium is known to have included the present pulpit platform (which replaced an earlier pulpit), and a kerosene chandelier.⁷⁰ The 1878 renovation may also have included the moulded window frames and, perhaps, the wainscoating, all of which predate the 1922-23 remodeling.⁷¹ The hot air grates in the floor date from the 1903 installation of the furnaces.⁷² The 1922-23 renovation transformed the auditorium. The old choir platform against the southeast wall was removed. The present double doors replaced an earlier entry from the anteroom. A hardwood floor, the present pews, the stained glass in the windows, and the choir platform in the north corner were all installed. And elaborate pressed metal sheathed the upper walls and the ceiling, which had been plastered.⁷³ Essentially, the auditorium still appears today much as it did in 1923. Electric lights replaced the kerosene chandelier in 1937.⁷⁴ A curtain was mounted on the wall behind the pulpit in 1965.⁷⁵ The present carpeting was laid on the choir platform, the pulpit platform, and their steps in 1976.⁷⁶ The door to the fire escape appeared about 1982.⁷⁷ And ceiling fans were installed about 1983.⁷⁸ But these changes have not compromised the early 20th century

68. Interview of Clayton Currier and Guy Deering by David Ruell, December 5, 1989

69. Ibid.; interview of Calyton Currier by David Ruell, January 2, 1990; Jenkins, supplemental notes to Osgood, "An historical sketch...", unpagged

70. Osgood, "An historical sketch...", unpagged; "History of the First Church of Loudon", unpagged; "Records of First Baptist Society in Loudon and First Freewill Baptist Society, 1817-1883", minutes of May 18, 1878 meeting

71. Interview of Clayton Currier and Guy Deering by David Ruell, December 5, 1989

72. Interview of Clayton Currier by David Ruell, January 2, 1990; ANNUAL REPORT OF THE FINANCIAL AFFAIRS OF THE TOWN OF LOUDON FOR THE YEAR ENDING FEBRUARY 15, 1904, p.12

73. "History of the First Church of Loudon", unpagged; interviews of Clayton Currier and Guy Deering by David Ruell, December 5, 1989

74. "Record Book of the Free Baptist Church Society, Loudon, N.H., 1927-1982", p.58

75. "Record Book of the Free Baptist Church Society, Loudon, N.H., 1927-1982", p.182

76. "Record Book of the Free Baptist Church Society, Loudon, N.H., 1927-1982", p.244

77. "Record Book of the Free Baptist Church Society, Loudon, N.H., 1927-1982", p. 286; interview of William Frost by David Ruell, December 5, 1989

78. Interview of William Frost by David Ruell, December 5, 1989

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character of the auditorium. (The only major interior change to the attic or the belfry tower, since the 1878 installation of the bell, seems to have been the replacement of the timber beams supporting the bell in 1979.⁷⁹)

In summary, the exterior of the building appears today virtually as it did in 1847, the town rooms in the first story as they did in 1892, the secondary church rooms as they did in the late 19th century, and the church auditorium as it did in 1923.

The town hall grounds have also seen some changes. Town meetings voted to allow the erection of horsesheds on the grounds, in 1852, 1872 and 1895.⁸⁰ The horsesheds were replaced in 1946-47 by a new town garage built to the northwest of the town hall.⁸¹ This garage burned and was replaced in 1975-76 by a large building that also included town offices.⁸² (That portion of the town hall grounds containing the town garage has therefore been so altered that it was not included in the nominated property.) 1975 saw the installation of a gravel parking lot in front of the Town Hall.⁸³ A flag pole and a time capsule were placed on the lawn as part of the 1976 Bicentennial celebration.⁸⁴ The small paved parking area and the paved walks behind the Town Hall were laid in the mid 1980's.⁸⁵ But, the town hall grounds, as defined by the roads, by an old stone wall and a steep bank on the northeast, and by the town garage on the northwest, essentially retain their historic integrity.

Although the Loudon Town Hall and its grounds have seen many changes

79. "Record Book of the Free Baptist Church Society, Loudon, N.H., 1927-1982", pp.264 and 266, interview of Clayton Currier by David Ruell, January 2, 1990

80. "Town Book No. 8, 1837-1855", pp.415,416, and 430; "Town Book No.9, 1855-1880" (manuscript, N.H. Division of Records Management and Archives, Concord, N.H.), unpagged, minutes of March 12, 1872 meeting; "Town Book No. 10, 1880-1900", pp. 417 and 421

81. "Minutes and Various Records, 1943-1968" (manuscript, Loudon Town Offices, Loudon, N.H.) pp. 74,79,99 and 192; ANNUAL REPORT OF THE TOWN OF LOUDON FOR THE YEAR ENDING DECEMBER 31, 1946, p.10

82. "Book No. 7, 1968-1980" (manuscript, Loudon Town Offices, Loudon, N.H.) pp. 172,184,185,212, and 220; ANNUAL REPORT OF THE TOWN OF LOUDON FOR THE YEAR ENDING DECEMBER 31, 1974 (Concord: 1975), p. 16; ANNUAL REPORT OF THE TOWN OF LOUDON FOR THE YEAR ENDING DECEMBER 31,1975 (Concord: 1976), pp. 15-16

83. ANNUAL REPORT OF THE TOWN OF LOUDON FOR THE YEAR ENDING DECEMBER 31, 1975, pp. 15-16; interview of William Frost by David Ruell, December 5, 1989

34. ANNUAL REPORT OF THE TOWN OF LOUDON FOR THE YEAR ENDING DECEMBER 31, 1976 (Concord:1977), p.64; "Record Book of the Free Baptist Church Society, Loudon, N.H., 1927-1982", p.244

85. Interview of Roger Maxfield by David Ruell, February 21, 1990

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during the building's two centuries of service to the community, the nominated property does retain its basic integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.

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were not incorporated until the 19th century, Wilmot in 1807 and Allenstown in 1831, although Allenstown was apparently functioning as a town in the 18th century, without an official incorporation by the legislature. The 19th century also saw the creation of three new towns out of parts of already existing towns, Hooksett in 1822, Franklin in 1828, and Webster in 1860.)¹ The governments of all these towns were originally based on the town meeting, the public meeting of the town's voters held annually, or as required by special needs, to make governmental policy for the town, to appropriate funds for the local government, to adopt ordinances and regulations, and to elect town officials. The everyday governmental tasks were entrusted to a board of selectmen. But, major decisions were made at town meetings. Two Merrimack County towns switched to a city form of government, with elected city councils, in the 19th century, Concord in 1853² and Franklin in 1894³. But, the other twenty-five municipalities in the county still retain the town meeting as the principal mechanism of their local government.

Town meetings do require a place to meet. And, in the 18th century and the early 19th century, the responsibilities of town government in New Hampshire included the support of a town minister and the provision of a building for religious services. Usually, in New Hampshire towns, town meetings and town supported religious services were held in a meetinghouse, erected with town appropriations and/or funds obtained by the sale of pew privileges. Save for the small town of Danbury, all of the Merrimack County towns in existence by 1820 had acquired such meetinghouse, most of them built in the late 18th century.⁴ (The towns of Sutton and Boscawen both actually had two meetinghouses located in separate parts of town, and alternated town meetings between the two buildings.⁵)

In 1819, however, the relationship of church and state in New Hampshire was radically changed when the state legislature adopted the Toleration Act, which stated that town funds could no longer be used for the support of ministers and of meetinghouses used for religious purposes. The Toleration Act did allow the towns to continue to maintain meetinghouses that they

1. D. H. Hurd, ed. HISTORY OF MERRIMACK AND BELKNAP COUNTIES, NEW HAMPSHIRE (Philadelphia:1885), pp.1-2

2. Hurd, p.120

3. Hobart Pillsbury, NEW HAMPSHIRE: RESOURCES, ATTRACTIONS, AND ITS PEOPLE: A HISTORY (New York:1927), vol. II, p.670

4. A survey of past and present meetinghouses was made by consulting Hurd's county history, numerous local histories and by interviewing local historians. These sources will be cited in the appropriate place and in the bibliography.

5. Augusta H. Worthen, THE HISTORY OF SUTTON, NEW HAMPSHIRE (Sutton:1970 reprint of 1890 ed.), p.325; C.C. Coffin, THE HISTORY OF BOSCAWEN AND WEBSTER FROM 1733 TO 1878 (Concord:1878), pp.98-101,157-158,241-242

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already owned.⁶ But, the ultimate effect of the Toleration Act was the physical, as well as the financial, separation of church and town. Usually, two new buildings, the church and the town hall, replaced the old meeting-house in Merrimack County. Today, there are nineteen buildings standing in Merrimack County that were specifically built as town halls (or city halls) before 1940.⁷ Nearly half of these town halls are small, one and a half story, gable roofed, vernacular buildings, whose gable end serves as the main facade. These include the present or past town halls in Salisbury (1839), Chichester (1845), Hill (1847), Bow (1847), Epsom (1850), Danbury (1856), Newbury (1876), Andover (1879), and Wilmot (1906).⁸ Three towns built larger, more elaborate, two story wooden town halls, Bradford in 1863, Hopkinton in 1873, and Dunbarton in 1909.⁹ More pretentious brick structures were erected in Hooksett (1828-29), Concord (the old city hall of 1855 and the present city hall of 1902-04), Sutton (1891-92), Franklin (1892-93), Warner (1910) and New London (1917-18).¹⁰

6. LAWS OF NEW HAMPSHIRE, VOL. 8, SECOND CONSTITUTIONAL PERIOD, 1811-1820 (Concord: 1920), pp.820-821

7. The town halls of the county were also surveyed by reviewing county and local histories and by talking to local historians and officials. These sources will be cited at the appropriate places and in the bibliography. It should be noted that two towns, Allenstown and Northfield, acquired former church buildings to serve as their town halls. (John Dowst, "The Old Allenstown Meeting House" *Granite Montly*, 1912, vol. 44, pp. 5-11; Lucy R. Cross, *HISTORY OF NORTHFIELD, NEW HAMPSHIRE, 1780-1905* (Concord: 1905), pp. 26, 37-38)

8. John J. Dearborn, *THE HISTORY OF SALISBURY, NEW HAMPSHIRE* (Manchester: 1890), pp.359-361; Chichester History Committee, *A HISTORY OF CHICHESTER 1727-1977* (c.1977), pp.35-36; Mildred Morrill, Harriette Kenney, Lee-ann Fosyth, *HILL, THE OLD AND THE NEW, 1754-1976* (c.1976), p.4; David A. Bundy, *100 ACRES MORE OR LESS: THE HISTORY OF THE LAND AND PEOPLE OF BOW, NEW HAMPSHIRE* (Canaan:1975), pp.101,308-309; James Garvin, "Report to the Epsom Town Hall Committee" (manuscript, N.H. Division of Historical Resources, Concord, N.H.); date board on Danbury Town Hall; *NEWBURY, PAST AND PRESENT* (c.1955), p.10; Ralph G. Chaffee, *HISTORY OF ANDOVER, NEW HAMPSHIRE, 1900-1965*, (Orford:1966), p.19; Florence Langley, *GLIMPSES OF THE PAST: THE HISTORY OF WILMOT, NEW HAMPSHIRE* (Canaan:1986) pp.29-32

9. Bradford History Committee, *TWO HUNDRED PLUS, 1771-1976, BRADFORD, NEW HAMPSHIRE IN RETROSPECT* (Canaan:1976), pp.47-50; C.C. Lord, *LIFE AND TIMES IN HOPKINTON, N.H.* (Concord:1890), pp.172-175; Alice Hadley, *WHERE THE WINDS BLOW FREE:DUNBARTON, NEW HAMPSHIRE* (Canaan:1976), pp.8 and 41. The Bradford Town Hall was listed on the National Register on November 13, 1980.

10. Charles R. Hardy, *HOOKSETT HISTORICAL SKETCHES, 1822-1968* (Manchester: 1969), pp.57-61; James O. Lyford, ed., *HISTORY OF CONCORD, NEW HAMPSHIRE* (Concord:1903), pp.442-444,1371-1374 ; *DEDICATION OF PILLSBURY MEMORIAL HALL IN SUTTON, N.H.* (Concord:1893) pp.65 and 67; Alice M. Shepard (cont.)

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But, although the construction of a town hall (or a city hall) proved to be the solution to the physical needs of most municipalities in the county, other towns were unwilling to abandon their investments in the old meetinghouse. The majority of the old town meetinghouses are no longer extant, being lost to fire or demolition. (Materials from the demolished meetinghouses of Bradford and Chichester were used to build the present town halls.¹¹) Some eleven or twelve 18th century meetinghouses once used for town meetings still stand in Merrimack County, although all have been extensively remodeled. (The fate of Sutton's South Meetinghouse is unclear. Given the loss of records and conflicting historical accounts, it is not known if the building was remodeled into a church, or replaced by an entirely new church building, in the 1830's.¹²) Five or six of these meetinghouses, in Andover, Hill, Salisbury, Hopkinton, Boscawen, and maybe South Sutton, were remodeled into churches.¹³ But, the other six surviving meetinghouses were remodeled for municipal functions. The meetinghouses in Henniker, Pittsfield, and Canterbury were remodeled as town halls and ceased to be used for religious purposes.¹⁴ But, the meetinghouses in

10.(cont.) "A History of Franklin, N.H." (manuscript, N.H. Historical Society, Concord, N.H.), pp.534-538; Carl Malmberg, ed. WARNER, NEW HAMPSHIRE 1880-1974 (Warner:1974) pp.23-24; James D. Squires MIRROR TO AMERICA: A HISTORY OF NEW LONDON, NEW HAMPSHIRE, 1900-1950 (Concord:1952), pp.35-36. Three of these buildings have been listed on the National Register, the old Concord city hall (now converted to a courthouse) as the Merrimack County Courthouse on November 27, 1979, the present Concord City Hall as part of the Concord Civic District on December 22, 1983, and the Franklin City Hall as part of the Franklin Falls Historic District on August 19, 1982.

11. Bradford History Committee, pp.47-50; Chichester History Committee, pp. 35-36; J.L. Sanborn, THE HISTORY OF THE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH IN CHICHESTER N.H., 1727 TO 1894 (Providence, R.I.: 1905), p. 18
12. Worthen, p. 333; Arthur E. French, A HISTORIC SKETCH OF MEETINGHOUSE BUILDING (Sutton:1936), p.7; interview of Betty Wells by David Ruell, November 19, 1989
13. Ibid.; John R. Eastman HISTORY OF THE TOWN OF ANDOVER, NEW HAMPSHIRE 1751-1906 (Concord:1910) pp.102-104; Dearborn, pp.131-144; Lord, p.184; Coffin, pp. 157-158, 232-233. The former Andover meetinghouse, now the Congregational Church, was listed on the National Register as part of the East Andover Village Center Historic District on March 16, 1989, while the former Hill meetinghouse, now the Hill Center Church, was listed on September 12, 1985.
14. Henniker History Committee, THE ONLY HENNIKER ON EARTH (Canaan: 1980). pp.38-39; E. Harold Young HISTORY OF PITTSFIELD, NEW HAMPSHIRE (Manchester: 1953) pp.48-49; James O. Lyford HISTORY OF THE TOWN OF CANTERBURY, NEW HAMPSHIRE, 1727-1912 (Canterbury: 1912), pp. 219,224. The Henniker Town Hall was listed on the National Register on February 24, 1981. The Pittsfield Town Hall was listed as part of the Pittsfield Center Historic District on December 12, 1980.

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Loudon, Webster and North Sutton continued to serve both governmental and religious functions, as each was divided into two stories, with a town hall in the first story and a church in the second story. The Webster meetinghouse, built in 1792 as Boscawen's western meetinghouse, became Webster's meetinghouse, when that town was created out of western Boscawen in 1860. But, in 1844, before the creation of the new town, the Webster Meeting House had been divided internally to create a second story chapel for the Christian Union Society and a first story town hall. The building was used for town meetings until 1941, when it was moved and converted into a museum.¹⁵ Sutton's North Meetinghouse, built in 1794-97, was divided in the same manner in 1855. And its first story was used as the town hall until the construction of the present town hall in 1891-92.¹⁶ So, the Loudon Town Hall, which saw a similar internal division in 1847, is not unique in its combination of a first story town hall and a second story church, although such a combination must still be regarded as rather unusual.

(It is interesting to note that two similar structures once stood in Merrimack County. In 1838, when the First Christian Church was built in Franklin, the town paid for the construction of the basement, which served as the town hall until the construction of the present city hall in 1892-93. The First Christian Church burned in 1917.¹⁷ In Boscawen, the First Congregational Church, a meetinghouse which had been used for town meetings before its remodeling as a church in 1839, was raised in 1847, so that the Town of Boscawen could construct a town hall as a basement level under the church. This basement level and the old town hall were destroyed in 1940-41 when the building was moved to face in a new direction, although a new basement level containing the town hall was built at the new location.¹⁸)

The Town of Loudon was created out of the southeastern portion of the Town of Canterbury. The Canterbury historian wrote that "in 1772, the people in the southern part of Canterbury found that it was inconvenient
15. Coffin, pp.137-143,241-242; Webster History Committee, WEBSTER, NEW HAMPSHIRE, 1933-1983 (Warner:1984), pp.27-28, 157-159. The Webster Meeting House was listed on the National Register on March 7, 1985.

16. Worthen, pp. 325, 337-339

17. Shepard, pp. 241-242; "This is Franklin..." supplement to The Trumpeter (Franklin), August 16, 1978, p.28

18. Coffin, pp.232-233; Agnes Pillsbury, THE STORY OF BOSCAWEN CHURCH (Concord, c.1940), p.42; ANNUAL REPORT OF THE TOWN OFFICERS OF THE TOWN OF BOSCAWEN FOR THE YEAR ENDING JANUARY 31, 1941 (Penacook:1941), p.20; interview of Virginia Colby by David Ruell, December 22, 1989. The First Congregational Church of Boscawen was listed on the National Register on April 19, 1982.

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for them to attend church at the town meeting house and that their interests were more closely connected with one another than with the remainder of the town,"¹⁹ and therefore petitioned to be set off as a new town. The petitioners may have shared other interests besides the inconvenience of attending church. But, the difficulty of going to the Canterbury meetinghouse was, in fact, the only reason for the proposed division of the town given in the January 1773 petition to the governor and the legislature, which noted "that your petitioners live at the distance of ten and twelve miles (as the roads now go) from the Meeting House in [Canterbury], that the Roads are very bad and therefore they can't without great difficulty attend the public worship of God there nor any public affairs of the Town".²⁰ There being no opposition to the division of the Town of Canterbury, the legislature granted the request of the petitioners and created the Town of Loudon at the legislative session in January of 1773.²¹ It could actually be argued that the Town of Loudon was created for the sole purpose of erecting the building now known as the Loudon Town Hall.

The first meeting of the new town in March of 1773 was devoted to the setting up of the town government.²² But, at the second town meeting in November of the same year, the question of locating and building a meeting house was raised. The town then voted that the building stand on the "School Lot", a town owned lot, not far from the center of the new municipality.²³ Some steps were apparently taken to gather materials for the meetinghouse, as the town voted in February of 1775 to lend "Mr. Blunt" 6000 feet "of pine board halled to the place where it is voted for the Meetinghouse", if Blunt guaranteed to provide the same amount of pine boards when it came time to erect the building.²⁴ At a November 10, 1777 meeting, the town voted to build the meetinghouse with tax monies, "to gett the timber, hew it and hall it to the Spot this winter" and established a seven man committee to do these jobs.²⁵ Apparently, little was done by the committee, not surprisingly, since the country was then in revolt against the British government. In October of 1778, we again find the town meeting voting "to raise Seven hundred dollars to gett said fraim & hall it to the Spot & fraim it" and appointing a new five man committee (with only three men who

19. Lyford, HISTORY OF THE TOWN OF CANTERBURY, p.61

20. Isaac W. Hammond, ed. TOWN PAPERS, DOCUMENTS RELATING TO TOWNS IN NEW HAMPSHIRE, A TO F, Vol. XI in the NEW HAMPSHIRE STATE PAPERS (Concord: 1882), pp. 263-264

21. LAWS OF NEW HAMPSHIRE, VOL. 3, PROVINCE PERIOD, 1745-1774 (Bristol: 1915), p.585

22. "Loudon Clerk's Book of Records No. 1" (manuscript, Loudon Town Offices, Loudon, N.H.), pp.5-8

23. "Loudon Clerk's Book of Records No. 1", pp. 8-9

24. "Loudon Clerk's Book of Records No. 1", pp. 13-14

25. "Loudon Clerk's Book of Recrods No. 1", p. 32

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had been on the old committee) to do the work. The same meeting decided that the new meetinghouse was to be the same size as the Epsom meeting house, and set the rate of pay for labor.²⁶ Just a few weeks later, in November, another town meeting voted to sell the pews on the ground floor of the meetinghouse and chose another five man committee "to sell the pews at a publick vendue to the highest bidder and to take security for the money and lay it out when wanted on the house".²⁷ In late December, yet another town meeting changed the dimensions of the meetinghouse, adding six feet to its length and two feet to its width, and voted that the purchasers of pew privileges were to build their pews within twelve months after the erection of the building and the laying of the floor or lose their privileges.²⁸ As often happened, the location of the meetinghouse became a controversial issue. But attempts at town meetings in February and March of 1779 to change the location of the building were unsuccessful.²⁹

The annual March meeting in 1779 appropriated \$1400 for the meeting house frame (and voted to buy two barrels of rum for the raising).³⁰ A town meeting in June appropriated another \$1000 for the meetinghouse frame.³¹ Sometime in the summer of 1779, the meetinghouse frame was raised.³² By September 1779, the building was enclosed and sufficiently finished to house a town meeting. The first town meeting in the meetinghouse was held on September 9, 1779, to vote on the proposed state constitution and to elect a delegate to a state convention.³³ But the building, although used continuously thereafter for town meetings, was by no means completed.

The finishing of the meetinghouse required more funds, which were not readily available. In November of 1783, it was voted to allow the layout and sale of six new pew privileges, the money so raised to be spent on glazing and other finishing touches on the building.³⁴ (These pews were were apparently sold at the same meeting.³⁵) Part of the financial problem appears to have been the failure of pew owners to pay up on their pew privileges. In March 1786, November 1787, September 1788, and June 1789,

26. "Loudon Clerk's Book of Records No. 1", pp.40-41

27. "Loudon Clerk's Book of Records No. 1", p. 42

28. "Loudon Clerk's Book of Records No. 1", pp.43-44

29. "Loudon Clerk's Book of Records No. 1", pp.44-46 and 48

30. "Loudon Clerk's Book of Records No. 1", pp. 46 and 48

31. "Loudon Clerk's Book of Records No. 1", p.50

32. Henry J. Osgood "An historical sketch of the building and repairing of the Loudon Meeting House from 1773 to 1878" (manuscript, Loudon Center Free Will Baptist Church, Loudon, N.H.), unpagged

33. "Loudon Clerk's Book of Records No. 1", p.51

34. "Loudon Clerk's Book of Records No. 1", p.76

35. "Loudon Clerk's Book of Records No. 1", p.130

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town meetings voted to have committees or agents collect the monies due for the pews and spend it on finishing the meetinghouse, including the glazing, which was still not completed in June of 1789.³⁶ In January of 1788, the town decided to hire its first settled minister, Rev. Jedediah Tucker.³⁷ The scheduling of the ordination of Rev Tucker for October of 1789³⁸ spurred the town to finish the building. At the September 7, 1789 meeting that scheduled the ordination, it was voted to sell additional pew privileges and to build a "porch", a stair tower, on each gable end. Timothy French and Thomas Emery were chosen to build the porches.³⁹ Two weeks later, on September 21, it was further voted to build a gallery on three sides of the meetinghouse interior and to sell the gallery pews, with the monies so raised to be spent on the meetinghouse.⁴⁰ An article in the warrant for a December 1790 meeting asked for authority to purchase lime to plaster the meetinghouse, but the minutes of that meeting do not survive.⁴¹ The annual meeting in March 1791 authorized the sale of six more new pew privileges and the use of the money for the meetinghouse.⁴² But finally, it was realized that the attempts to sell new pews and to collect the money due on pews was not going to finance the finishing of the meetinghouse. At a June 20, 1791 meeting, the town voted "to raise a sum of money to finish the meeting house and leave it to the meeting house committee to appoint the sum".⁴³ This open ended appropriation of town money did the job. The interior was lathed and plastered, and essentially completed in 1791.⁴⁴ The porches were not, however, finished until later, as, in August of 1794, we find a town meeting voting to give Emery and French just "six weeks more to finish the Porches".⁴⁵

From the floor plans and the brief descriptions that are available⁴⁶, it is clear that the Loudon meetinghouse was a standard late 18th century

36. "Loudon Clerk's Book of Records No. 1", pp.100-101,107,115,and 121
37. "Loudon Clerk's Book of Records No. 1", p.108; Henry J. Osgood, "History of Loudon" in D.H. Hurd, ed. HISTORY OF MERRIMACK AND BELKNAP COUNTIES, NEW HAMPSHIRE, p.492
38. "Loudon Clerk's Book of Records No. 1", pp.123-124
39. Ibid.
40. "Loudon Clerk's Book of Records No. 1", p.125
41. "Loudon Clerk's Book of Records No. 1", p. 58
42. "Loudon Clerk's Book of Records No. 1", p. 133
43. "Loudon Clerk's Book of Records No. 1", p. 134
44. Osgood, "An historical sketch...."unpaged
45. "Loudon Clerk's Book of Records No. 1", pp.172-173
46. "Loudon Clerk's Book of Records No. 1", p.127; Osgood, "An historical sketch...."; Henry Osgood, "A plan of the floor of the Meeting House as built in 1791", dated April 1, 1878 (copy, Loudon Center Free Will Baptist Church, Loudon, N.H.); Osgood, "History of Loudon", pp. 490-491

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meetinghouse, a two and a half story, gable roofed building with a stair tower (with entry) on each gable end, and a main entry in the center of the lateral roadside facade. The interior had box pews on the main floor, a high pulpit with a sounding board in the center of the rear lateral wall, and a gallery filled with more pews on three sides of the room. The meeting house was used for town meetings and elections and for the religious services of the Congregationalists.⁴⁷ The town meeting refused in 1792 to allow the Baptists to use the building⁴⁸ and refused again in 1810 to allow the Free Will Baptists and the Methodists even part time use of the meetinghouse.⁴⁹ But, eventually, a more tolerant view prevailed. In 1823, the Free Will Baptists were allowed to use the meetinghouse half of the time.⁵⁰ And, in 1839, when the Congregationalists built their own new church, the Free Will Baptists were left in virtually undisputed possession of the meetinghouse on Sundays.⁵¹

In the 1820's, efforts were made to modernize the building. A March 1822 town meeting voted to repair and alter the meetinghouse, replacing the two porches on the gable ends with a new porch, with entry and stair tower, on the roadside facade.⁵² Townspeople chose this opportunity to propose other architectural changes. But, the voters defeated an article to add a steeple to the proposed roadside porch at a September 1822 town meeting⁵³ and a petitioned article to build, instead of the roadside porch, a porch with belfry and steeple on the southeast gable end at an August 1823 town meeting.⁵⁴ Indeed, the town meeting decided in June, 1823 that the committee chosen to make the repairs and alterations to the meetinghouse could simply repair the old porches, rather than build a new one on the roadside, if they so decided.⁵⁵ There is no record of what changes were actually made, and no evidence that the roadside porch was built. So, it may well be that no significant alterations were made to the building. These various plans do, however, suggest a growing interest in updating the building and giving it a more fashionable appearance.

The impetus for the modernization of the meetinghouse apparently now passed to the Free Will Baptists. On a petitioned article, the March 1840 town meeting agreed "to grant the Freewill Baptist Society... the right to

47. Osgood "History of Loudon", p.491

48. "Loudon Clerk's Book of Records No. 1", pp.160 and 162

49. "Town Book No. 3" (manuscript, Loudon Town Offices, Loudon, N.H.), pp. 112-113

50. Robert F. Lawrence, THE NEW HAMPSHIRE CHURCHES (Claremont, 1856), p.396

51. Lawrence, p. 398

52. "Town Book No. 3", pp. 224 and 227

53. "Town Book No. 3", pp. 228-229

54. "Town Book No. 3", p. 238

55. "Town Book No. 3", p. 237

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occupy the Meeting House as a place of public worship and to make such alterations in the construction of the same as may be deemed expedient".⁵⁶ No recorded alteration to the building was made following this 1840 vote. And, the March 1845 town meeting turned down a proposal that the town pay a "portion of the expense of repairing the outside of the old meeting house".⁵⁷ The Baptists considered building a new church, instead of altering the old meetinghouse, and petitioned the annual March 1847 town meeting for the right to erect a church on town land southeast of the meetinghouse.⁵⁸ But, instead the annual town meeting appointed a committee to confer with the Baptists on the renovation of the meetinghouse.⁵⁹ At a special town meeting two and a half weeks later, the committee reported that the Baptists proposed "that they have the upper part of the town house for a meeting house, with a privilege in the lower part for an entry and stairway on the easterly end and the town to have a passage way through the entry into the lower part of the house", which would become the town hall. The Town and the Baptists were to share equally the cost of repairing the exterior and were each to be responsible for their own windows.⁶⁰ The special town meeting agreed to the proposal.⁶¹ The meetinghouse was then remodeled by the internal division of the building, the installation of the belfry, and the fitting up of the southeast gable end as the main facade with the main entry. These changes were finished by January 15, 1848, when the Baptist Society's committee on the renovations made its report and sold the pews in the new second story church.⁶² The March 1850 town meeting instructed the selectmen "to furnish and finish a room in the [east] corner of the town hall suitable for the selectmen to meet to do business, and to deposit papers in the selectmen's hands and reports, books, and papers in the hands of the town clerk, which are liable to be lost being moved from place to place".⁶³

It would appear that, since the 1850 fitting out of the selectmen's office, the internal layout and the basic functions of rooms in the building have not changed. The changes that have been made since the mid 19th century have largely been limited to interior decoration and the addition of modern utilities and emergency exits. Besides such minor items as signs, lights, and flowerboxes, the exterior changes have been limited to the

56. "Town Book No. 8, 1837-1855" (manuscript, Loudon Town Offices, Loudon, N.H.), pp. 51 and 57

57. "Town Book No. 8, 1837-1855", pp. 154 and 163

58. "Town Book No. 8, 1837-1855", pp. 233-234

59. "Town Book No. 8, 1837-1855", p. 244

60. "Town Book No. 8, 1837-1855", pp. 249-251

61. "Town Book No. 8, 1837-1855", p. 251

62. untitled report of building committee, dated January 15, 1848 (copy, Loudon Center Free Will Baptist Church, Loudon, N.H.)

63. "Town Book No. 8, 1837-1855", pp. 325 and 333

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Loudon Town Hall

installation of the bell, the covering of the roof with metal, the loss of the lower railing on the belfry tower, the installation of stained glass in the second story windows, the replacement of the main entry with double doors, and the adding of two exits on the northeast facade, a first story door with wheelchair ramp, and a second story door with fire escape. The exterior therefore appears virtually as it did in 1847. The town hall and selectmen's office in the first story were renovated in 1891-92, but have seen little important change since then, save for voting booths and new furnaces in the town hall, and cabinets and bookcases in the selectmen's office. Essentially, the town rooms are still late 19th century in character. The church used portions of the building, the stairhall, anteroom and auditorium, have undergone two major renovations, in 1878 and 1922-23. Only a few changes of any consequence, such as the addition of the chair lift and the linoleum floors, were made after 1923. The church rooms therefore still reflect the taste of the church members of the late 19th century and the early 20th century. The grounds have seen the addition of a flagpole, a parking area, and a town garage. (The present town garage, built in 1975-76, does not qualify for the National Register, so it has not been included in this nomination.) Basically, the Town Hall and its grounds retain their integrity for the period of significance.

Historically, the Loudon Town Hall is significant for its over two centuries of use as a town hall, a record surpassed by only one other building in Merrimack County. From September 1779 through March 1981, the Loudon Town Hall was used for all town meetings.⁶⁴ (As the town's population has grown dramatically in recent years, the Town Hall had become too small by 1982 to accommodate the town's voters attending town meetings. And the town meetings have since been held in other larger facilities.⁶⁵) Discussions of local politics and town affairs undoubtedly took place elsewhere. But the actual decisions of local government were made at the town meetings in the Town Hall for 202 years. The Town Hall has also been used as the voting place for local, county, state, and federal elections from that same town meeting in September 1779 to the present.⁶⁶ The selectmen's office was the only town owned office from the time of its construction in 1850 until 1976, when another office was provided in the new town garage.⁶⁷

Some town officials, such as the town clerk and the tax collector, used

64. See the minutes of town meetings in the Loudon town records stored at the Loudon Town Offices and the N.H. Division of Records Management and Archives.

65. ANNUAL REPORT OF THE TOWN OF LOUDON FOR THE YEAR ENDING DECEMBER 31, 1981 (Concord:1982), pp.6, 15-16

66. See the records of elections in the Loudon town records, in the Loudon Town Offices and the N.H. Division of Records Management and Archives.

67. Interview of Eileen Maxfield by David Ruell, November 29, 1989; interviews of Guy Deering and Clayton Currier by David Ruell, December 5, 1989

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Loudon Town Hall

their homes for the conduct of town business during that period.⁶⁸ But, the office in the Town Hall was the meeting place for the selectmen, the administrators of the town government, and the depository for town records, including the records of the town clerk and tax collector.⁶⁹ So, in many ways, the Loudon Town Hall was the center, indeed the only home, of the municipal government for virtually all of Loudon's history. (In Merrimack County, only the Canterbury Town Hall, built as the town meetinghouse in 1751-56, first used for town meetings in 1753, and remodeled as the town hall in 1825, has a longer history of use for town meetings and elections.⁷⁰ The Canterbury Town Hall was used for town meetings through 1973 and continues to be used for elections to the present day.⁷¹)

Local government by town meetings and boards of selectmen has been the standard form of municipal government in New Hampshire from the colonial period to modern times. The town halls, where town meetings and elections have been held to decide major issues and to choose officials, and where selectmen have met to discuss the daily affairs of town government, have an historical importance in the area of local government comparable to that of the state and federal capitols in the areas of state and national government. The Loudon Town Hall is a well preserved, excellent example of these important buildings and should be recognized for its central role in the governmental history of a typical New Hampshire town.

68. Ibid.

69. Ibid.; Within the past fifty years, the Town Hall was also used as the meeting place for other town boards, such as the Planning Board and the Zoning Board of Adjustment. (Interview of Roger Maxfield and Richard Malfait by David Ruell, February 21, 1990)

70. Lyford, HISTORY OF THE TOWN OF CANTERBURY...., pp.21-26,219-224; interview of Pat Andrews by David Ruell, November 19, 1989

71. ANNUAL REPORTS OF THE TOWN OFFICERS OF THE TOWN OF CANTERBURY, N.H. FOR THE YEAR ENDING DECEMBER 31, 1972 (Concord:1973), p.6; ANNUAL REPORTS OF THE TOWN OFFICERS OF THE TOWN OF CANTERBURY, N.H. FOR THE YEAR ENDING DECEMBER 31, 1973 (Concord:1974), p.6; interview of Cheryl Gordon by David Ruell, February 27, 1990

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JANUARY 31, 1937 (Concord: Evans Printing Co., 1937)

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(no publication data)

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Loudon Town Hall

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Loudon Town Hall

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interview of Eileen Maxfield by David Ruell, November 29, 1989

interview of Roger Maxfield by David Ruell, February 21, 1990

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Loudon Town Hall

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Loudon Town Hall

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Loudon Town Hall

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interview of Tracy Messer by David Ruell, November 20, 1989

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Loudon Town Hall

Verbal Boundary Description

northwest gable end of the Loudon Town Hall at a distance of 22 feet, for approximately 160 feet to the top edge of a steep wooded bank behind the Town Hall; then proceeds southeasterly and southerly along the top edge of the bank to the end of a stone wall (near the east corner of the Town Hall parking lot); then proceeds southeast approximately 60 feet along the stone wall; then proceeds northeast approximately 20 feet along the stone wall; then proceeds southeast approximately 130 feet along the stone wall to the right-of-way of Youngs Hill Road; then proceeds southwest along the right-of-way of Youngs Hill Road to the point of beginning, the intersection of Youngs Hill Road and Clough Hill Road. The boundary is shown as a dashed line on the accompanying sketch map entitled "Loudon Town Hall, Loudon, N.H.". (The nominated property appears as part of Lot 9 on Loudon Tax Map 33.)

Boundary Justification

portions of the town owned lot. That section of the lot the northwest of the Town Hall that includes the town garage (built in 1975-76), its parking area, and associated service areas, has lost its historical integrity and was therefore excluded by the arbitrary line that serves as the northwest boundary line of the nominated property. That section of the lot to the northeast of the top edge of the steep wooded bank and the stone wall that mark the northeast boundary of the nominated property was excluded because it is not visually or historically associated with the Loudon Town Hall. (Much of this low lying area is now used for the storage of sand, gravel, and other materials.) The top edge of the bank and the stone wall mark the visual boundary between the Town Hall grounds and the excluded area.

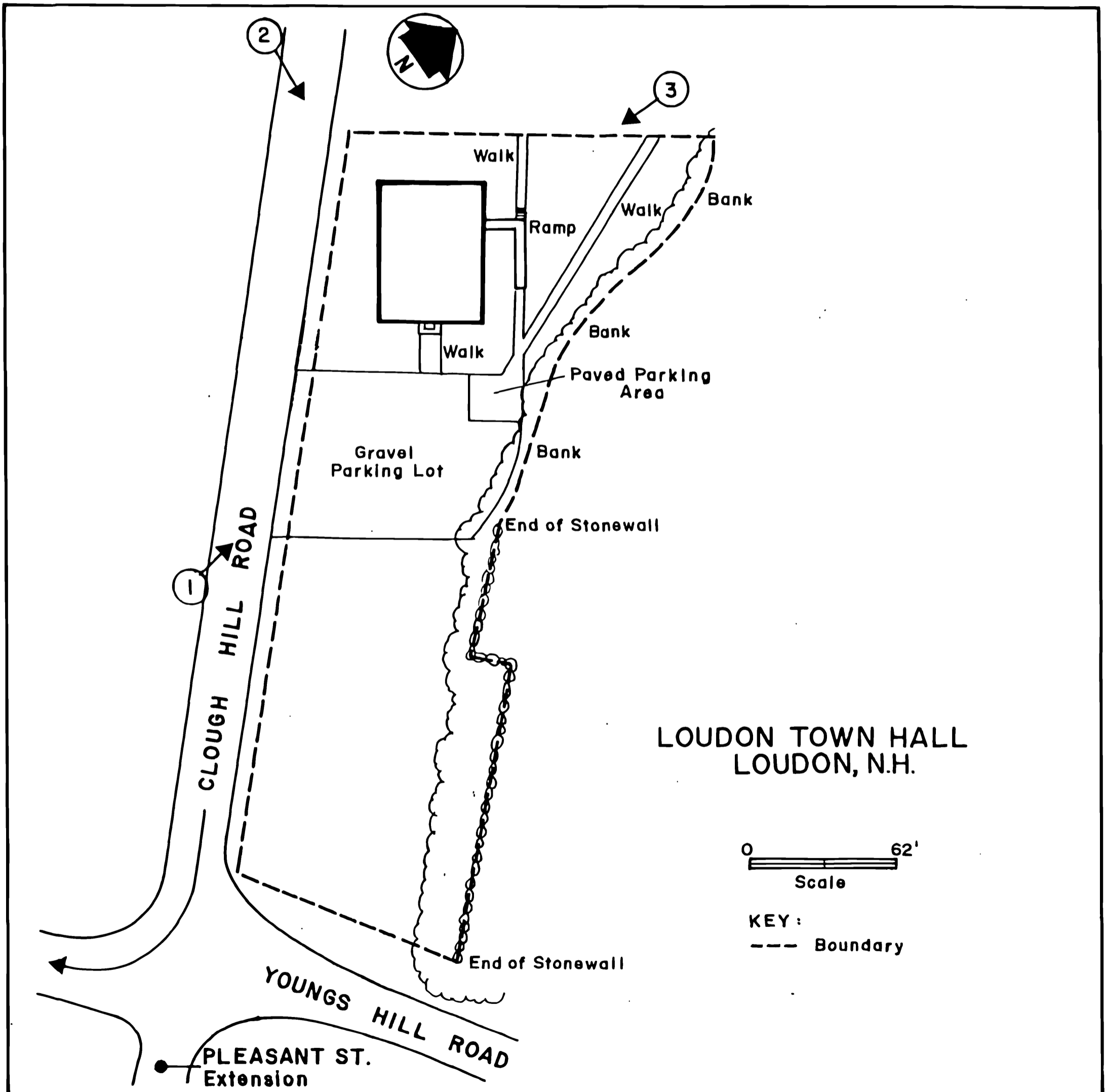
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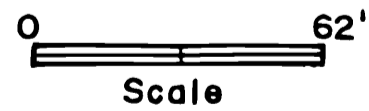
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Loudon Town Hall



LOUDON TOWN HALL
LOUDON, N.H.



KEY:
--- Boundary

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Section number _____ Page _____

Loudon Town Hall

Owner: Town of Loudon
 P.O. Box 7837
 Loudon, New Hampshire 03301-7837

7/2/91

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Section number _____ Page _____

Name change from Loudon Center Freewill Baptist Church--Loudon Town Hall to
Loudon Town Hall Merrimack County, NEW HAMPSHIRE

ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION APPROVAL

for Keeper *William Byers*
7/2 2/91

United States Department of the Interior
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National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Loudon Town Hall/Loudon Center
Freewill Baptist Church

Section number _____ Page _____

AMENDMENT

This continuation sheet is submitted to supercede that sent earlier (December 1990) concerning a property originally listed to the Register (September 5, 1990) as Loudon Town Hall in Loudon, New Hampshire.

We ask that the name officially be as follows:

Historic Name: Loudon Town Hall

Other Names: Loudon Center Freewill Baptist Church;
Loudon Town House; Loudon Meeting House



Nancy C. Muller, Director
NH State Historic Preservation Officer

June 26, 1991

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number _____ Page _____

Name change from Loudon Town Hall to Loudon Center Freewill Baptist Church/
Loudon Town Hall, Merrimack County, NEW HAMPSHIRE

ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION APPROVAL

for
Keeper Alvin J. Green 12/17/90

**United States Department of the Interior
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**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Loudon Center Freewill Baptist
Church/Loudon Town Hall

Section number _____ Page _____

AMENDMENT

This continuation sheet is submitted to request two technical clarifications concerning the property originally listed (September 5, 1990) as Loudon Town Hall in Loudon, New Hampshire.

The first regards a name change, to "Loudon Center Freewill Baptist Church/Loudon Town Hall", as this is the name by which the building has always been known. Secondly, it should be noted that the building is situated on the Parsonage Lot, on the southeast side of the School Lot, rather than on the School Lot. The structure has occupied this site since its original construction, so this clarification does not affect boundaries.



R. Stuart Wallace, Director
NH State Historic Preservation Officer

December 4, 1990