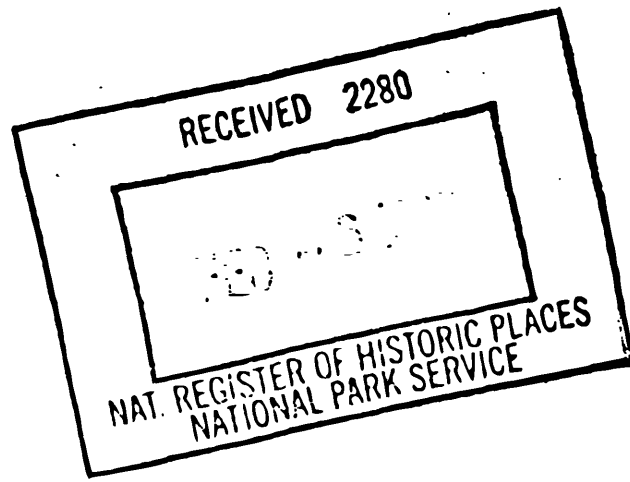


NPS Form 10-900
1024-0018
(Rev. 10-90)



196

OMB No.

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

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM**

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name SMITH MEETING HOUSE

other names/site number NA

2. Location

street & number South Corner of intersection of Smith Meetinghouse, NA not for publication
Parsonage Hill, and Joe Jones Roads

city or town Gilmanston NA vicinity

state New Hampshire code NH county Belknap code 001 zip code 03237

3. 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. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Nancy C. Miller 1/29/98
Signature of certifying official Date
New Hampshire
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting or other official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

Name of Property SMITH MEETING HOUSE

County and State BELKNAP COUNTY NH

4. National Park Service Certification

- I, hereby certify that this property is:
- 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 Keeper Beth Sarge Date of Action 3/23/98

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)
(count)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

- building(s)
 - district
 - site
 - structure
 - object

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	buildings
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	sites
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	structures
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	objects
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

Name of related multiple property listing (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)
NA

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)
instructions)

Cat: RELIGION/religious facility Sub: _____

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: RELIGION/religious facility Sub: _____

SOCIAL/meeting hall

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

MID 19th CENTURY/greek revival

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation
Granite

roof
Shingle

walls
Weatherboard

other

Narrative Description (Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

Name of Property SMITH MEETING HOUSE

County and State BELKNAP COUNTY NH

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria (Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.

B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.

C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.

D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.

B removed from its original location.

C a birthplace or a grave.

D a cemetery.

E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.

F a commemorative property.

G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

c. 1840 – C. 1900

Significant Dates

c. 1840

c. 1900

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

NA

Cultural Affiliation

NA

Architect/Builder

UNKNOWN

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

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 # _____

Name of repository: First Congregational Society in Gilmanton

Name of Property SMITH MEETING HOUSE

County and State BELKNAP NH

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property less than one

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

	Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
1	<u>19</u>	<u>308660</u>	<u>4809510</u>	3	_____	_____
2	_____	_____	_____	4	_____	_____

See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title David Ruell
*James Garvin/Christine Fonda
organization Lakes Region Planning Commission date January 1998
*NH Division of Historical Resources
street & number 16 Hill Street telephone 603-968-7716
*19 Pillsbury Street *603-271-6437
city or town Ashland state NH zip code 03217
*Concord *NH *03301

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name First Congregational Society in Gilmanton
street & number RR #1 Box 1430 telephone _____
city or town Gilmanton state NH zip code 0323

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 7 Page 1

Smith Meeting House
Belknap, New Hampshire

DESCRIPTION:

The Smith Meeting House is a one-story meeting house that measures 48'-6½" in length and 38'-5½" in width. It stands on a foundation with split granite underpinning at grade level and a full basement below grade. The building has a frame of heavy timber, with clapboard walls and a wood-shingled roof. Its façade faces southwest and has two five-panel doors at the floor level, with three windows placed above them to light a small choir gallery at the southern end of the auditorium. Two of these windows are fitted with 6-over-6 sashes glazed with clear glass. The central window is filled with stained glass bearing a floral motif above a cross and crown enclosed within a circle that displays the words, "God Is Our Friend/In Him We Trust." At the bottom of the window is the legend, "In Memory of My Ancestor/Fred P. Ham." The two front doors are reached by a set of wooden steps, and each door has five panels surrounded by Grecian ogee mouldings. Door and window casings on the front, as on the other sides of the building, are simple flat boards. The front eaves of the building are marked by two-part rake boards.

Each side of the building has four evenly-spaced windows, each with a set of six-over-six sashes, flat casings, and heavy three-inch-deep sills. The sides of the building have heavy eaves cornices with flat crown and bed mouldings; these return a short distance around the corners of the front and rear walls.

The rear (northeast) elevation of the building has two first-floor windows that provide illumination for a dais within, and a small six-over-six gable window that provides the only light to an attic area over the auditorium. Placed just outside the rear first-floor windows are two brick chimneys that rise along the rear wall of the building and serve two wood-burning stoves that heat the meeting house. These chimneys are stepped back to somewhat smaller dimensions above the roof line of the structure.

Within, the building has square plastered vestibules in each front corner. These are entered by the two exterior doors, and provide access to the auditorium through two interior doors; four-light transom sashes above each of the inside doors admit some light from the auditorium into the vestibules when the vestibule doors are closed. Between the vestibule projections is a choir gallery which is reached by a narrow stairway leading from the southeastern vestibule and contains several pews that stand on a floor that is pitched toward the dais at the opposite end of the room. The choir gallery has a plastered lower wall that projects forward from the two vestibule enclosures and is capped by a wooden cornice. Above this cornice are five turned baluster-shaped posts with ball

**United States Department of the Interior
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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 7 Page 2

Smith Meeting House
Belknap, New Hampshire

DESCRIPTION (continued):

finials; these probably once supported a rod that held a curtain or served as a book rest for the front seats.

The auditorium is a plainly-finished room with a floor of unpainted southern yellow pine boards, a painted wainscoting that runs just beneath the window sills, plastered walls and ceiling, and a low dais or platform, sheathed with southern yellow pine boards, running across the full width of the rear or northeastern wall of the building. The room is lighted by seven electric fixtures with white glass globes hung from chains, and by a four-branch kerosene chandelier and several kerosene wall brackets. The auditorium is furnished with a number of wooden pews, both old and new; all have paneled ends and downcurving scroll-shaped arms at each end.

The balance of the nominated property consists of a grassy lot with a few deciduous shade trees.

EARLIER APPEARANCE:

It should be recognized that the meeting house as seen today is essentially in the condition in which it was placed around the turn of the century as a result of the restoration campaign that began in 1898. As related in Dr. Albion H. French's "Old Gilmanton Matters" in *Granite Monthly* 41 (1909) and in Edward J. Maher's *A Brief History of the Smith Meeting House, Gilmanton, New Hampshire* (Gilmanton Historical Society 1970), the structure had fallen into nearly abandoned and ruinous condition by the late 1800s. A group of dedicated inhabitants formed the "Old Smith Meeting House Improvement Society" about 1898 and proceeded to raise funds to restore the building. In order to fund the re-laying of the auditorium floor, the group sold the former pews. To raise funds for other needs, they held annual "Entertainments and Fairs," which quickly merged and became synonymous with Gilmanton's Old Home Week celebrations. Over a period of years, the Society succeeded in putting the building into the condition in which it essentially remains today.

In the course of their work, the Society made some changes to the structure. As mentioned, they sold the old pews, thereby gaining an open meeting hall (which may have been one of their aims) and raising enough money to re-floor the auditorium with narrow boards of southern yellow pine, a wood which had become widely available and was preferred for flooring by the late 1800s. They built the dais or platform at the northern end of the room, taking care to keep the Empire-style reading desk that had been put in the building in 1840. They replaced the old twenty-over-twenty

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

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 7 Page 3

Smith Meeting House
Belknap, New Hampshire

EARLIER APPEARANCE (continued):

window sashes (which accounts say were badly damaged) with the present six-over-six sashes, and apparently replaced the casings and sills as well. They installed window blinds (which are now stored in the nearby woodshed/privy building) on all windows. They replaced the old six-panel front doors (which resembled the doors now remaining in the interior of the vestibules) with modern doors having five horizontal panels and wide applied panel mouldings. They re-clapboarded the building, omitting a flat-board water table which appears at the sill level in an old photograph and applying their new clapboards with a wider exposure to the weather than the old. They replaced an old chimney that rose through the roof (and was probably suspended in the roof framing) with a pair of safer chimneys at the rear wall.

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

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 8 Page 4

Smith Meeting House
Belknap, New Hampshire

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE:

The Smith Meeting House is eligible for the National Register under Criterion C for significance in architecture. It is a well-preserved mid-19th-century vernacular church. This building type was a popular one at time in New Hampshire's Lakes Region; this is the only example in the town of Gilmanton. It is characterized by its low massing, gable-front orientation, and two entries on the front façade. The meeting house possesses integrity of location, setting, design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association for the period c. 1840 when first constructed, to c. 1900 when it was rehabilitated after a period of neglect.

The Smith Meeting House derives its name from its predecessor, the Gilmanton town meetinghouse, which was named for Rev. Isaac Smith, the town's first Congregational minister, who preached in the building from its construction in 1774-75, to his death in 1817. The meetinghouse was not finally finished until 1790, and was seldom used for town meetings after 1797, when the town began to meet at the Gilmanton Academy. The maintenance of the building therefore fell increasingly on the First Congregational Society, founded about 1816. By the late 1830's, the two story meetinghouse was in disrepair, and at the end of the decade, it was torn down. The salvaged materials were used to build the present smaller, one story church, which nevertheless retains the old name. The dates of the demolition of the old building and of the construction of the new building are a matter of some small dispute. The historians of the period, the town historian writing in 1845 and a church historian writing in 1856, agreed that the meetinghouse was torn down in 1839 and the new building erected in 1840. A later historian of the building dates the demolition of the old building to 1838 and the erection of the present church to 1839. The new church is said to have cost \$625. The congregation of the Smith Meeting House had been seriously reduced in the two decades before the building of the new church by the formation of two other Congregational churches in Gilmanton, in the villages of Gilmanton Corner to the west and Gilmanton Iron Works to the east. The remaining rural territory between the two villages could not really support a Congregational church of its own, particularly as the hill farms of the area declined after the Civil War. The building was little used in the latter part of the 19th century and fell into some disrepair. However, in 1897, Sylvester J. Gale decided to do something about the decaying building and convinced others to join him in an attempt to preserve the building. The Old Smith Meeting House Improvement Society was formally organized in 1898. And, within the next few years the church was repaired and refurbished.

Since the early 20th century, the Smith Meeting House has been well looked after and the centerpiece of Gilmanton's Old Home Week activities. It survives as an expression of a popular regional building type, the only such example within the town.

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

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 9 Page 5 _____

Smith Meeting House
Belknap, New Hampshire

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Daniel Lancaster, *The History of Gilmanton* (Gilmanton:1845).

Edward J. Maher, *A Brief History of Smith Meeting House, Gilmanton, New Hampshire* (Gilmanton: 1970).

Albion H. French "Old Gilmanton Matters: Historical Memoranda and Biographical Notes" Granite Monthly (1909) vol. 41, pp. 249-265.

Robert F. Lawrence, *The New Hampshire Churches* (Claremont: 1856).

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

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 10 Page 6 _____

Smith Meeting House
Belknap, New Hampshire

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION:

Boundaries of the nominated property are indicated by the heavy black line on the attached sketch map.

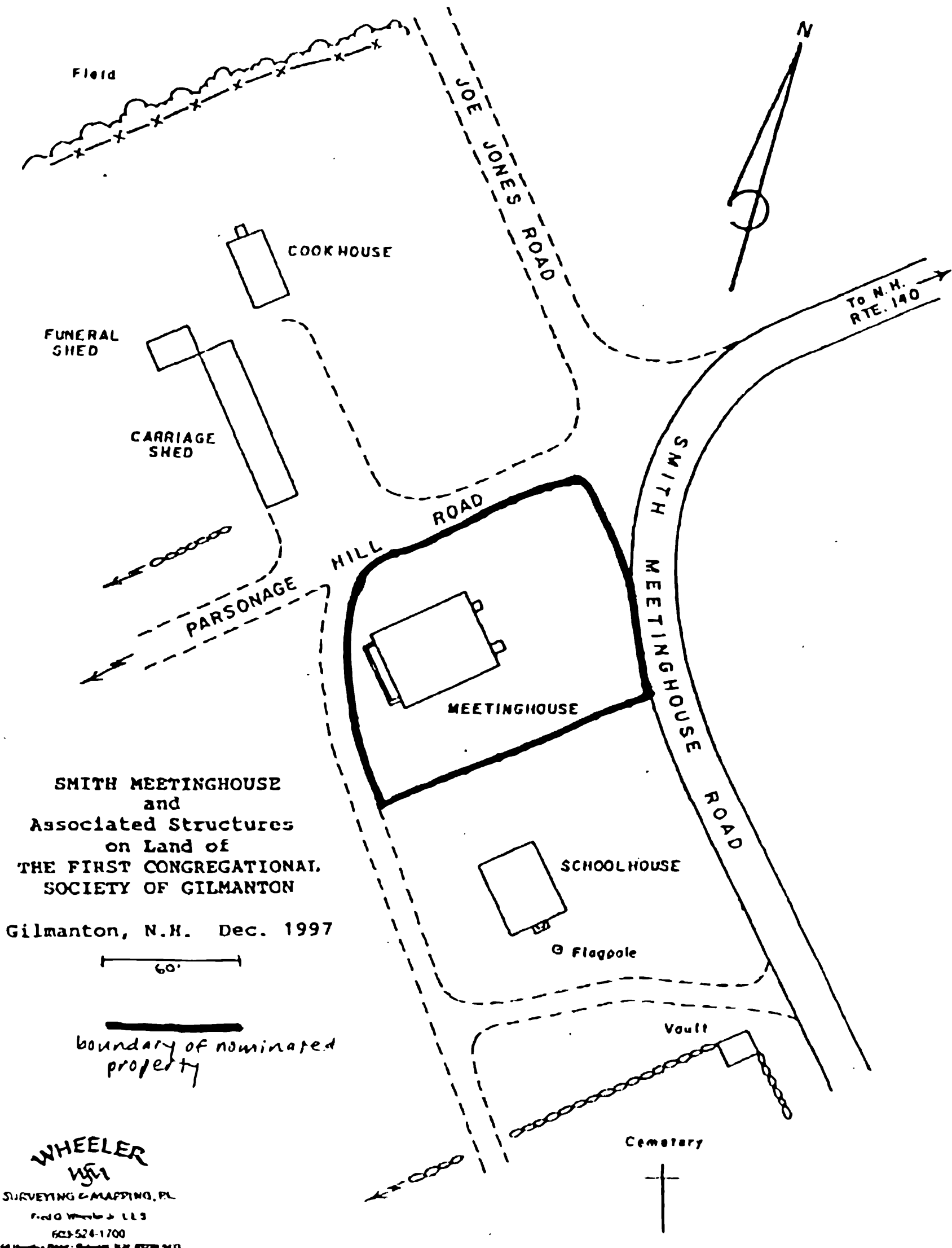
BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION:

The boundaries of the nominated property include the Smith Meeting House and its immediate setting. The building was erected on this site c.1840

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number _____ Page 7



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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number _____ Page _____

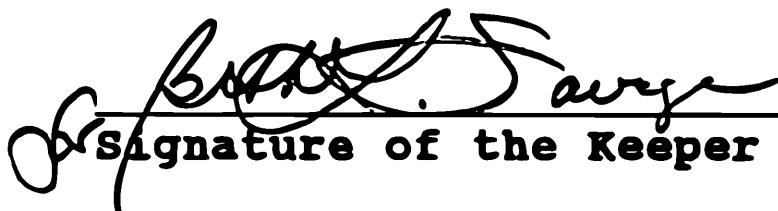
SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

NRIS Reference Number: 98000196 **Date Listed:** 03/23/98

Smith Meeting House Belknap NH
Property Name **County** **State**

N/A
Multiple Name

This property is determined eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.


Signature of the Keeper

3/23/98
Date of Action

=====
Amended Items in Nomination:

Level of Significance

The appropriate level of significance for this property is "local."

This information was discussed with NESHPO staff by telephone.

DISTRIBUTION:
National Register property file
Nominating Authority (without attachment)