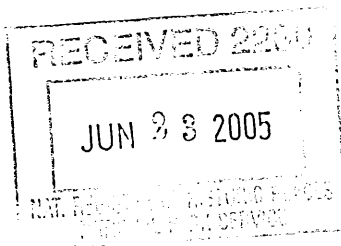


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service



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 Grafton District Schoolhouse No. 2

other names/site number Old Grafton Fire House

2. Location

street & number 217 Main Street

not for publication n/a

city or town Grafton vicinity n/a

state Vermont code VT county Windham code 025

zip code 05146

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this x 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 x meets ___ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant ___ nationally x statewide ___ locally. (___ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Suzanne C. Daniels National Register Specialist 6-22-05
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

Vermont State Historic Preservation Office
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/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

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): _____

Edson A. Beall 8/11/05

bar

Signature of Keeper

Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)

- 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

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

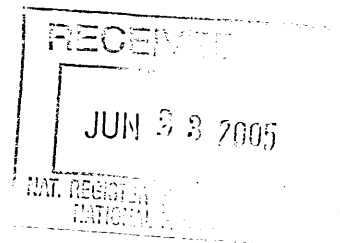
Number of contributing resources previously listed in the
National Register 0

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

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: <u>Education</u>	Sub: <u>School</u>
<u>Commerce/Trade</u>	<u>Specialty Store</u>
<u>Social</u>	<u>Meeting Hall</u>
<u>Recreation and Culture</u>	<u>Music Facility</u>
<u>Government</u>	<u>Fire Station</u>



Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: <u>Commerce/Trade</u>	Sub: <u>Specialty Store</u>
<u>Recreation and Culture</u>	<u>Music Facility</u>

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

Greek Revival

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation stone

roof metal

walls weatherboard

other _____

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

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 a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

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

Property is:

- 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
- Education
- Community Planning and Development
- Industry
- Entertainment/Recreation
- Politics/Government

Period of Significance 1835-1955

Significant Dates c. 1835

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

n/a

Cultural Affiliation n/a

Architect/Builder unknown

Narrative Statement of Significance (Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

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: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property .25 acres

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

	Zone Easting	Northing	Zone Easting	Northing
1	<u>18</u>	<u>694528</u>	<u>4782674</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 Paula Sagerman, Historic Preservation Consultant

organization _____ date March 16, 2005

street & number 7 Winter Haven Drive telephone (802) 464-5179

city or town Wilmington state VT zip code 05363

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 Windham Foundation

street & number 225 Townshend Road, P.O. Box 70 telephone (802) 843-2211

city or town Grafton state VT zip code 05146

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.

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
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Section 7 Page 1

**Grafton District Schoolhouse No. 2
Grafton, Windham County, Vermont**

Description

The c. 1835 former District No. 2 Schoolhouse is located on Main Street in the historic village of Grafton, Vermont. This two-story wood frame Greek Revival style building is an intact and good example of a mid nineteenth century village schoolhouse that was later adapted to other historic uses. It was constructed as a schoolhouse, but only served that purpose until 1867, when the two village schoolhouses were consolidated into a new graded school. Afterwards, the building served as a tin shop, and then was an undertaking and coffin shop. In 1922, the second story became the home of the Grafton Cornet Band, and in 1939, the first story became the village fire station. In 1992, the fire department moved into a new fire house and the Windham Foundation acquired the building. Since then, it has been a gift shop and the home of the band. The building retains its integrity of location, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association, and there are no threats to its integrity. Due to the alteration of the first story of the front elevation and the interior of the first story as a result of the many changes of use, its integrity of design is slightly reduced. The building is well-maintained by the Windham Foundation, which intends to preserve its integrity.

Setting

Grafton is a rural town (population about 600) located in north central Windham County in the upper valley of the Saxtons River, which runs east through Rockingham into the Connecticut River. Grafton village is at the confluence of the north and south branches of the Saxtons River, in the center of the town. Surrounding the village are sparsely developed rolling hills with historic farmsteads, and there is one other small remote hamlet called Houghtonville.

Grafton is the quintessential rural Vermont village. It contains a Main Street (Vermont Route 121), and at the center of the village, Main Street intersects with the Townshend Road, creating a focal point. Main Street continues east into Mechanicsville, an extension of the village that follows the Saxtons River. There are also a few side roads off of Main Street and Townshend Road that are within the village. These streets are densely settled with mostly nineteenth century wood frame buildings and very few twentieth-century structures. Most of the resources are single family homes in the Federal and Greek Revival styles, and other historic buildings include a hotel, town hall, general store, a former post office, another former schoolhouse, and two churches. The village appears to be eligible as a National Register of Historic Places historic district, and many of the properties also appear to be individually eligible for the National Register. There are three buildings in the village that have already been listed on the National

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Section 7 Page 2

**Grafton District Schoolhouse No. 2
Grafton, Windham County, Vermont**

Register, two residences and one church. All of the historic buildings in the village are well-maintained and retain their historic integrity, and there are no intrusions, including utility poles and wires.

The former District No. 2 Schoolhouse (hereinafter called the schoolhouse) is located at 217 Main Street. It sits on a $\frac{1}{4}$ acre triangular lot in close proximity to the south bank of the north branch of the Saxtons River. The building faces south and has a small setback from the street behind a paved parking area. In close proximity to the west side of the building is the former post office, which is also being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places. Behind the building, the grassy lot has scattered mature deciduous trees.

Exterior

The two-story two bay by four bay wood frame structure has a rectangular footprint oriented perpendicular to the street, a mortared fieldstone foundation, clapboard siding, and a front-gable standing seam metal roof with boxed cornices and pedimented gables. Architectural trim includes an entablature encircling the roof, wide double-band gable rakes, eave moldings, corner pilasters with plain capitals, and flat-stock window and door casings. The capitals are unusual as they are projecting and tapered rather than flat. The entablature covers the upper window lintels. Along the west elevation, there is an enclosed staircase that leads from the front of the building to a side door at the second bay of the second story. It has clapboard siding, a flat sheet metal roof that follows the slope of the staircase, a midway landing, and is supported by a square post. The staircase provides a separate entry to the building for the Cornet Band. There is an interior ridge fire alarm at the front of the building, and a small brick interior ridge chimney at the rear.

The front gable wall has two equidistant modern wood garage doors. Each door has six horizontal pane windows (two rows of three). Above each door is a second-story window. The east elevation has four regularly-spaced windows at each story, except for the left bay of the first story, which has a modern wood door with a six-pane light. The doorway is protected by a modern gabled hood supported by knee braces. The west elevation has regularly-spaced windows where the wall is not blocked by the exterior staircase. The two window openings that are blocked originally contained windows, as the window casings survive. The rear gable wall has three irregularly-spaced windows at the first story. All of the windows are six-over-six wood units.

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Section 7 Page 3

**Grafton District Schoolhouse No. 2
Grafton, Windham County, Vermont**

Greek Revival features of the building include the front-gable orientation, pedimented gables, entablatures and wide gable rakes, and corner pilasters. The building is in excellent condition.

Interior

The first story is one large room that serves as a gift shop, plus there is a small room in the northwest corner that serves as storage. The large room has modern carpeting, homasote walls and ceilings, and flat-stock window and door casings with peaked lintelboards.

The second story has one large front-to-back room and four small rooms along the west elevation. The center small room serves as an entry hall from the exterior staircase. The rear small room is a storage closet that is accessed from both the entry hall and large room. The front small rooms are also storage; one is accessed from the entry hall, and the other from the large room. The entry hall and rear storage room project slightly into the large room, and the corner of the projection is rounded.

The second story has rough pine flooring, plaster walls and ceilings, and flat-stock window and door casings and baseboards. The ceiling of the entire second story is barrel vaulted; the walls of the small rooms cut off the west end of the vault. A few feet below the wall plates, there are exposed metal tie rods that connect the east and west walls. All of the doors at the second story, including the exterior door to the staircase, are four-panel wood doors with metal or ceramic doorknobs. At the rear of the large room is a freestanding brick chimney that appears to serve as a heating flue for the first story. At the ceiling next to the chimney is a square hole in the ceiling. Centered in the middle of the ceiling is a small square hole that may have once been for a stovepipe or the rope to the former bell tower. The enclosed staircase is unfinished and has an exposed pine structure, plywood sheathing, and pine treads and risers.

Construction Chronology

It is unclear when the building was constructed, but judging by its Greek Revival features, it was constructed in the 1830s or 1840s. An earlier schoolhouse probably stood on the site, as early as 1811, when John Butterfield, who probably owned the property at the time, was paid by the School Trustees, presumably for a lease. The original schoolhouse may have been raised in the 1830s or 1840s to become the second story of the extant building, because the entablature awkwardly conceals the second story window lintels.

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**Grafton District Schoolhouse No. 2
Grafton, Windham County, Vermont**

The building remains fairly intact despite the variety of uses the building has had over the years. The exterior appearance has probably not changed since construction, except for the replacement of two features; the foundation, and the first story openings of the front gable wall. There was probably an interior ridge bell tower. Modern additions include the exterior staircase and side door hood. The foundation was rebuilt after the building was damaged during the 1938 hurricane, when it was moved from its foundation.

The front elevation originally had two outer doorways (presumably boys' and girls' entries to the schoolhouse) with four-panel doors and tall cornices. It is uncertain if there were any openings between the doorways, because the only available photographs were taken after the building had been converted to a commercial establishment. A pre-1938 photograph shows that in addition to the original doorways, there was a centered double-leaf door with pairs of tall vertical panes, flanked by individual two-over-two windows. This ensemble shared a wide cornice that matches the outer doors' cornices. After the building was converted to a fire house in 1939, the center doorway was replaced with a single centered paneled one-bay garage door. By 1971, this door was replaced with a two-bay paneled garage door with an upper row of lights. This door was later replaced with the two extant doors. The exterior staircase was added after 1971.

While the first story of the front elevation has been altered, because the building was a schoolhouse only during the nineteenth century, the side elevations remain intact. This is due to the fact that the building does not have the window alterations that occurred on Vermont schoolhouses during the early twentieth century.

The interior of the first story has no remaining historic finishes except for the window casings; the historic finishes were probably all removed when the building was converted to a fire house in 1939. The second story appears to be intact, and the finishes may be original. However, the interrupted barrel vault ceiling may indicate that the second story was originally one large room. If so, the extant floor plan dates to no later than World War II, when plaster and wood lathe were still used.

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Section 8 Page 1

**Grafton District Schoolhouse No. 2
Grafton, Windham County, Vermont**

Statement of Significance

The former Grafton District Schoolhouse No. 2 is significant as an intact example of a mid nineteenth-century Greek Revival building that has served a variety of community uses over the years. It was constructed c. 1835 as a schoolhouse, which closed in 1867. After that it was a tin shop, then an undertaking establishment and coffin shop and Masonic Hall. Since 1922, the second story has been the home of the Grafton Cornet Band, and from 1939-1992, the first story served as Grafton's fire house. In 1992, the building was purchased by the Windham Foundation, and a gift shop opened on the first story. The building and its setting retain most of their historic integrity, and the building is an integral part of Grafton's historic Main Street. The former schoolhouse meets National Register Criterion A for its contribution to Grafton's and Vermont's history of community development, education, commerce, entertainment and government, and meets National Register Criterion C for its architectural merit as a Greek Revival public building. The building relates to the statewide themes of Historic Architecture and Patterns of Town Development, Culture and Government, and Industry and Commerce. It is being nominated under the Multiple Property Listing for "Educational Resources of Vermont," and meets the registration requirements for the "School" property type. The period of significance of the schoolhouse is 1835-1955, which spans the years between the approximate construction date of the schoolhouse and the fifty-year limit for National Register eligibility.

The former Grafton District Schoolhouse No. 2 (hereinafter called "the schoolhouse") is located on Main Street in Grafton village, which is a densely settled rural village comprised of intact nineteenth-century buildings. Grafton was first chartered in 1754 with the name Thomlinson. Like most Vermont towns chartered before the French and Indian War, the town could not fulfill the conditions of the charter, and in 1763, it was regranted to the original proprietors.

Like many of Vermont's early towns, Grafton's first settlement was on a hilltop, in this case, Middletown Hill, which is about a mile northwest of Grafton village. It has been reported that a man named Slack was the first settler, having arrived in 1768. However, the 1771 census reported that there were no inhabitants in Thomlinson. Middletown's first settlers arrived in the 1770s, but were temporary residents. The first permanent settlers arrived in 1780, and were from Connecticut and Massachusetts. The first recorded town meeting was held in 1783, although it is possible that town meetings had already been held for a few years prior to this. By 1791, the population of Grafton was 561, almost as high as today's population of about 600.

By the turn of the nineteenth century, Middletown village had a meeting house, a church, stores, a cemetery, and numerous residences. Besides Middletown, additional hamlets appeared,

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**Grafton District Schoolhouse No. 2
Grafton, Windham County, Vermont**

including Houghtonville, Mechanicsville, and Cambridgeport, which lies partly in Rockingham. In 1791, an auction was held for the privilege of renaming the town. The highest bidder, Joseph Axtell, paid five dollars and a jug of rum and selected the name Grafton, which was the name of his hometown in Massachusetts.

In the early nineteenth century, Grafton residents began to “move down the hill” into what is now Grafton village and adjacent Mechanicsville. Like many other Vermont towns, residents desired to move from hilltops into river valleys, not only because the area was open for development, but also to take advantage of the water power for mills. What is now known as Main Street/Route 121 was laid out in 1818. It follows the Saxtons River and connects Grafton with Rockingham to the east.

In the “lower village,” mills such as a grist mill, saw mill and cider mill were established by the 1820s. The cider mill was converted to a carding mill and woolen factory in the 1830s. By 1840, there were two grist mills, six saw mills and a fulling and carding mill in town. From the 1830s to the 1880s, there was also a carriage and sleigh factory, and Grafton was also known for the manufacture of fishing rods during the fourth quarter of the nineteenth century. Grafton’s most successful industry was soapstone. From the 1850s to the 1890s, there were two quarries in town that were operated by local citizens John L. Butterfield and Charles Smith. The soapstone was milled in Cambridgeport, worked into window sills and lintels, fireplaces, and plumbing pipes, then transported to Bellows Falls to be shipped by rail. Butterfield & Smith became the largest soapstone producer in Vermont and the second largest in the United States. By the end of the nineteenth-century, soapstone was replaced by more durable products, and the industry in general declined.

Starting in the 1810s, stores, churches, schools, and a tavern, were established in the “lower village,” and by the 1830s Grafton village and Middletown competed for the status of being the center of town. By the 1840s, Grafton village had become the established center and Middletown became a rural area comprised of farmsteads. The population of Grafton did not grow as a result of the expansion of the new village; instead, there was just a shift in where people lived. The population peaked in 1820 at 1,482, which is almost 2-1/2 times today’s population.

The 1856 McClellan map reveals that Grafton village was almost as developed as it is today, and what remained of Middletown was a handful of farmsteads, a church, and a cemetery. The 1869 Beers map shows that the Middletown church was gone and that Grafton village was fully developed. Besides the numerous residences, Grafton village had two churches, a parsonage, a

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**Grafton District Schoolhouse No. 2
Grafton, Windham County, Vermont**

cemetery, a hotel, a large schoolhouse (two smaller schoolhouses had recently been closed, including the subject schoolhouse), a cabinet shop, a tin shop, three stores, a carriage shop, and a blacksmith shop. The churches, stores, hotel, former schoolhouses, and most of the residences remain standing today.

Early twentieth century industries in Grafton included logging and dairy farming, and the spacious Phelps Hotel attracted many visitors. By the mid twentieth century, these industries were dying out, many commercial establishments had closed, and agriculture was on a major decline. In 1940, Grafton reached its lowest population, 393, and many village buildings fell into disrepair.

In 1963, the Windham Foundation (which owns the subject property) was established in Grafton by Dean Mathey of Princeton, New Jersey. Mathey's cousin Mat Hall, who had a summer home in Grafton, assisted with the operation of the foundation. The purpose of the Windham Foundation was, and still is, to revitalize Grafton and provide grants to Vermont organizations. In the 1960s and 1970s it purchased about twenty-seven buildings in the village and restored them, and acquired over 1,000 acres of land surrounding the village. Today, the Windham Foundation provides long-term leases for these buildings, and operates the Old Tavern, the Grafton Village Cheese Company, and conserves the rural acreage as a recreational area open to the public. Besides historic preservation, other community enhancements undertaken by the Windham Foundation include funding the burial of all utility lines in the village and the installation of historically appropriate street lights. Today, Grafton village is one of the most historically intact and well-maintained villages in Vermont. It appears to be eligible for the National Register of Historic Places, with very few non-contributing resources.

The schoolhouse has played an important role in Grafton's history and is an integral part of the Main Street streetscape. School was first taught in Middletown by Hester Fisher in a log barn on Benjamin Dwinell's property. The first schoolhouse was reportedly constructed in Howeville in 1781, and later a brick schoolhouse was constructed in Middletown. In 1782, Vermont enacted the first state law that enabled towns to divide into school districts and form school trustee boards and raise taxes to support schools. Six years later, Grafton was divided into about ten school districts. In 1819 and 1827, two more school districts were added to the town. A "lower village" schoolhouse was probably needed by the early nineteenth century. The 1810s School Trustees records note that Dr. John Butterfield (who lived across the street from the subject building) was paid in 1811, 1812, 1816, and twice in 1819, but it is unclear what he was paid for. Perhaps school classes were held in his house until 1819, when a schoolhouse was constructed across the street on land that he owned. It is very likely that a schoolhouse was

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**Grafton District Schoolhouse No. 2
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constructed in the village by this point, but it was probably not the extant building, as it would have been too large.

It is unknown at what point the extant schoolhouse was constructed. It is possible that the original schoolhouse was raised to become the second story of a new schoolhouse, and the building was then updated with Greek Revival features. This would explain the awkward concealment of the second story window lintels by the Greek Revival roof entablature. The Greek Revival appearance of the schoolhouse suggests that it dates to anytime between the 1830s to the 1850s.

In 1836, the lower village was divided into two school districts. The subject property remained in District No. 2 and the other district became District No. 13. The boundary between the two districts was "along the upper side of the school house including premises of Mrs. Butterfield." This probably means that the part of the village west of the schoolhouse was in District No. 13. In 1839, a brick one-room schoolhouse (now a private home) was constructed at the west end of Main Street, about 1,000 feet from the subject schoolhouse. The construction of the brick schoolhouse further confuses the matter of the construction date of the subject schoolhouse, because it is unlikely that two schoolhouses were constructed in such close proximity both geographically and chronologically. Perhaps there were two small schoolhouses in the village until 1839, and the growth of the village in the 1840s necessitated a larger schoolhouse. This puts the date of the subject schoolhouse closer to the 1850s. It should also be noted that even though most nineteenth-century school districts in Vermont had their own schoolhouse, it was unusual for a small village to have two separate school districts and two schoolhouses in such close proximity to each other.

Until the 1860s, all thirteen district schoolhouses in town were one story except for the subject schoolhouse. Five of these schools survive (three brick, two wood frame), and are private homes. In 1864, the State of Vermont changed the way citizens were taxed for schools, and public education was made available to everyone. The Grafton Village Graded School was established in 1866 by combining the two village school districts, and around the corner a new, larger schoolhouse was constructed, which opened in 1867. (This building burned down in 1936.) In 1894, the further consolidation of school districts reduced the number of schools in Grafton to six, and four in 1940. Today, there is one modern elementary school, in the location of the 1867 school. The town has never provided secondary or private education.

In 1867, the subject schoolhouse became a tin shop that may have been operated by M. and J.T. Howard. The property was acquired by John L. Butterfield, who conveyed it to his grandson

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**Grafton District Schoolhouse No. 2
Grafton, Windham County, Vermont**

John Butterfield Duncan. By the late 1890s, the building became W.E.L. Walker's undertaking and coffin making establishment. It remained in this use until Walker's death in 1922. From 1871 to its disbandment in 1901, the Masonic Keystone Lodge #95 used the upper floor as a meeting room.

In 1922, the Grafton Cornet Band began leasing the second floor of the building, and had the building electrified. The band remained in this location for ten years, and in 1932, moved into the Village School House, because the band could occupy it rent-free. In 1936, when the school burned down, most of the instruments were lost. The band was almost discontinued at the time, but funds were raised for new instruments and the band has practiced in the schoolhouse since 1939.

The Grafton Cornet Band was organized in 1867, and is the oldest continuously operating cornet band in Vermont. The band was organized by Solomon F. Merrill of Keene, New Hampshire, a well-known musician at the time. The band's first meeting took place at the Phelps Hotel, now the Old Tavern at Grafton. The owner of the Phelps Hotel, Francis Phelps, was the band's first drum major, and the first band leader was Richard Clark.

The band performed on a bandstand located at the corner of Main Street and Townshend Road, in front of the Tavern. The first bandstand was built about 1870, the second bandstand was built in 1902, and the third in the early 1920s, which was made of concrete. The last bandstand was removed in the late 1920s so that the roads could be widened to accommodate automobiles. Around that time, the band also stopped wearing uniforms, and by 1940, the drum major position was eliminated. The first female to play in the band (after a vote to allow women) was Mary Palmer, who starting playing piccolo for the band in 1937.

Throughout the years, the band has performed in Windham, Windsor and Bennington Counties, playing at Memorial Day and July 4th celebrations and state and county fairs. More recently, it also has played at Alumni celebrations and fundraisers in Windham County. The band also played on horse-drawn wagons, traveling through towns during their holiday celebrations. From 1986 on, the band has performed in parades while riding on a flatbed trailer pulled by a pickup truck. Today's band members are from a widespread area: Vermont's four southern counties, New Hampshire and Massachusetts. The band plays an average of eighteen engagements annually.

The hurricane of 1938 was very destructive. In Grafton, thirteen bridges and most of the roads were washed away, and the schoolhouse, as well as the former adjacent post office, was swept

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off its foundation. After the hurricane, the schoolhouse was moved back onto a new fieldstone foundation, and restored.

For over fifty years, the building served as the Grafton Fire House. In September 1939, John B. Duncan, who at this point was the last remaining heir of the Butterfield family, had donated the property – still called the “Tin Shop” – to the Grafton Fireman’s Association, Inc., with two stipulations: if the building ceases to exist as a fire house, the property shall revert back to the heirs of Duncan; and the Grafton Band shall have the privilege to the main hall of the second floor for their home and headquarters.

This was not Grafton’s first fire house. Grafton’s first fire department, the Grafton Fire Company, was organized in 1924, and its first fire chief was Harry A. Farnsworth. That year, the Harley Leonard Garage on Kidder Hill Road was purchased by the Town to serve as the fire house. (It is now a private home.) The first two pumpers were not motorized, and in 1933 the fire company bought a 1926 Cadillac that was altered and converted to a pumper. At the same time, the first fire hoses were acquired. The first pumper is on display at the Grafton Historical Society Museum. The Grafton Firemen’s Association was organized in 1934 with the purpose of operating the new pumper equipment, and its first chief was Earl E. Wright. In 1956, the Grafton Fire Company disbanded, and all assets were given to the Grafton Firemen’s Association Inc.

In order to convert the building to a fire house, and accommodate new fire equipment over the years, alterations were undertaken at the front elevation and the interior of the building. When the building was converted to a fire house in 1939, a single-bay garage door replaced the pedestrian door, and the first story of the interior of the building was stripped of its historic features. Later, possibly to accommodate a 1968 fire truck, the garage door was widened, and in the late twentieth-century, the garage door was replaced with two garage doors in order to accommodate two fire trucks.

By about 1990, the station could no longer accommodate the increasing size of fire trucks, and the need for a rescue vehicle, which is a common problem with many historic fire stations. In 1992, a new fire station was constructed ½ mile south of the village on Route 121, in order to accommodate the size and number of modern emergency vehicles. The Windham Foundation purchased the subject building, and the deed repeats the stipulation that the second floor is for the use of the Cornet Band.

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Grafton's nineteenth-century schoolhouses are evidence of its growth and success. The schoolhouse's relatively large size in a rural village indicates the importance of education at the time. This schoolhouse is also significant due to its role as a public building that has served many community uses. For over fifty years it was an important community building as it served as both the only local fire house and the home of the Grafton Cornet Band. The conversion of a school house into a fire house is not as unusual as it seems. The 1846 two-story schoolhouse in Halifax, which is also in Windham County, was converted to a fire house in the early twentieth-century. Also, on the cover of the 1981 report, "The Firehouse: A Study of Architectural Designs in Vermont," there is an image of the Grafton fire house.

The schoolhouse has architectural significance as a good example of a Greek Revival two-story schoolhouse, and it has more stylistic details than most rural Vermont schoolhouses built during the first half of the nineteenth century. Greek Revival features include the front-gable orientation, corner pilasters, roof entablature, pedimented gable, and regularly-spaced original six-over-six windows. It is possible that the design of the schoolhouse was based on published architectural plans such as William A. Alcott's 1832 *Essay on the Construction of Schoolhouses*. His designs promoted the Greek Revival style, possibly to depict the schoolhouse as a temple of learning. One plan in this publication depicts a floor plan similar to that of the schoolhouse, with a similar footprint, front-gable orientation, two front entries, and four regularly-spaced windows at the side elevations. Double entrances were more common on schools built from published plans than those on single-entry vernacular structures. The schoolhouse is also significant because two-story schools with only one classroom on each floor are rare in Vermont. In the southern third of Vermont (Windham and Bennington Counties), there may be only two other two-story, two-room schoolhouses. One is an 1842 schoolhouse in Shaftsbury, and the other is the Halifax schoolhouse mentioned above.

Today, the first story of the former schoolhouse is one open room used as a gift shop. The second story remains the home of the Grafton Cornet Band. Both of these uses are appropriate for this historic building, and its ownership by the Windham Foundation ensures its future preservation. Although the building has not served as a fire house for thirteen years, its appearance as a fire house has been preserved.

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**Grafton District Schoolhouse No. 2
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Boundary Description

The triangular boundary of the Grafton Schoolhouse No. 2 property follows the perimeter property lines of Grafton Tax Parcel 008076. This parcel is identified on the "Village" map of the Grafton Tax Parcel maps.

Boundary Justification

The boundary is the historic and current legal property boundary of the Grafton Schoolhouse No. 2. This boundary is sufficient to convey the historic significance of this schoolhouse.

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Section Photograph Labels

**Grafton District Schoolhouse No. 2
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The following information is the same for all photographs:

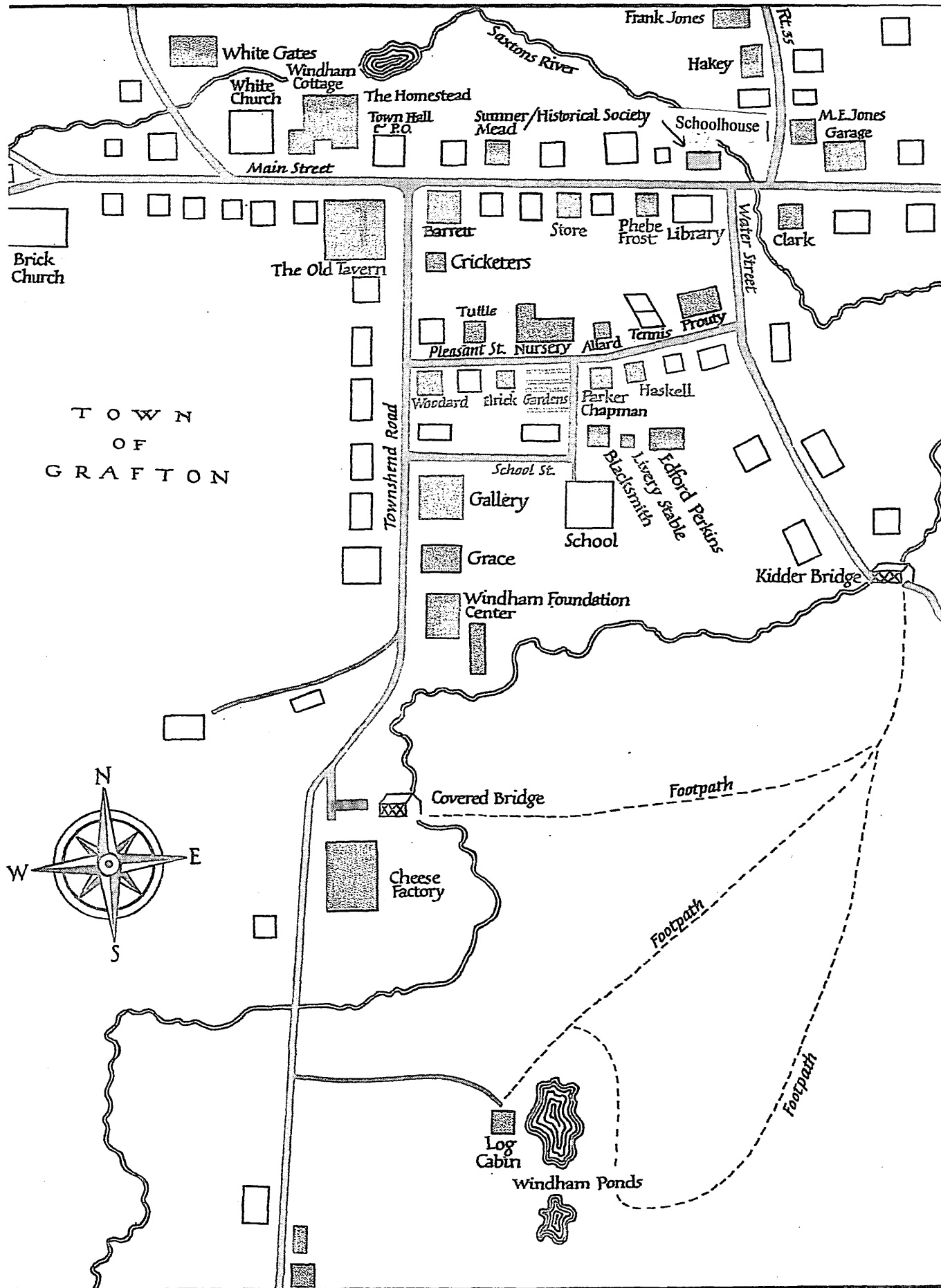
Grafton District Schoolhouse No. 2
Grafton, Windham County, Vermont
Photos by Paula Sagerman
October 2004
Electronic images on CD filed at Vermont Division for Historic Preservation

Photograph #1
Facing west on Main Street; schoolhouse is on right

Photograph #2
Facing northwest toward schoolhouse

Photograph #3
Facing southeast towards schoolhouse

Photograph #4
Facing south in second story



Map by the Windham Foundation