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United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

AUG 3 1988

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 Gordon-Nash Library  
other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number Main Street  not for publication N/A  
city, town New Hampton  vicinity N/A  
state New Hampshire code NH county Belknap code NH001 zip code 03256

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	_____	_____ sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	_____	_____ structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	_____	_____ objects
		<u>1</u>	<u>1</u> Total

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.

*R. Stuart Wallace* July 28, 1988  
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.

\_\_\_\_\_  
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:

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:)

*Beth L. Sarge* 9-15-88  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

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**6. Function or Use**

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Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Education / library

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Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Education / library

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**7. Description**

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Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

Renaissance

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Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation Granitewalls BrickSandstoneroof Slateother Copper

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**Describe present and historic physical appearance.**

The Gordon-Nash Library is a library building that stands on its own lot on the south side of Main Street (Route 132) in New Hampton village. The library building consists of three sections, the original building, erected in 1895, and two rear additions, built in 1961-2 and in 1977, that cover the rear (south) facade of the original building. The original building, with its Renaissance style ornament, is built of brick, the two modern additions of concrete block covered by brick veneer on the exterior. The original building is one story high, above a high basement on the street (north) facade, but, because of the slope of the land, is two stories high on the rear. The two story high flat roofed, rear additions were built with their upper floors on the same level as the main (street level) floor of the original building. The original building consists of a hip roofed main block, set parallel to the street, with two hip roofed projections, a shallow but wide entry pavilion in the center of the north (street) facade and another projection (of the same dimensions as the pavilion) in the center of the rear (south) facade. The rear projection is now entirely surrounded by the two rear additions, which together form a rectangular structure nearly as wide as the main block, and almost three yards deeper than the main block. The additions therefore comprise half of the present building. The 1962 addition covered the western three-quarters of the original building, while the 1977 addition covered the remaining quarter to the east of the earlier addition. The original building stands on its original location and is relatively well preserved. The exterior (save for the now covered rear facades) is virtually untouched. The interior has seen some renovations associated with the two additions. One main level room, the old reference room, was subdivided. And two main level walls were removed to improve the circulation. One basement room was subdivided to create a corridor to a rear addition. Other minor interior changes have been made over the years. But, the essential elements of the original interiors still survive largely unchanged. Basically, the original building retains its integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.

The pavilion and the street facade of the main block share a foundation of smooth Concord granite blocks. The pavilion and the three public facades of the main block also share a facing of old gold Perth Amboy brick, laid in stretcher bond with reddish brown mortar. The long narrow gold bricks are speckled with black spots, and are of two distinct shades, with the basement level bricks being somewhat darker than the main level bricks. The more common red bricks, laid in common bond, flemish variation, were

 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)  
Education  
Architecture

Period of Significance  
1895-1896

Significant Dates  
1895  
1896

Cultural Affiliation  
N/A

Significant Person  
N/A

Architect/Builder  
Fuller, James E. (architect)  
Cook Gardner & Son (builder)

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

The Gordon-Nash Library is significant under Criteria A in the area of education as the first public library building erected in Belknap County. Built in 1895 and opened to the public in 1896, the Gordon-Nash Library marked an important step in the development of the county's public library system, the movement of these still young institutions from makeshift and often inappropriate quarters to buildings specifically designed and built for use by libraries. Most of the county's public libraries have since acquired their own buildings, usually, as in the case of the Gordon-Nash Library, through the generous gift or bequest of a public spirited individual. The Gordon-Nash Library is also significant under Criteria C in the area of architecture as an attractive library building notable for its fine Renaissance style ornament and its pleasing design, the first public library building in the Lakes Region of New Hampshire to follow the Classical tradition in its design and to use a symmetrical main block with an entry pavilion.

The Gordon-Nash Library was preceded by several public libraries in Belknap County, beginning with Laconia's municipal library, which opened in 1879.<sup>1</sup> By 1895, six of the county's eleven municipalities were served by public libraries. But, none of these communities had its own public library building, as the municipalities did not have sufficient means to erect buildings for library purposes. The county's earliest public libraries were all housed in makeshift quarters, in rooms not designed for library use. As the first public library building built in the county, the Gordon-Nash Library was an important example, demonstrating the value of an appropriate library building. And that example was followed by the majority of the county's public libraries. Eight library buildings were erected between 1900 and 1928 in six of the county's town and in its one city. With one exception, these buildings were erected with private funds, usually the donation or bequest of a generous individual, not with public funds

1. The following histories and descriptions of Belknap County's libraries are based on David Ruell, PUBLIC LIBRARIES IN THE LAKES REGION, AN ARCHITECTURAL SURVEY (Meredith, N.H.:1986).

See continuation sheet

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

Emil W. Allen, Jr. "Survey of Building Needs of Gordon-Nash Library, New Hampton, N.H." May, 1961 (manuscript, Gordon-Nash Library, New Hampton, N.H.)

"AMONG THE HILLS" A SOUVENIR OF NEW HAMPTON (New Hampton, N.H.:R.A.Carver, 1896)

Ashland Item March 2, April 27, June 15, July 27, August 31, November 30, 1895; June 13, 1896

Horace G. Bradt & Associates "Additions & Alterations to Gordon-Nash Library, New Hampton, New Hampshire" (plans, Gordon-Nash Library, New Hampton, N.H.)

Bristol Weekly Enterprise June 28, August 30, 1894; March 14 & 21, May 2 & 30, July 11 & 25, August 1 & 8, September 12, October 3, 1895; January 30, February 20, April 2, May 7, 14, & 28, July 2, 1896

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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:

Gordon-Nash Library

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreage of property approximately 1.1 acres

UTM References

A 19 285925 4831250  
 Zone Easting Northing

C \_\_\_\_\_

B \_\_\_\_\_  
 Zone Easting Northing

D \_\_\_\_\_

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundary of the nominated property is described as follows: beginning at the northwest corner of the lot (a stone post on the south side of Main Street), the boundary proceeds 66 feet S 12° 30' W, then 50 feet S 8° 56' E, then 165 feet S 0° 18' E, then 82 feet S 78° 57' E, then 81 feet S 0° 21' W, then 69 feet N 86° 37' E, then 333 feet

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes the entire lot on which the Gordon-Nash Library has stood since its construction in 1895.

See continuation sheet

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title David Ruell

organization Lakes Region Planning Commission date March 28, 1988

street & number Main Street telephone 279-8171

city or town Meredith state New Hampshire zip code 03253

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exposed on the rear facade. The original building was trimmed with Long-meadow brownstone, a reddish sandstone. The basement level is topped, on all facades of the main block and the pavilion, by a deep sandstone water table, decorated by upper mouldings. The pavilion and main block are both topped by the same elaborate entablature with sandstone frieze and architrave and an ornate copper cornice decorated with mouldings, scrolled consoles, and dentils. The slate sheathed hip roofs are trimmed by copper flashing and ridge mouldings. The ridge line of the pavilion's hip roof is at the same level as the main block roof ridge line. But, the rear projection's hip roof (all that can now be seen of the rear projection) is lower, with a ridge line below that of the main block roof. On the south (rear) slope of the main block roof, to the east of the rear projection roof, is found the chimney, a wide chimney of the same old gold bricks, with corbeled top and copper cap, decorated by a course of sandstone just beneath the corbeling, and having on the east side, a now bricked up opening with sandstone sill. On the east and west slopes of the main block roof are now found small metal vents.

The pavilion is only four feet deep, but occupies two-fifths of the main block's street facade. As noted, it has the same granite foundation, brick walls, sandstone watertable, and stone and copper entablature, as the main block. The pavilion walls are a little higher than the main block walls. So, while the pavilion foundation and watertable are continuous with those of the main block, the stone frieze of its entablature is at the same level as the copper cornice of the main block entablature. In the center of the pavilion's three bay wide street (north) facade is the building's main entry, which is reached by five granite steps, with high granite sidewalls. (The steps are now served by modern wrought metal hand rails.) The main entry was originally a semicircular arched opening into the open vestibule, but the opening has been filled by a door and windows! The plain framed wooden door has a single panel with a metal bookdrop drawer beneath a large single pane glass window. The door is flanked by two pane half sidelights above wooden panels and is topped by a two pane transom window, all with moulded wooden frames. The upper panes of the sidelights and the transom window's panes are curved to follow the arch. The entry retains its smooth granite sill and its sandstone semicircular arch set in a sandstone frame of pilasters and entablature. The finely carved moulded arch incorporates an egg and dart moulding and a bead and reel moulding. The mouldings return at the bases of both jambs. And the arch is crowned by elaborate scrolled keystone, from which a modern metal light fixture is now suspended. The moulded arch, set against a backing of sandstone blocks, is framed by pilasters and entablature. In each spandrel is found a carved low relief wreath of ribbons and flowers. The paneled pilasters that flank the arched entry has moulded bases that rest on the granite sidewalls of the steps and moulded capitals of no recognized order. The upper halves of the pilaster panels are ornamental. The date of this change is unfortunately not recorded.

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mented by carved low reliefs of flowers and ribbons. The sandstone entablature has a cornice with dentils and mouldings, and a paneled frieze, but no architrave. Above each pilaster, the frieze has a rectangular panel in which is inscribed a diamond shaped panel. The long rectangular panel forming the central portion of the frieze contains a more elaborate central rectangular panel with moulded frame and a trapezoidal shaped projection at each end. In the panel is the inscribed date "1895", flanked by incised foliage, with both the date and the foliage painted in gold. From the two projections at the ends of the panel flow low relief carved ribbons which fill the rest of the frieze's central panel. The two side bays of the pavilion's main facade each contain a tall window, consisting of a one over one sash window and a stained glass transom window, the latter having a geometric pattern of ovals surrounded by a border of small rectangles. The windows have moulded wooden frames and sandstone sills, the sill of the transom window serving as the lintel of the sash window. The transom window is topped by a deep sandstone lintel with a projecting cornice decorated by dentils and mouldings, that copies the cornice of the main block's entablature. (Metal framed storm windows now cover the sash windows.) In the frieze of the pavilion's main cornice is found the inscription "GORDON-NASH LIBRARY", with the incised letters again painted in gold. On the front of the pavilion, the copper cornice also serves as a gutter, the roof flashing that normally covers the cornice having been omitted. Copper drainpipes at each end of the front cornice/gutter descend a short distance, then turn the corners of the pavilion to descend the side walls. The pavilion's narrow side walls are windowless, save for a single pane basement window on the west side, which has a moulded wooden frame and a granite sill, and is topped by the sandstone water table.

The two ends of the main block have different fenestration, reflecting the original internal layout, with a reading room at the east end and a stack room at the west end. That section of the main block's north street facade east of the pavilion has three tall windows similar in design to the pavilion windows, with one over one sash windows beneath stained glass transom windows of the same geometric design. The windows have the same moulded wooden frames and sandstone sills, the transom window sill again serving as the sash window lintel. (At both levels, the sills of the three windows are abutting.) Here, however, the transom windows are topped by the main block's entablature, and do not have separate lintels of their own. (Again, modern storm windows cover the sash windows.) To the west of the pavilion, the north facade has three high, large, single pane windows, with moulded wooden frames, similar metal framed storm windows, abutting sandstone sills, which are topped by the main block entablature. (At each end of the north facade is

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found a short metal pipe railing attached to the building and designed to limit foot traffic down the steep banks at each end of the main block.) The three bay east and west ends each have a basement level that is fully exposed at the south corner, but only partly exposed at the north end, the land sloping steeply from the north corner. The basement level windows, with one exception, have moulded wooden frames and lintels, and sandstone sills. All the basement windows are topped by the sandstone water table, just as all the main level windows are topped by the sandstone architrave and frieze of the main entablature. The east end's basement level has a single pane window to the north, a one over one sash window (with four pane storm window) in the center, and a former door opening to the south. The former door opening, remodeled in 1977, now contains, from the ground up, a granite sill, a moulded panel, a pivoting single pane window, and a large, tall plate glass window, all with plain frames. The east end's main level features three windows of the same design as those of the easterly section of the north facade, with one over one sash windows and stained glass transom windows (as well as the usual storm windows). The west end's basement level has a single pane window to the north and two one over one sash windows (again with four pane storm windows) in the central and south bays. The main level has, in the center, a one over one sash window with stained glass transom window, of the same design as those on the east end of the main block, and, in each side bay, a high single pane window of the same design as the windows in the westerly section of the main block's north facade. (All are now covered by modern storm windows.) The rear facade of the main block is almost completely covered by the two rear additions, leaving only two feet visible at the east corner and a foot and a half visible at the west corner. These fragments do reveal the red brick rear wall, with quoins of gold brick at both corners, and the same water table and entablature seen on the more public facades.

The two story 1962 addition is set on a concrete foundation. The red brick of its exterior walls is laid in common bond, flemish variation. The wooden cornice with mouldings and frieze is set at the same level as the copper cornice of the main block entablature. A television antenna is mounted on the flat roof. The windows have plain wooden frames and concrete sills. The lower level windows of the two bay west facade are both large plate glass windows above large single pane pivoting windows. The two taller upper level windows also each have a tall plate glass window and a lower, single pane, pivoting window. The south window is topped by a single pane transom window, while, on the north window, the transom window has been replaced by a metal louver. The south facade has two windows of similar, but slightly different design in its upper level. The western window is a double window with large plate glass central windows, lower single pane pivoting sash, and single pane transom windows.

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The eastern window again has a lower single pane pivoting sash, but it has an unique stained glass window, installed in 1976 over the original plate glass window, and a metal louver replacing the transom window. The stained glass window features a large star set against the waving stripes of an American flag, with smaller stars and an eagle within the large star. The south facade has just one lower level window, a tall, double casement window with two pane sash.

The brick walls of the two story, flat roofed 1977 addition are laid in stretcher bond, set on a concrete foundation, and topped by a simple copper flashing. (The walls of the 1977 addition are approximately two feet lower than the walls of both the main block and the 1962 addition.) The rear (south) facade is windowless. The eastern windows have, with three notable exceptions, simply moulded metal and plastic frames, concrete sills and lintels. The lower level has two tall windows with large plate glass windows, above pivoting single pane sash, to the south of the recessed side entry, and a tall, narrow plate glass window to the north of the entry. The wide, deep recess containing the side entry has a concrete floor, brick sidewalls, and a metal ceiling with round central light fixture. The rear wall of the recess is mostly glass, featuring a glass door with metal frame to the south of two tall plate glass windows. Above the door and windows appears a large plate glass transom window. All share the same plain metal frame. The upper level of the east facade has two southern windows of the same design as the southern windows of the lower level, and three northern oriel windows, which share the same metal roof. The oriel windows each have a single, tall plate glass window with simply moulded plastic and metal frame, set in a deep rectangular metal projection. The metal roof, best described as a steeply pitched shed roof with a vertical lower edge, is ornamented only by some metal ridges. The roof's flat metal soffit between the oriel windows is equally featureless.

The plan of the Gordon-Nash Library is surprisingly complex for the size of the building. The main level of the original building was originally divided into five rooms. The vestibule at the main entry occupies the central third of the pavilion and projects four feet into the main block, where it opens into the entry hall, which occupies the center of the main block. The vestibule is flanked on the east by the stairs which lead from the entry hall to the basement level and occupy the eastern third of the pavilion, as well as part of the main block. South of the entry hall and continuing into the rear projection was the reference room. The easterly end of the main block, that portion east of the pavilion and the rear projection, was devoted to the reading room, now the children's room. The western end of the original building, to the west



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of the vestibule, entry hall, and old reference room, was occupied by the stack room. The stack room, now the reference room, included the western third of the pavilion and of the rear projection, giving the room an almost T-shaped plan, with two small alcoves at its northeast and southeast corners. In the 1962 renovation, the reading room and stack room acquired their present functions; and the circulation desk and doorway between the entry hall and stack room (new reference room) was removed, along with most of the wall between the two rooms. The old reference room was subdivided, most of it becoming the office, but that portion in the rear projection was incorporated into the new workroom in the addition. The old stack room's south alcove became a short corridor to the rear addition. The two additions did add new rooms to the main level. A shallow but long magazine storage closet appeared in the 1962 addition on the south side of the main block's new reference room, to the west of its former rear projection. In the center of the rear additions to the south of the entry hall and office are found the workroom (also incorporating part of the original building) and the rear stair hall, both built in 1962. The rest of the two additions is devoted to a large U-shaped room wrapped around the workroom and the rear stair hall, stretching from the old south alcove of the old stack room (which now functions as a short corridor) around to the children's room. This large U-shaped space, encompassing three-quarters of the 1962 addition and all of the 1977 addition, is, save for a periodical reading area in the southwest corner of the 1962 addition, and a small area of study carrels south of the stair hall, used almost entirely for stacks.

The vestibule was formerly an open porch, and was therefore treated as an outside space. The floor is covered with small mosaic tiles, mostly white, but with three borders of blue, red, and black tiles. The walls of old gold brick, laid in stretcher bond, have moulded baseboards of white marble. The wooden ceiling has nine large panels with moulded frames and beaded boarding infill, a deep ceiling moulding, and a modern, central hanging light fixture. As already noted, the arch in the outer (north) wall has been filled by a paneled door with a glass window, flanking half sidelights above panels, and a two pane transom window, all sharing a plain wooden frame. The blocks of the sandstone arch itself are smoothly dressed on the interior. Mounted on the west wall is a large dedicatory bronze plaque, with simple frame, describing Judge Nash's gift of the library. The inner south wall contains the original main entry to the building. The semicircular arched entry has an elaborate sandstone arch of exactly the same design as the exterior arch of the present main entry, complete with the same mouldings and ornate keystone. The entry has a marble sill and features double oak doors with moulded oak frame. The

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lower panels of the arched doors include a diamond shaped panel inscribed in a large rectangular panel. The large square windows built into each leaf of the doors are curved to follow the arch.

The entry hall now shares a continuous wall to wall carpet with the other public spaces, as well as the office and workroom, of the main level. The entry hall has plaster walls with a high paneled wainscoating, featuring a moulded baseboard, two rows of panels (tall lower panels and short upper panels), and a high moulded rail. The high ceiling, trimmed by a heavy moulded cornice, is covered by modern ceiling tiles. Two fluorescent light fixtures and an exit light hang from the ceiling. The already described double doors to the vestibule in the north wall are framed by a marble sill and a moulded semicircular wooden arch. The outer moulding on the arch is a more delicate version of the egg and dart moulding already seen on the exterior stone arches. East of the vestibule are the front stairs, the stairway opening into the entry hall and being treated as part of the room. The carpeted steps are protected by a balustrade with turned balusters, moulded hand rail, and square posts with fluted sides and square caps ornamented by dentils and mouldings. The paneled wainscoating descends along the stairway wall to the lower level. The stairs start from the entry hall, descend along the west wall (beside the vestibule) to a landing at the north end of the space, then along the east wall to a small hall in the basement level. The stairs are lit by a high window in the north wall. The one over one sash window has a moulded sill, and moulded frame with egg and dart moulding. Above the window is a transom panel (covering the stained glass transom window still seen on the exterior) with the same moulded frame, here with shouldered upper corners and a crowning dentiled and moulded cornice, which projects from the main wall cornice. In the center of the entry hall's east wall is the large sliding door to the children's room. The fourteen long horizontal panels of the wide door have moulded frames and are arranged in two vertical rows. The door has the same moulded frame with egg and dart moulding as the north window (a frame which is repeated on the other openings of the original building), here with shouldered upper corners and the same dentiled cornice seen above the transom panel of the north window. An identical frame with cornice appears in the center of the south wall, surrounding the shorter and narrower double doors to the office (formerly the reference room). Each leaf of the double doors features three panels beneath a large single pane window, all with moulded frames. Most of the west wall of the entry hall has been removed, leaving a large opening, topped by a plain lintel, into the new reference room. The circulation desk once incorporated into the west wall has been replaced by a long modern free standing counter in front of the double doors to the office.

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The children's room (formerly the reading room) at the east end of the main block is a five sided space, as an angled fireplace fills the southwest corner. Save for the southwest fireplace wall and, to some extent, the north wall, the plaster walls are now covered with modern wooden bookcases, covering the original high paneled wainscoating. The wainscoating, of the same design as that in the entry hall, is visible only between the windows on the north wall, and, even there, it is partially hidden by the low bookcase that covers the wall beneath the windows. The high ceiling retains its heavy moulded cornice, of the same design as the entry hall cornice, but is now covered by modern ceiling tiles. The room is lit by suspended fluorescent light fixtures and by six one over one sash windows, three in the north wall and three in the east wall. The windows are all of the same design already seen on the entry hall's north window, each having the same moulded frame with outer egg and dart moulding, the same transom panel (covering a stained glass transom window) with similar frame and shouldered upper corners, and the same dentiled projecting cornice. The west wall features the already described large sliding door to the entry hall, which has the same frame with cornice in the children's room as it does in the entry hall. The fireplace in the southwest corner has a ceramic tile hearth, primarily of square brown tiles, but surrounded by borders of rectangular tiles, including a course of floral tiles. The fireplace opening itself has a floor, interior and surround of the same dark old gold bricks used on the exterior. The fireplace's moulded wooden frame features beading on the upper edge and is flanked by fluted pilasters, whose capitals incorporate dentils, egg and dart mouldings, beading, and oval patera with radiating reeding, and which support the moulded mantelshelf. Between the fireplace opening's moulded wooden frame and the mantelshelf are found triglyphs with guttae, one at each end of the fireplace and an oval patera with radiating fluting. The short paneled overmantel has three panels, a large central panel and small side panels, with moulded frames, and a shallow crowning moulding. The fireplace occupies almost the full width of the southwest wall. But, to each side of the fireplace, the plaster wall features a simple baseboard and high moulded rail. The junction of the southwest wall and the south wall is marked by a vertical egg and dart moulding. Much of the south wall was removed to create a large untrimmed opening into the 1977 addition. Still projecting from the cornice at the top of the south wall is the dentiled cornice and upper egg and dart moulding that once topped a southern window. Besides the wall bookcases, the children's room has three low free standing bookcases.

The office (formerly part of the reference room) has a modern carpeted floor, plaster walls with moulded baseboards, and a high ceiling with modern ceiling tiles and a suspended fluorescent light fixture. The north

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wall features the already described double doors to the entry hall, which have the same moulded frame here as in the entry hall, complete with egg and dart moulding, shouldered upper corners, and dentiled cornice. At the west end of the south wall is a plain, modern wooden door, with plain frame, opening into the workroom. Large plain framed plate glass windows, one in the west wall and two in the south wall, overlook the adjoining reference room and workroom respectively.

The reference room, as the former stack room, is somewhat plainer than the more public entry hall and former reading room. Its plaster walls have no wainscoating, just moulded baseboards, and the high ceiling, now covered with modern ceiling tiles, has no cornice or ceiling moulding. The floor is now carpeted, and much of the walls are now covered with metal and wooden bookcases. A card catalog, record case, and tables also stand in the room. At the north end of the small alcove at the northeast corner of the room is found another one over one sash window beneath a transom panel (covering a stained glass transom window) with the same frame and cornice found on the similar windows in the entry hall and the children's room. Another one over one sash window (with transom panel) of identical design appears in the center of the west wall. High, large, single pane windows, with moulded frames featuring egg and dart mouldings, shouldered upper corners, and projecting dentiled cornices also appear in the north wall (three to the west of the alcove) and in the west wall (one to each side of the central window). Hanging fluorescent lights also help to light the room. The south wall contains a plain framed wooden door to the storage closet, and, at the east end, the former alcove, now a short corridor to the rear addition. The corridor has a fully carpeted floor, the plaster walls with baseboards of the new reference room, and the suspended tile ceiling of the 1962 addition. The storage closet now has a linoleum tile floor, painted brick north and east walls (formerly the exterior walls of the original building's main block and rear projection), painted concrete block west and south walls, a plain framed northern door, and a ceiling with modern ceiling tiles and fluorescent light fixtures. Shelves line all but the north wall. In the ceiling of the reference room is the two panel door for the attic's disappearing stairs. The attic is an unfinished space, with a floor now covered with insulation, short brick walls, and exposed rafters on the board ceiling. Air conditioning equipment and shelving occupy the attic.

The workroom to the south of the office, partly in the original building and partly in the 1962 addition, has a carpeted floor, painted concrete block walls (save for the plasterboard northerly walls), and a suspended tile ceiling with mounted fluorescent light fixtures. The room is basically a rectangle in shape, but three corners are taken up

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by other elements, a closet in the northwest corner, a closet and a book elevator in the southwest corner, and a closet and the back of an alcove (the latter opening into another room) in the northeast corner. Plain frames surround the three plain modern wooden closet doors and the short metal book elevator door, as well as the plate glass windows looking into the adjoining rooms, two large windows in the north wall looking into the office, one in the west wall looking into the stack area, and one in the south wall looking into the rear stair hall. The room has three modern doors to adjoining rooms, a plain wooden door to the office in the north wall, a wooden door with builtin window to the stack area in the 1962 addition in the west wall, and low double wooden half doors to the stack area in the 1977 addition in the east wall, all with the common plain trim. Builtin elements include a small sink in the northeast corner and a workbench and shelves along the south wall.

The rear stair hall to the south of the workroom in the 1962 addition is a two story space with carpeted landings and steps, painted concrete block walls, and a suspended tile ceiling. A plain framed door with a large builtin window at the south end of the west wall opens from the stack area onto the upper landing at the west end. A small janitor's closet with builtin sink, concrete block walls, and another door with large builtin window occupies the north half of the upper landing. From the upper landing, the stairs descend along the south wall to a landing at the east end, then along the north wall to the lower level landing at the west end. A plain framed metal door with large builtin window in the west wall opens from the lower landing to a lower level corridor. A plain framed metal door from the lower landing serves the storage space under the stairs (which has a linoleum tile floor, concrete block walls, and a ceiling of the exposed undersides of the metal steps). The stair hall is lit by fluorescent lights and by large plate glass windows in the upper level walls, one in the north wall looking into the workroom, and a double window in the south wall looking into the stack area.

The stack area, the U-shaped room surrounding the workroom and rear stair hall, consists of two sections, the L-shaped western arm and southern section of the 1962 addition, and the eastern arm of the 1977 addition. Both sections have similar features, carpeted floors and, usually, painted concrete block walls. The 1962 section has a suspended tile ceiling with mounted light fixtures. The 1977 section has a lower ceiling covered with ceiling tiles, ceiling mounted light fixtures, and two exposed brick walls, the north wall (once the exterior wall of the original building) and the west wall (formerly the exterior wall of the 1962 addition). The stack area is lit by several windows, all with plain frames, typically with large plate glass windows above single pane pivoting sash. Two such windows

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are found in the outer west wall, as are two double windows and a single window (the latter covered by the already described stained glass window with eagle, stars and stripes) in the south wall and two more single windows in the outer east wall. The east wall also features, in its northern section, three oriel windows, each a single tall plain framed plate glass window in a deep recess with plasterboard sides and ceiling and a formica covered floor. The northern openings into the original building, a wide opening into the children's room in the 1977 section, and a narrower opening to the short corridor from the 1962 section, are untrimmed. Most of the features of the inner walls of the U-shaped room have already been described, including the doors and windows of the workroom and the rear stair hall. Also to be found are a metal water fountain mounted on the east wall of the 1962 section and a small alcove at the north end of the 1977 section's west wall. (The alcove exists because the 1962 addition overlapped the original building's rear projection by two feet, thus creating an indentation that was eventually incorporated into the 1977 addition.) Most of the stack area is, of course, devoted to metal stacks, tall stacks for the adults in the 1962 section and the southern part of the 1977 section, and shorter bookcases for the children in the northern part of the 1977 section. But, all of the southwest corner of the 1962 section is reserved for a periodical reading room, and another small area south of the rear stair hall is occupied by study carrels.

The lower level also has a rather complex plan. The east end of the original building's main block, east of the pavilion and rear projection, was set aside as a town office, with a large selectmen's room and, to its north, two small spaces, a fireproof closet and a walkin safe. The west end of the original building, west of the pavilion and the projection, is occupied by a large storage stack room. At the east end of the central portion of the original building is the small lower stairhall (just south of the descending basement stairs), which serves both the selectmen's room and the lower hall, a wider hallway in the center of the main block. North of the lower hall are two small rooms, a restroom to the west and the old kitchen to the east, both of which extend into the pavilion basement. South of the lower hall and the lower stairhall is found the furnace room and, to its west, a corridor extending into the rear addition, which was carved out of the furnace room in the 1962 renovation. On the east side of the corridor and occupying a corner of the furnace room is a small restroom. The basement corridor is L-shaped in plan, with a spur extending to the east, south of the furnace room, to the lower entry hall, an irregular space occupying part of the 1962 addition and the northerly part of the 1977 addition. (Off the lower entry hall in the 1977 addition is the small new kitchen.) South of the

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corridor's eastern spur in the 1962 addition is the rear stair hall, already described. South of the storage stack room in the 1962 addition is the small meeting room. South of the corridor's north-south section is a short corridor serving the small meeting room and the rear stair hall. Finally, the entire southerly end of both additions is occupied by a large long community room.

Returning to the original building's basement stairs, we find at the lower level the small stairhall, with carpeted floor, plaster or plaster-board walls with moulded baseboards (and, on part of the east wall, the paneled wainscoting of the upper level that descended alongside the stairs), and a plaster ceiling with ceiling moulding. To the north are the already described basement stairs. Both the east and west walls feature a door with three lower panels and a large upper window, both with moulded frames. The east door serves the selectmen's room, the west door the lower hall.

The selectmen's room has a linoleum floor and a plaster ceiling. The plaster walls have a plaster dado with moulded rail and baseboard on the north and west, a moulded baseboard on the east, and a high picture moulding on the east, west, and north. Like the children's room above it, the selectmen's room is a five-sided space with an angled fireplace occupying the southwest corner. The fireplace opening has a ceramic tile hearth, a brick interior and surround, and a moulded wooden frame. Flanking the fireplace are pilasters, fluted in their upper portions, which rise to flank the mantelshelf and the overmantel. The moulded mantelshelf is supported by four decoratively sawn brackets. The three panels of the overmantel have moulded frames and a crowning moulding. The room is lit by two windows in the east wall, a northerly one over one sash window with moulded frame, and, to its south, a large plate glass window above a pivoting single pane sash and bottom panel, which fill the former exterior door opening. The already described paneled door with builtin window to the lower stairhall in the west wall has a moulded frame, while the modern plain door to the lower entry hall in the south wall has a plain frame. In the north wall, a moulded frame surrounds the walkin safe's metal door, while the fireproof closet's plain modern wooden door has no trim. The walkin safe to the west has a concrete floor and ceiling, painted brick walls, and builtin shelves. The fireproof closet (formerly an alcove of the selectmen's room) to the east has a linoleum tile floor, concrete block south wall, three plaster walls, and a plaster ceiling. The closet is lit by a single pane window with moulded frame high in the east wall.

The lower hall has a linoleum tile floor, plaster walls with moulded

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baseboards, and a plaster ceiling with ceiling moulding. Moulded frames surround the older doors, the three panel doors with large upper windows (the east door to the stairhall and the west door to the storage stack room) and the five panel doors (the south door to the furnace room, and the two northern doors, a single door to the restroom and the double doors to the old kitchen). The modern wooden door at the west end of the south wall, serving the new basement corridor, has a plain frame.

The small old kitchen, located beneath the vestibule of the main level, has a linoleum tile floor, plaster walls and ceiling, builtin kitchen cabinets on the north and west walls, and plain frames on the doors, the double five panel southern doors to the lower hall and the modern wooden eastern door to a small closet under the basement stairs. The restroom to the west of the old kitchen has a linoleum tile floor, plaster walls with moulded baseboards, the usual fixtures, and a high plaster ceiling. Moulded frames surround the southern five panel door to the lower hall and the single pane window high in the west wall. The furnace room, set two steps lower than the rest of the original building's basement level, has a concrete floor, a high plasterboard ceiling, and painted brick walls (save for the new western wall and the projection of the restroom in the southwest corner, both built of concrete block). The brick chimney base projects from the east wall. Plain frames or no trim surround the doors, the five panel northern door to the lower hall and the two modern wooden doors, the western door to a small closet and the southern door to the lower entry hall. Part of the room is occupied by a large furnace.

The storage stack room, at the east end of the main block, is a large room with linoleum tile floor, plaster walls with simple baseboards, and a plaster ceiling. Plain frames surround the openings, the two eastern doors, a three panel door with builtin window to the lower hall and a plain modern wooden door to the basement corridor, and three western windows, two one over one sash windows and a high single pane northerly window. The room is filled with bookcases, free standing metal stacks, as well as wooden and metal bookcases on the north and east walls.

The L-shaped basement corridor's carpeted floor is sloped in the north-south section, as the floors of the rear additions' lower levels are slightly lower than the floor of the original building's basement. The corridor has walls of painted brick and painted concrete block, the former being the earlier walls of the original building, here the west wall and the north walls. Plain frames surround the modern corridor doors, three plain wooden doors, all in the north-south section (a western door to the storage stack room, a north door to the lower hall, and an east door to the restroom) and two doors with large builtin



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windows, one at the south end of the north-south corridor to the short corridor serving the community room, small meeting room, and rear stair hall, and one at the east end of the east-west corridor to the lower entry hall. Large square electric light fixtures are mounted on the ceiling, which is sheathed with modern tiles. The concrete block walls of the small restroom actually project a few feet into the north-south corridor. (The restroom has a linoleum tile floor, painted concrete block and brick walls, the usual fixtures, and a high plaster ceiling.) Projecting into the east-west corridor is the concrete block walled book elevator with its plain framed short metal door.

The short corridor to the south of the basement corridor, the small meeting room, and the larger community room all have carpeted floors, plain window and door frames, and tile ceilings with mounted light fixtures. Modern vertically grooved laminated plywood covers the short corridor walls, the newer walls of the small meeting room, and most of the walls of the community room. The small meeting room still has the exposed, although now painted, brick exterior walls of the original building serving as its north wall and part of its east wall. The easterly end of the community room in the 1977 addition has wallpapered plaster-board walls. The short corridor has a plain wooden western door to the small meeting room, an eastern metal door with builtin window to the rear stair hall, and a northern modern door with builtin window to the basement corridor. The short corridor has no southern wall, as it opens directly into the community room. The small meeting room is served by just one door, the already noted door from the short corridor, and is lit by only one window, a western window with large plate glass upper window and a lower, single pane, pivoting sash. The community room, the largest lower level room, occupies parts of both rear additions; and, as noted, the two different sections have different wall treatments. The older west section also boasts ranks of enclosed bookcases with glass fronts, above a rank of cabinets along its south wall. The room is lit by a double casement window with two pane sash in the south wall, and by three large plate glass windows with lower single pane pivoting sash, one in the west wall and two in the east wall. The north wall contains the already mentioned opening to the short corridor and, towards the east end, a small countertop opening with double sliding doors to the new kitchen, and a large metal framed, glassed entry to the lower entry hall, of the same design as the building's recessed side entry, having a metal framed glass door, flanked by two tall plate glass windows to its east, and all topped by a large plate glass transom window.

The lower entry hall is the most irregular space in the building. It has two extensions on its west side, an alcove at the north end, which, like the similar alcove on the upper level, was created by the short

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overlap of the rear projection by the 1962 addition, and a corridor in the 1962 addition, actually the original lower entry hall, which has now been expanded into the 1977 addition. On its east side, the entry hall has lost space to the recessed entry and to the small new kitchen in its southeast corner. The room is unified by a ceramic tile floor and a suspended tile ceiling with mounted light fixtures. The outer brick walls of the original building and the 1962 addition now serve as the north and west walls, with the other walls being sheathed with vertically grooved modern plywood. The room is lit by the glass door and windows of the side entry in the center of the the easterly walls and by a tall eastern plate glass window in a deep recess to the north of the side entry. Plain frames surround the windows and the doors. In the north wall of the main space is a deep recess, served by a concrete step, for the plain metal door to the selectmen's room. The western spur, the original entry hall in the 1962 addition, has a door with builtin window to the basement corridor at its west end, and a wooden door to the furnace room in its north wall. At the south end of the lower entry hall is the already described door and windows into the community room. In the east wall is found a metal door to the new kitchen. Finally, the northeast corner, in front of the window, is filled by a chest high equipment storage space with brick walls, formica top, and a plain metal door on the side. The small new kitchen has a ceramic tile floor, wall papered walls, kitchen cabinets on the south and east walls, and a tile ceiling with mounted light fixtures. Plain frames surround the west door to the lower entry hall and the double sliding doors of the countertop opening to the community room.

South of the library, almost touching the south wall of the 1977 addition, stands the storage shed, built in 1986 and therefore considered non-contributing. The small, one story, gambrel roofed, wooden building is set on long concrete "curbs". The vertically boarded walls are trimmed by cornerboards, the asphalt shingled roof by close eaves and verges. The only opening is a plain framed board door in the south "gable" end. The interior is unfinished, with a board floor and exposed studding and rafters.

The lot is flat near the street, then slopes down to the south on both sides of the main block to a relatively flat area at the lower floor level, on which is found the rear portion of the building, the storage shed, and a parking lot to the east and southeast of the library. From this rear flat area, the lot slopes down again towards the southerly and westerly boundaries. The grounds are mostly grassed with scattered trees and shrubs. Three street trees stand along the Main Street sidewalk. A low hedge lines the sidewalk and the northerly sides of the wide asphalt paved walk from the sidewalk to the main entry steps. Interrupting

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the hedge, just east of the front walk, is a bulletin board/library sign, a glass fronted metal case on a brick base. Foundation shrubs and trees are found on the north (street) facade of the main block. And other trees and shrubs ornament the lawns around the building. The paved parking area to the east and southeast of the rear additions is continuous with a paved parking area on the neighboring New Hampton School property. The shared parking lot is reached from the street by a paved driveway, which, although partly on the library lot, is primarily on the New Hampton School property. A low hedge, similar to the sidewalk hedge, grows on the west (library) edge of this shared driveway. An electric light on a wooden pole set to the southeast of the building helps to light part of the parking lot. (Another pole east of the building supports the power line serving the light pole.) The recessed side entry in the 1977 addition is served by a wide paved walk from the eastern parking area, and by a narrower paved walk that branches off from the wide walk and runs east of the library out to the Main Street sidewalk. The rear southerly and westerly boundaries are lined by rows of trees, notably tall spruce trees.

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raised by taxation. The movement from inadequate quarters to proper library buildings, which began with the construction of the Gordon-Nash Library, was a significant advance in the evolution of the county's public library system. For it was only in appropriate homes that the public libraries could reach their full potential as educational institutions serving the citizens of their communities.

In the larger Lakes Region of New Hampshire, four public library buildings were built before the Gordon-Nash Library, beginning with the Minot-Sleeper Library in Bristol, built in 1884. Architecturally, these four buildings all belong to the Victorian era, showing the eclectic style and the asymmetry of form and facade of that period. None showed the influence of the Classical styles, which were beginning to regain their former popularity in the 1890's. The Gordon-Nash Library, with its Renaissance style ornament, was the first public library in the region to use a Classical style, as well as the first to use a symmetrical form with a central entry pavilion. In both of these aspects of its design, the building proved to be the architectural model for later libraries in the region. Of the sixteen public libraries built in the region between the construction of the Gordon-Nash Library and World War II, twelve buildings followed the Classical styles (including the related Colonial Revival style) and six buildings used a symmetrical main block with a central entry pavilion, with another five buildings using a symmetrical main block with central entry porch or portico. So, in style and form, the Gordon-Nash Library marked a significant turning point in the architectural evolution of the libraries of the Lakes Region.

The historic context for the Gordon-Nash Library under Criteria A in the area of education is Public Library Development in Belknap County, 1878-1938. Before the establishment of public libraries, some of the county's citizens were served by private libraries, usually subscription libraries open only to their members. Such a subscription library, the New Hampton Social Library, was established in 1813 by eight New Hampton men.<sup>2</sup> This small private library was once housed in the home of John Nash, and was probably familiar to his son, Stephen Gordon Nash (1822-1894), who would later establish the Gordon-Nash Library.<sup>3</sup> But, this private library, like many other subscription libraries, eventually declined and "probably ceased to function after 1830".<sup>4</sup> The New Hampton Literary Institution, now

2. LAWS OF NEW HAMPSHIRE, VOLUME 8, SECOND CONSTITUTIONAL PERIOD, 1811-1820 (Concord, N.H.:1920) pp. 213-214

3. Jeannette C. Matthews HISTORY OF THE GORDON-NASH LIBRARY, NEW HAMPTON N.H. (New Hampton, N.H.:1965), p.1

4. Pauline S. Merrill A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE TOWN OF NEW HAMPTON (New Hampton, N.H.: c.1964) unpagged

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the New Hampton School in the village, could also boast three private student libraries, owned and maintained by the school's three literary societies, the Literary Adelphi, the Social Fraternity, and the Germanae Delictae Scientiae.<sup>5</sup> But, the private libraries, adult or student, were generally open only to the members of their associations, and did not serve the public at large. In 1833, the free public library movement began in New Hampshire, with the establishment of the Peterborough Town Library, now the oldest municipal public library in the country. It was, however, some forty-five years before a Belknap County community followed Peterborough's lead. The 1878 Laconia town meeting voted to establish a public library, which opened in 1879.<sup>6</sup> The Laconia library was followed by another town library in Meredith in 1882. The citizens of Tilton acquired the use of a public library in 1887, when the Hall Memorial Library opened in the neighboring Merrimack County town of Northfield to serve both municipalities. In 1891, the state legislature offered a \$100 grant to any community that would establish a free public library and appropriate a certain sum every year for its support. This offer was accepted by the towns of Alton, Barnstead and Gilmanton in 1892, and by Belmont and Gilford in 1893.<sup>7</sup> In 1895, the state legislature mandated annual library appropriations, even in those towns where no public library had been established. This requirement eventually prodded Sanbornton and Centre Harbor to establish public libraries in 1903 and 1910, respectively. So, by the early 20th century, every citizen in the county had access to a public library. (Two towns actually had more than one library. Gilmanton eventually had three public libraries, in the villages of Gilmanton Iron Works, Gilmanton Corner, and Lower Gilmanton. And a branch library of the Laconia Public Library was established in the Lakeport section of the city.) These early public libraries were not very well housed, as the municipalities, although willing to purchase books and pay a librarian, did not have the funds to erect library buildings. The quarters of the libraries were therefore usually makeshifts- the librarian's home, as in Gilford, a room in the town hall, as in Alton, a rented room in a commercial block, as in Belmont and Laconia. The first public library to obtain its own library building was the Gordon-Nash Library, whose origin was actually quite different from the county's other libraries.

5. Pauline S. Merrill, John C. Gowan et al A SMALL GORE OF LAND (New Hampton, N.H.: 1977) pp. 183-200

6. For the history of the Belknap County libraries mentioned in this paragraph, see David Ruell PUBLIC LIBRARIES IN THE LAKES REGION, AN ARCHITECTURAL SURVEY (Meredith, N.H.: 1986).

7. The voters of Gilmanton did change their minds, repealing the vote to establish a town library at the next annual meeting in 1893. But, in 1896, they did vote to reestablish the public library.

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Stephen Gordon Nash, the donor of the library, was born and raised in New Hampton, and educated at the local academy (now the New Hampton School) and at Dartmouth College. After a brief teaching career, he studied law and was admitted to the bar in Boston, where he prospered and served as both a judge and state legislator. Both of his children died in infancy, and he conceived, in his later years, the plan of leaving most of his estate to establish a public library in New Hampton.<sup>8</sup> He chose, however, not to give the money to the town government, but to establish a private corporation to build and maintain the library. On July 20, 1887, the state legislature approved an act incorporating the Gordon-Nash Library, named for the Judge's parents, listing Judge Nash, his wife, and three friends as the incorporators, and authorizing the corporation to establish and maintain a public library in New Hampton.<sup>9</sup> The organizational meeting of the corporation was held in September, but the library corporation remained a paper institution until after the Judge's death.<sup>10</sup> In October of 1888, the Judge did purchase the future site of the library, two lots on the village's main street.<sup>11</sup> (This prominent site became available after an August 1887 fire destroyed three buildings in the center of the village.<sup>12</sup>) After the Judge's death on May 1, 1894, his will was found to contain a number of separate bequests for the library, including \$10,000 for "the erection of a Library Building, fire-proof with ventilated walls and of agreeable architecture",<sup>13</sup> as well as the residue of his estate, reserving, however, a life estate for his wife. The corporation records say little about the actual construction of the building, noting only that, at the annual meeting in October of 1894, two of the incorporators were "made a special committee to make a contract for the erection of a library building".<sup>14</sup> By then, however, work had already begun on the project, as the Bristol newspaper had

8. For a biography of Judge Nash, see Matthews, pp. 33-47.

9. "An Act to Incorporate the Gordon-Nash Library", Chapter 193 in LAWS OF THE STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE, PASSED JUNE SESSION 1887 (Manchester, N.H.: 1887) pp.552-553

10. Matthews, pp.2-3

11. "Deed Esther H. Prescott to Stephen G. Nash, October 17, 1888", Book 80, Page 53, and "Deed, Frank P. Morrill to Stephen G. Nash, October 17, 1888", Book 80, Page 54 (manuscripts, Belknap County Registry of Deeds, Laconia, N.H.). The two lots were not conveyed to the library corporation until March of 1895. (see "Deed, Samuel G. Davis and Mary U. Nash to Gordon-Nash Library, March 11, 1895" Book 93, Page 495, Belknap County Registry of Deeds)

12. Merrill, A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE TOWN OF NEW HAMPTON

13. "Will of Stephen Gordon Nash", signed November 9, 1887 (copy in files of Gordon-Nash Library, New Hampton, N.H.)

14. "Gordon-Nash Library Records 1887-1916" (manuscript, Gordon-Nash Library, New Hampton, N.H.) p.18

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reported in August that a "survey of the library lot has been taken in order that the architect may prepare a plan of the foundation ... for the new library building".<sup>15</sup> The architect engaged by the corporation was James E. Fuller of the Worcester, Mass. architectural firm of Fuller & Delano.<sup>16</sup> Little is known about the design process, beyond Mrs. Nash's request that the building be faced with old gold brick, rather than the common red brick.<sup>17</sup> In March of 1895, it could be reported that the building contract had been awarded to Gardner Cook & Son of Laconia, and that bricks and lumber were being delivered to the site.<sup>18</sup> By early May, work had begun on the foundations.<sup>19</sup> In early July, the Bristol paper noted that "The masons are through and the building is ready for the carpenters."<sup>20</sup> By the end of the month, the roof was on and the "copper trimmings", presumably the cornice, were being installed.<sup>21</sup> In early August, carvers from Boston were reported at work on the library.<sup>22</sup> In September, the carpenters were described as "finishing the interior".<sup>23</sup> And by the end of November, the building was reported as "nearly completed".<sup>24</sup> Although the building was apparently finished in 1895, it was not opened to the public for some months. None of the original incorporators lived in New Hampton, so, at the annual corporation meeting in October, 1895, a dozen New Hampton citizens were elected to the corporation, and control of the library thus turned over to the town's residents.<sup>25</sup> Late November saw the arrival of five tons of books, half of Judge Nash's personal library, which had been included in the bequest.<sup>26</sup> A librarian was appointed in February.<sup>27</sup> The spring saw the cataloging of the books,<sup>28</sup>

15. Bristol Weekly Enterprise August 30, 1894, p.3
16. GORDON-NASH LIBRARY, NEW HAMPTON, N.H. (no place:1912) unpagged;  
Bristol Weekly Enterprise March 14, 1895, p.1
17. GORDON-NASH LIBRARY, NEW HAMPTON, N.H. (1912)
18. Bristol Weekly Enterprise March 14, 1895, p.1; March 21, 1895, p.3;  
Prof. H.W. Brown "The Gordon-Nash Library" The Hamptonia, vol. XIII,  
No. 3, (March, 1895) pp. 63-64
19. Bristol Weekly Enterprise May 2, 1895, p.3
20. Bristol Weekly Enterprise July 11, 1895, p.3
21. Bristol Weekly Enterprise July 25, 1895, p.3
22. Bristol Weekly Enterprise August 8, 1895, p.3
23. Bristol Weekly Enterprise September 12, 1895, p.3
24. Ashland Item November 30, 1895, p.4
25. Matthews, pp. 2-8; "Gordon-Nash Library Records 1887-1916", pp. 21-26
26. Ashland Item November 30, 1895, p.4
27. Bristol Weekly Enterprise February 20, 1896, p.3
28. Plymouth Record April 4, 1896, p.7; May 23, 1896, p.7; Bristol Weekly Enterprise May 14, 1896, p.3

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including the books of the New Hampton Literary Institution's literary societies, which were transferred to the new library.<sup>29</sup> Finally, on June 25, 1896, the building was dedicated, in coordination with the 75th anniversary celebration of the New Hampton Literary Institution, and opened to the public.<sup>30</sup>

(The Gordon-Nash Library differed in its administration from the other public libraries in the county. Those other public libraries are municipal departments, owned by the municipality and run by elected or appointed public officials. Although the Town of New Hampton, at its annual meeting in March, 1896, did vote to "accept the bequest of Stephen G. Nash",<sup>31</sup> the town government has, in fact, never operated the Gordon-Nash Library, nor contributed to the costs of its operation. It has remained, along among the county's libraries, an independent private institution. The library did, however, provide space for the town offices until 1984, when a separate town office building was erected.)

The original building of the Gordon-Nash Library is rather well preserved, particularly on the exterior. The only changes to the three public facades have been largely limited to the main entry. The outer arch of the vestibule, originally open, was filled in by a door with sidelights and transom window, apparently sometime in the mid 20th century. And handrails were installed on the front steps in the 1960's.<sup>32</sup> An eastern basement door was replaced by a window in 1977.<sup>33</sup> Inconspicuous storm windows were installed in 1980.<sup>34</sup> Save for these minor changes, the building appears today from the public highway as it did in 1896. By contrast, the rear facade of the original building has been almost entirely covered over by two additions, a large addition covering the westerly three-quarters of the rear facade, and a smaller addition covering the easterly quarter. The western addition was built in 1961-62 by builder Douglas E. Page of Claremont, according to the plans of architect Horace Bradt of Exeter.<sup>35</sup> The small eastern addition was designed by New

29. Bristol Weekly Enterprise May 28, 1896, p.3; July 2, 1896, p.1  
30. Bristol Weekly Enterprise July 2, 1896, p.1; SERMONS AND ADDRESSES DELIVERED IN CONNECTION WITH THE 75TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE NEW HAMPTON INSTITUTION AND THE DEDICATION OF THE GORDON-NASH LIBRARY (Laconia, N.H.: 1896)

31. "New Hampton Town Records, Volume 6, 1890-1938" (manuscript, New Hampton Town Offices, New Hampton, N.H.)

32. Interview of Barbara Shaw by David Ruell, March 1, 1988

33. Ibid.

34. "Annual Report of Librarian, October 8, 1980" in "Gordon-Nash Library Records 1972-1981" (manuscript, Gordon-Nash Library, New Hampton, N.H.)

35. Matthews, pp. 55- 58



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Hampton architect Frank Marinace and erected by contractor Donald Snyder & Sons, Inc. of Concord in 1977.<sup>36</sup> The two story, concrete block additions, covered with brick veneer, are modern in style, but are not incompatible with the original building. Their main virtue is their modesty, as they have relatively plain facades that do not compete with the original building, and they hide behind the older building, which effectively screens them from the public street. The original building, although now only half of the present structure, remains the predominant feature of the library building.

The interiors of the original building have seen more changes, as they have been adapted to the library's changing needs and to the two rear additions. The first six decades of the 20th century apparently saw few changes, electric lights in 1900, storage shelves and a disappearing stairway for the attic in 1940, linoleum floors in the basement rooms in 1948, ceiling tiles in the main level rooms in 1951, and a partition between the lower stairhall and lower hall in 1954.<sup>37</sup> However, by the late 1950's, the need for more space was becoming obvious. In 1958, a planning committee was foamed, and in 1959, architect Bradt was hired to plan an addition and renovations of the original building.<sup>38</sup> In 1960 and 1961, the preliminary plans were reviewed by Emil Allen of the New Hampshire State Library, and revised in accordance with his suggestions.<sup>39</sup> Work began in July, 1961 and was completed in May, 1962.<sup>40</sup> In all of the main level rooms, new fluorescent light fixtures, and new bookcases and furniture were installed, and the stained glass transom windows were hidden behind panels. The old reading room, now converted to the children's room, saw no other changes. But, the old reference room and the old stack room did see some significant changes. The old reference room was subdivided, part being used for an office, part incorporated into a workroom that extended into the new addition. The fireplace in the old reference room's east wall was removed. The wall between the entry hall and the old stack room originally contained the circulation desk and a doorway. When the old stack room became the new reference room and the circulation desk was shifted to the south side of the entry hall, most of the wall between the two rooms was removed to allow for easy circulation and supervision. A window was cut into the wall between the new office and the new reference room. The small alcove at the southeast corner of the new

36. Ruell, p.66

37. Matthews, pp 19-21,26

38. Matthews, p. 55

39. Emil W. Allen, Jr. "Survey of Building Needs of Gordon-Nash Library, New Hampton, New Hampshire", May, 1961 (manuscript, Gordon-Nash Library, New Hampton, N.H.)

40. Matthews, p.55

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reference room became a corridor into the rear addition, losing its south wall. The south wall of the new reference room lost two windows, but gained a door into the magazine storage closet in the addition. The basement also saw a few changes. An alcove in the selectmen's room was walled off to create a fireproof closet. Part of the furnace room was used for a new restroom and for a basement corridor to the rear addition.<sup>41</sup> Later changes to the original building have been few. Wall to wall carpeting was installed in 1967-68.<sup>42</sup> The eastern addition, designed in 1976 by architect Marinace and built in 1977<sup>43</sup>, added more space and did alter the easterly spaces of the original building. The original reading room, now children's room, lost a window in the south wall, as a large opening was cut into the wall to provide access to the new addition. The south wall of the selectmen's room in the basement lost two windows, but gained a door into the new lower entry hall. The former outside entry to the selectmen's room, a door in the east wall, was replaced by a window.<sup>44</sup> Despite these changes, the rooms of the original building still retain most of their original architectural and historical elements.<sup>45</sup> (The only other significant change has been the addition of a prefabricated storage shed, installed behind the library in 1986.<sup>46</sup>)

41. Horace G. Bradt & Associates "Additions & Alterations to Gordon-Nash Library, New Hampton, New Hampshire" (plans, Gordon-Nash Library, New Hampton, N.H.); "Gordon-Nash Library, New Hampton, N.H." New Hampshire Architect, Vol.13., No.10, (June, 1962), pp.10-11; interview of Barbara Shaw by David Ruell, March 1, 1988; interview of Hope Swain by David Ruell, March 3, 1988; Matthews, pp. 55-57
42. "Annual Report of the Executive Committee" for 1967 and "Annual Report of Executive Committee, October 9, 1968" in "Gordon-Nash Library Annual Reports, 1961-1971" (manuscript, Gordon-Nash Library, New Hampton, N.H.)
43. "Executive Committee Report, October 1, 1975-September 30, 1976", "Minutes of January 24, 1977 meeting", and "Executive Committee Report October 1, 1976-September 30, 1977" in "Gordon-Nash Library Records 1972-1981"
44. Frank P. Marinace, Architect "Addition to the Gordon-Nash Library" (plans, Gordon-Nash Library, New Hampton, N.H.)
45. The western rear addition has also seen some changes, the addition of a janitor's closet in the rear stair hall in 1963, the renovation of the community room and small meeting room in 1968-71, a stained glass window in 1976, new openings into the east addition in 1977, and lowered ceilings in 1981. Matthews, p.54; "Judge Stephen Gordon Nash Memorial Room and Committee Room" (manuscript, Gordon-Nash Library, New Hampton, N.H.); Marinace "Addition to the Gordon-Nash Library"; "Gordon-Nash Library Annual Report, October 7, 1981" in "Gordon-Nash Library Records 1972-1981"
46. "Building Permit, New Hampton Village Precinct" issued October 20, 1986 to Gordon-Nash Library, (manuscript, Gordon-Nash Library, New Hampton, N.H.)

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By 1895, the vast majority of New Hampshire towns had established public libraries. But, few of these municipal libraries were housed in proper library buildings. In March of 1895, when the materials for the Gordon-Nash Library were being delivered to the site, there were only twenty-seven municipal public libraries with buildings specifically designed for library use.<sup>47</sup> Most small town libraries and even some larger municipal libraries, such as the city libraries in Nashua, Keene, and Laconia, were still housed in makeshift quarters, in houses, town halls, commercial blocks, stores, and other adapted rooms and structures. This was certainly the case in Belknap County, where no public library had yet moved to an adequate separate building. The Gordon-Nash Library was the first library in the county to acquire its own building, but not the last. Public library buildings were subsequently built in Meredith (1900-01), Laconia (1901-03), Lakeport (1905-06), Centre Harbor (1909-10), Barnstead (1916-17), Gilmanton Iron Works (1916-17), Gilford (1924-25), and Belmont (1927-28).<sup>48</sup> So, by the late 1920's, eight of the county's eleven municipalities had appropriate library buildings, with the City of Laconia having two buildings. The Alton town library was still housed in the Town Hall, although the Town had already received the bequest that would be used in 1951 to erect a library building. The Sanbornton and Gilmanton Corner libraries were housed in separate buildings, converted from other uses. And only the Lower Gilmanton library still remained in a private house. (The Town of Gilford did pay for its own library building, and the Gilmanton Iron Works library was funded by a public fund raising campaign. But, most of these library buildings, like the Gordon-Nash Library, were built with the bequest or gift of generous individuals.) The Gordon-Nash Library therefore marked the beginning of an important change in the county's public library system, the movement to separate, especially built library buildings. This movement must be considered the most important advance in the evolution of Belknap County's libraries, since their establishment. And, no doubt, the pioneering example of the Gordon-Nash Library served as an inspiration to the other towns in the county as a clear demonstration of the value of an appropriate library building.

47. The number of library buildings was based on the essay "Histories of Public Libraries" in REPORTS OF THE TRUSTEES OF THE STATE LIBRARY AND THE STATE LIBRARIAN FOR THE PERIOD BEGINNING JUNE 1, 1904 AND ENDING MAY 31, 1906 (Manchester: 1906), supplemented by research on libraries not fully covered in the essay. The number includes the Tamworth library, completed in February, 1895, but not the libraries in Kensington and New Ipswich, which were apparently completed later in 1895. Also omitted were the N.H. State Library (1893-4) and the Dartmouth College Library in Wilson Hall (1885).

48. For the histories of individual libraries in Belknap County, see Ruell, PUBLIC LIBRARIES IN THE LAKES REGION.

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In considering the significance of the Gordon-Nash Library under Criteria C in the area of architecture, we will use a somewhat broader historic context, Public Library Development in the Lakes Region 1870-1939. This larger region includes Belknap County and portions of three other counties. The history of the public library in the Lakes Region begins with the Ashland Town Library, established in 1870; and the history of public library buildings in the region begins with the Minot-Sleeper Library, erected in Bristol in 1884.<sup>49</sup> By March, 1895, there were four public libraries with their own specially designed and built buildings in the region, as the Bristol Library was followed by the Hall Memorial Library in Northfield (1885-86), the Haynes Memorial Library in Alexandria (1894), and the Cook Memorial Library in Tamworth (1894-95). The Alexandria library was a relatively plain vernacular building, with no stylistic pretensions. The Bristol and Tamworth libraries were more elaborate Victorian structures, with Gothic and Stick Style ornament on the Bristol library, and Queen Anne form and decoration for the Tamworth library. The impressive Northfield library uses the Queen Anne and Romanesque Revival styles. All four buildings were asymmetrical in form and facade. There was little suggestion in the four buildings of the Classical tradition, that complex of styles based directly or indirectly on Greek and Roman architecture. Considering all of the state's twenty-seven municipal library buildings, we find that the Classical based styles had a stronger showing outside the Lakes Region, appearing, to varying degrees, in four library buildings, in Marlborough (1867), West Swanzey (1885), Hopkinton (1890), and Exeter (1894). The Classical tradition was still far from being the dominant inspiration for New Hampshire libraries, when the Gordon-Nash Library was designed by architect James E. Fuller. But, the return to the Classical tradition was growing stronger in the last decade of the 19th century; and the Worcester architect was well aware of the architectural fashions of the day. For New Hampton, he designed a library building, with a simple, dignified, symmetrical form, so typical of Classical buildings, and with Classical inspired ornament, the mouldings and keystones of the stone arches, the ornate pilasters and entablature framing the vestibule entry, the dentiled cornices of the pavilion windows, the elaborate main entablature with its consoles, dentils, architrave and frieze, and the more delicate frames and cornices of the interior openings. The building does not fit exactly into any of the styles recognized by architectural historians. The ornament would best be described as Renaissance in character, rather than Beaux-Arts or Neo-Classical. And the low horizontal form of the building, emphasized by the horizontal foundation, watertable and main entablature, is also typical of the Renaissance style. However, there are features, such as the hip

49. For the histories of the public libraries in the Lakes Region, see Ruell, PUBLIC LIBRARIES IN THE LAKES REGION.

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roofs, the stained glass transom windows, and the projecting entry pavilion, that show that Fuller was not limited to any particular style. Although inspired by the Renaissance, he was obviously not striving to create a pure Renaissance style building. The Gordon-Nash Library still shows some of the eclecticism of the Victorian era. But, as the first Classically inspired library building, it does mark an important architectural change for the public libraries of the Lakes Region. For the Classical tradition (including the Colonial Revival style) was to become the dominant stylistic theme for the region's later libraries. Of the sixteen public library buildings erected in the region after the Gordon-Nash Library and before World War II (the last being the Ossipee Public Library of 1938-39), only four ignored the Classical and Colonial Revival styles, the Romanesque Revival Gale Memorial Library in Laconia (1901-03), the eclectic Ossian Wilbur Goss Reading Room in Lakeport (1905-06), the vernacular George Gamble Library in Danbury (1909-10), and the Gothic Samuel H. Wentworth Library in Sandwich (1915). The other twelve libraries followed the Classical tradition. In the Holderness Free Library (1909-10), the Classical elements were mixed with late Victorian features. But, in the other early 20th century buildings, notably the impressive Neo-Classical libraries in Franklin (1905-06) and Centre Harbor (1909-10), the Classical styles were clearly the only architectural inspiration. After the first World War, the more purely Classical styles gave way to the related Colonial Revival style, used for all four library buildings erected in the 1920's and the one library built in the 1930's.<sup>50</sup> The Gordon-Nash Library therefore marked a significant point in the architectural evolution of the region's libraries, the first appearance of the Classical tradition that would guide the design of the majority of the region's libraries.

Not unrelated to the introduction of the Classical styles in the Gordon-Nash Library was the introduction of a new form that would also prove popular among the later libraries in the region- the symmetrical main block with a central entry pavilion (or porch). The form had appeared in some seven New Hampshire library buildings before 1895. It was associated with the Classical style in the Exeter library (1894), but also with more Victorian eclectic buildings, such as the Newport library (1888) and the Romanesque Revival buildings, such as the Winchester library (1890-91). The symmetry and dignity of such a form made it a natural choice for Classically inspired buildings. Of the sixteen public libraries in the Lakes Region that followed the Gordon-Nash Library and preceded World War II, six used a symmetrical main block, with a central entry pavilion, including the Classical and Neo-Classical libraries of Meredith,<sup>50</sup> The Colonial Revival style continued to be popular after World War II, being used for half of the six libraries erected between 1951 and 1978.

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Franklin, and Centre Harbor, the Colonial Revival libraries of Wakefield and Sanbornville, and even the Gothic library of Sandwich. (A related form, the symmetrical main block with central entry porch or portico, was used on five more libraries, in Holderness, Danbury, Gilmanton Iron Works, Gilford, and Belmont.) So, in both its Classical style and its form, the Gordon-Nash Library served as an architectural model for the later libraries of the Lakes Region.

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Prof. H.W. Brown "The Gordon-Nash Library" The Hamptonia Vol. XIII, No.3,  
(March, 1895) pp.63-64)

"Building Permit, New Hampton Village Precinct" issued October 20,1986 to  
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New Hampton, N.H.)

"Deed, Samuel G. Davis and Mary U. Nash to Gordon-Nash Library, March 11,  
1895" Book 93, Page 495 (manuscript, Belknap County Registry of Deeds,  
Laconia, N.H.)

"Deed, Frank P. Morrill to Stephen G. Nash, October 17,1888" Book 80,Page  
54 (manuscript, Belknap County Registry of Deeds, Laconia, N.H.)

"Deed, Esther H. Prescott to Stephen G. Nash, October 17,1888" Book 80,  
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"Gordon-Nash Library" The Hamptonia Vol. XIV, No.2 (December,1895) p.27

"Gordon-Nash Library Annual Reports,1950 to 1960" (manuscript, Gordon-  
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No. 10 (June, 1962) pp. 10-11

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"Gordon-Nash Library Records, 1972-1981" (manuscript, Gordon-Nash Library,  
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"Judge Stephen Gordon Nash Memorial Room and Committee Room" (manuscript,  
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LAWS OF NEW HAMPSHIRE, VOLUME 8, SECOND CONSTITUTIONAL PERIOD, 1811-1820  
(Concord, N.H.: Evans Printing Co.: 1920)

LAWS OF THE STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE PASSED JUNE SESSION 1887 (Manchester,  
N.H., John B. Clarke, Public Printer: 1887)

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Frank P. Marinace, Architect "Addition to the Gordon-Nash Library"  
(plans, Gordon-Nash Library, New Hampton, N.H.)

Jeannette C. Matthews HISTORY OF THE GORDON-NASH LIBRARY, NEW HAMPTON,  
N.H. (New Hampton, N.H., Gordon-Nash Library: 1965)

Pauline S. Merrill A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE TOWN OF NEW HAMPTON (New  
Hampton, N.H., New Hampton Historical Society: c.1964)

Pauline S. Merrill, John C. Gowan et al A SMALL GORE OF LAND (New Hampton,  
N.H., The New Hampton Town History Committee: 1977)

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Plymouth Record February 29, April 4, May 9, 23 & 30, 1896

REPORTS OF THE TRUSTEES OF THE STATE LIBRARY AND THE STATE LIBRARIAN FOR  
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John B. Clarke Co.: 1906)

David Ruell PUBLIC LIBRARIES IN THE LAKES REGION, AN ARCHITECTURAL SURVEY  
(Meredith, N.H., Lakes Region Planning Commission: 1986)

SERMONS AND ADDRESSES DELIVERED IN CONNECTION WITH THE 75TH ANNIVERSARY  
OF THE NEW HAMPTON INSTITUTION AND THE DEDICATION OF THE GORDON-NASH  
LIBRARY (Laconia, N.H., Lewis, Vaughan, 1896)

"Will of Stephen Gordon Nash" signed November 9, 1887 (copy in files of  
Gordon-Nash Library, New Hampton, N.H.)

Interviews of Bill Hudson, Custodian of Gordon-Nash Library, by David  
Ruell, February 24 and March 6, 1988

Interview of Barbara Shaw, former Librarian of Gordon-Nash Library, by  
David Ruell, March 1, 1988

Interview of Hope Swain, former Librarian of Gordon-Nash Library, by  
David Ruell, March 3, 1988



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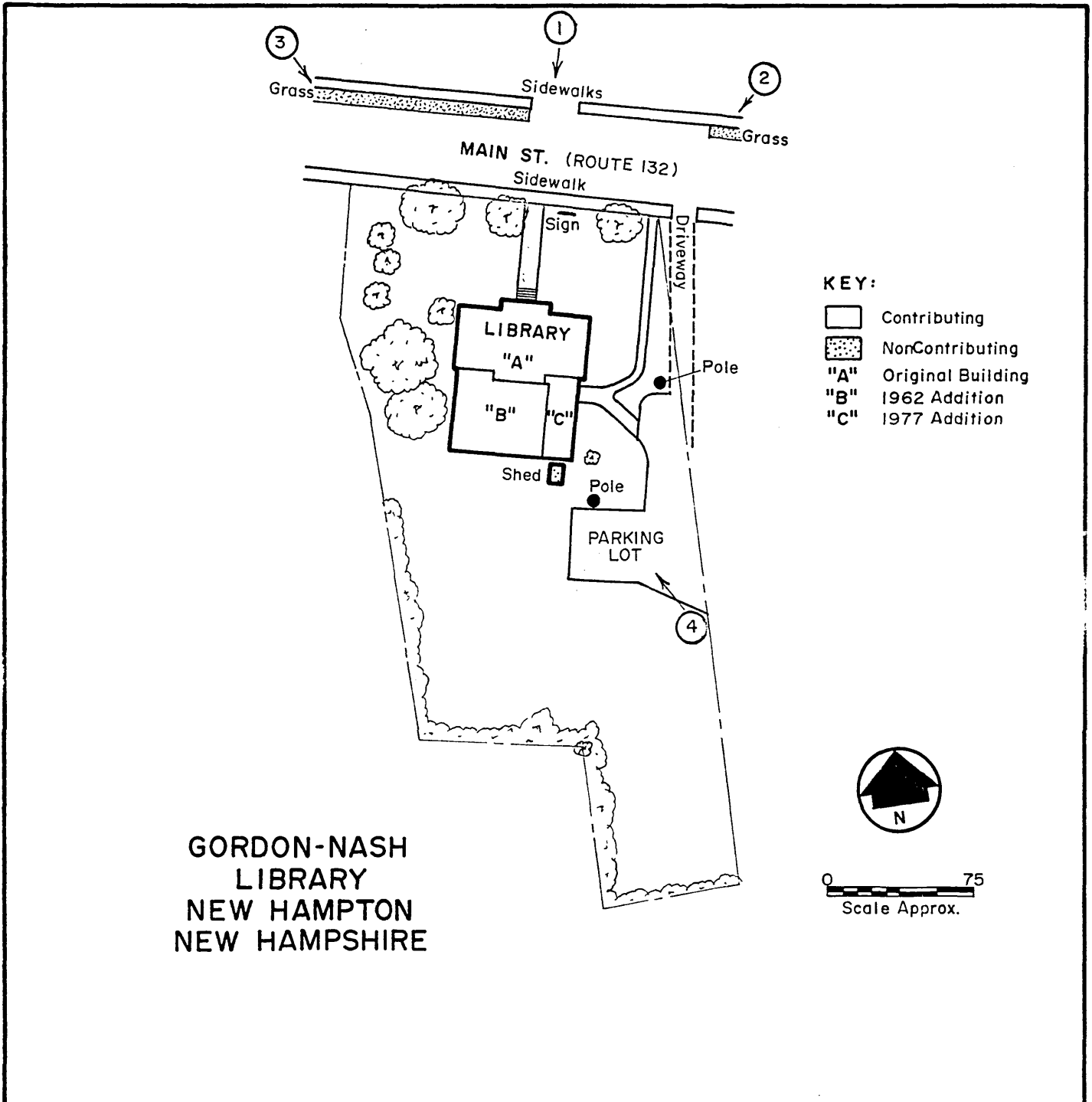
Verbal Boundary Description N 1° 17' E to a stone post on the south side of Main Street, then 155 feet N 75° 37' W (along Main Street) to the point of beginning. (The lot appears on New Hampton Property Map U4 as Lot 17. Its legal description appears on the Deed of Samuel G. Davis and Mary U. Nash to Gordon-Nash Library, Belknap County Registry of Deeds Book 93, Page 495.) Boundaries of the nominated property are highlighted in yellow on the attached sketch map.



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- KEY:
-  Contributing
  -  NonContributing
  - "A" Original Building
  - "B" 1962 Addition
  - "C" 1977 Addition

GORDON-NASH  
LIBRARY  
NEW HAMPTON  
NEW HAMPSHIRE



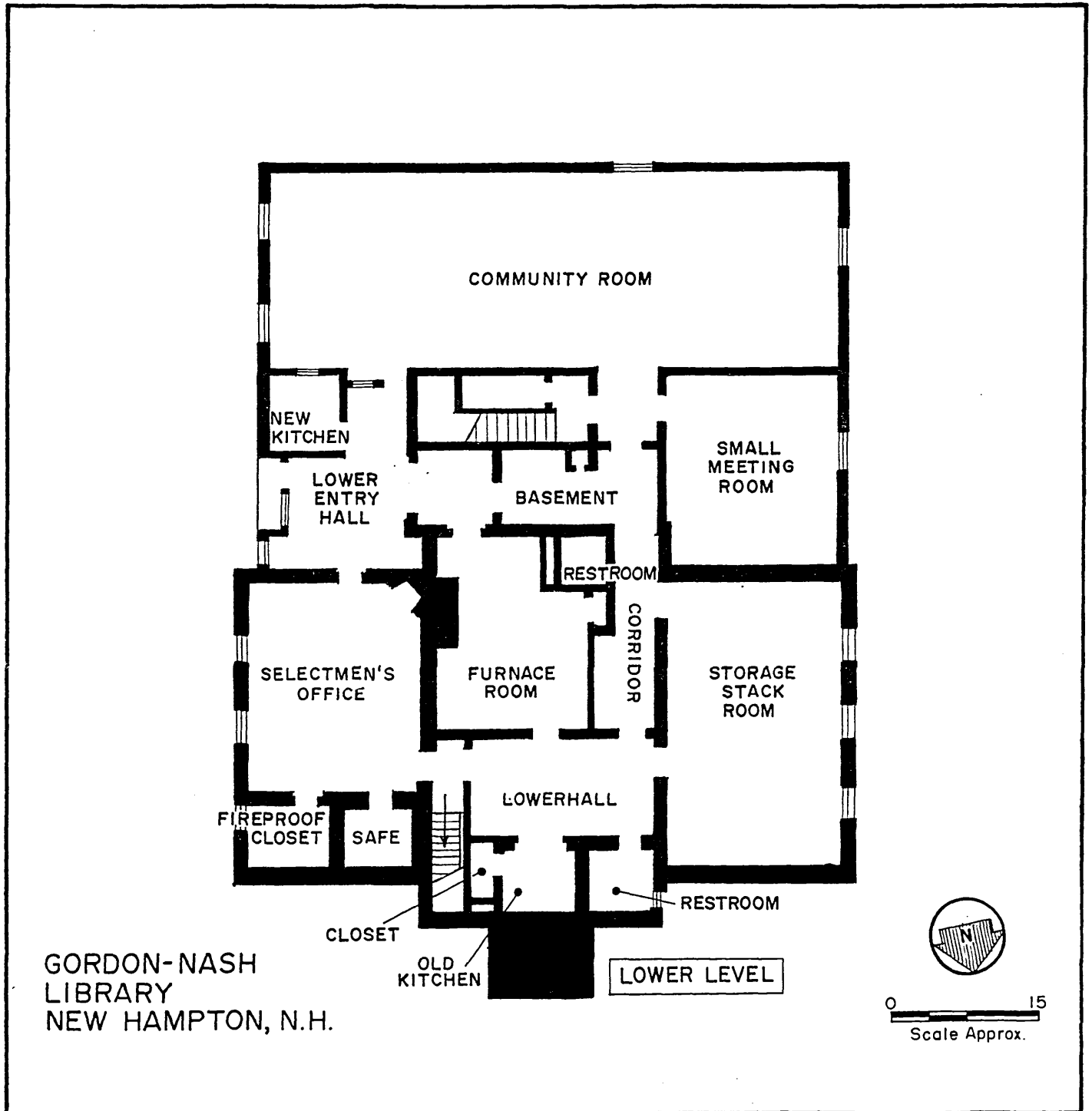
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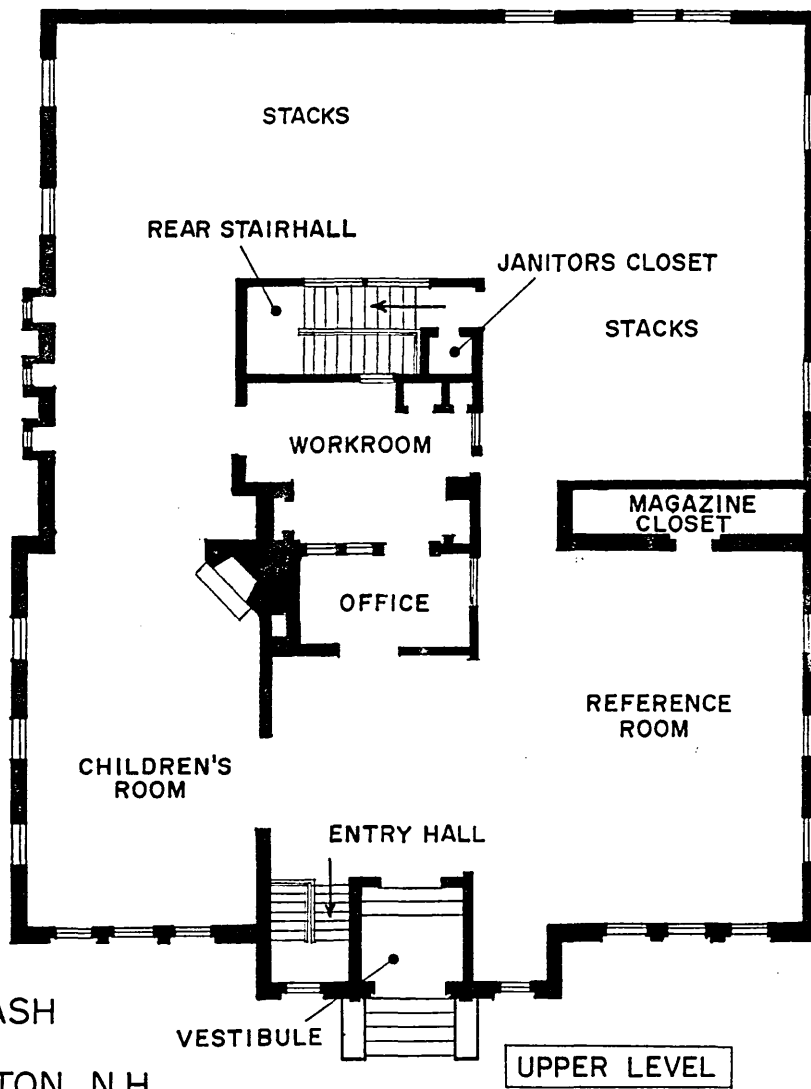
GORDON-NASH  
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Owner Gordon-Nash Library, Inc.

Mailing address Main Street  
New Hampton, N.H. 03256