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United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

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National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form

NATIONAL  
REGISTER

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 an 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 Wiggin Memorial Library

other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number Portsmouth Avenue (NH Rte 101) at Stratham Road (SE corner) N/A  not for publication

city or town Stratham N/A  vicinity

state New Hampshire code NH county Rockingham code 015 zip code 03885

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this  nomination  request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant  nationally  statewide  locally. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Marilyn C. Miller October 28, 1993  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date  
NEW HAMPSHIRE  
State of 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 certifying official/Title Date  
\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

- I hereby certify that the property is:
- entered in the National Register.  
 See continuation sheet.
  - determined eligible for the National Register  
 See continuation sheet.
  - determined not eligible for the National Register.
  - removed from the National Register.
  - other, (explain:)

[Signature] Signature of the Keeper 12/10/93 Date of Action  
NATIONAL REGISTER

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

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1		buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
1		Total

Name of related multiple property listing

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

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

EDUCATION/library

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

RECREATION AND CULTURE/museum

SOCIAL/clubhouse

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

LATE 19TH AND 20TH CENTURY REVIVALS

OTHER

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation STONE

walls STONE

roof SLATE

other N/A

Narrative Description

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

Wiggin Memorial Library  
100 North Main Street  
Rockingham, NH 03079

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.)

- Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
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.
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:

- owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
removed from its original location.
a birthplace or grave.
a cemetery.
a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
a commemorative property.
less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

EDUCATION

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1912-1943

Significant Dates

1912

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Charles Howard Walker (1857-1936)

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:

Wiggin Memorial Library  
Name of Property

Rockingham County, NH  
County and State

### 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property less than one acre

#### UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 | 1 | 9 | | 3 | 4 | 4 | 2 | 3 | 5 | | 4 | 7 | 6 | 5 | 1 | 6 | 0 |  
Zone Easting Northing  
2 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

3 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |  
Zone Easting Northing  
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

James L. Garvin  
name/title Barbara Mann\*  
NH Division of Historical Resources  
organization Stratham Historical Society\* date August 1993  
PO BOX 2043 (603) 271-3483  
street & number 10 Sandy Point Road\* telephone (603) 778-1347\*  
Concord NH 03302  
city or town Stratham\* state NH\* zip code 03885\*

#### 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 SHPO or FPO.)

name Town of Stratham  
street & number 10 Bunker Hill Avenue telephone (603) 772-7391  
city or town Stratham state NH zip code 03885

**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 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 Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 7 Page 1

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**Wiggin Memorial Library  
Rockingham County, NH**

**Description**

The George A. and Emma B. Wiggin Library is a public library building that was given to the town of Stratham, New Hampshire, under the terms of the will of a local philanthropist. The building was designed by a prominent Boston architect and has remained virtually unaltered since its completion in 1912.

The Wiggin Public Library stands on a low knoll at the intersection of Portsmouth Avenue (N.H. Route 101) and Winnicut Road. The lot is landscaped with Norway and silver maples and pin oaks, with a single larch tree and a variety of shrubs and perennials arranged as foundation plantings around the perimeter of the structure. Behind the building is the Stratham Volunteer Fire Department's fire station.

The library is a rectangular building of one story, with two gables in both the front and rear slopes of its gable roof and a projecting front portico that faces northwest and provides access to the single room on the main floor. The walls of the building rise from a foundation of mortared fieldstone and are constructed of split-faced random rubble with split granite trim. The rubble of the walls is selected stone, mostly granite of varying textures and colors, and including a high proportion of native Exeter granodiorite. Intermixed with these granites are a few conglomerates and other sedimentary stones, and a proportion of metamorphic stones of varying colors and textures, providing a highly variegated surface to the walls. The trim of the building, including the stone of the portico, the water table, the window lintels and sills, is Vinalhaven granite of a slightly pink hue. The granite of the projecting portico and its stereobate is hammered, while the other granite trim is split-faced. The roof has wooden eaves trim, and is covered with blue-gray slates which have closed valleys at the intersections of the main roof with the gables.

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## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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### Wiggin Memorial Library Rockingham County, NH

#### Description (continued)

The library is a highly symmetrical structure. The front (northwest elevation) of the building is dominated by the projecting central portico, which has four monolithic granite columns and a granite architrave in an extremely simplified Greek Doric order. This portico rises from a five-step granite stereobate. Behind the portico is a recessed porch that provides a sheltered entrance to the library room. The walls of this recess are paneled with wooden paneling that is characterized by flat panels bordered by flat Grecian ogee mouldings. In the center of the porch is a pine door with a large plate glass panel in its upper portion and a single wooden panel below. On each side of the door is a one-over-one set of window sashes, set within the stiles and rails of the surrounding paneling. The ceiling of the portico and recessed porch is covered with beaded sheathing or ceiling board.

The facade is articulated by projecting pavilions that flank the portico and are roofed by triangular gables. Beneath each gable, in the center of each pavilion, is a three-part window set beneath a low, segmental arch with voussoirs of the same variegated rubble stone that is used elsewhere on the walls. Below each of these windows, and below all others in the building, is a lug sill of the same Vinalhaven granite that is used for exterior trim throughout. Each window has a one-over-one set of sashes (as does every other window in the building), and the three windows are separated by paneled wooden mullions. Below the center of each of these front windows is a diminutive basement window that utilizes the water table as its lintel. At the outer corners of the front gables, and at every other point where raking roof cornices intersect projecting eaves cornices, a projecting granite corbel supports the overhang.

The walls of the building are plumb from grade up to the split granite water table of the building. Above the water table, the walls have an almost imperceptible batter that gives a subtle monumentality to this small structure.

The two ends of the building are almost identical. Each has two one-over-one windows that flank a central zone where a chimney rises within the walls. Beneath these windows on the southwest end of the building are basement windows, somewhat higher than those on the front of the building. The northeast end of the building has no basement windows.

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### Wiggin Memorial Library Rockingham County, NH

#### Description (continued)

On each gable end, the chimneys are expressed near the top of the wall where each stack, built of the same rubble as the walls below, is corbeled out about six inches from the wall plane and then rises some three feet above the ridge line of the structure to a concrete cap. The chimneys are flashed with lead and copper at their intersections with the roof planes.

The rear (southeast) elevation of the library is also generally symmetrical. Like the facade, this rear elevation is constructed of rubble, has pink Vinalhaven granite trim, and is articulated by two prominent gables that break the plane of the main roof. As on the front, these gables rise above a group of three windows separated by wooden mullions; unlike the front, where the window openings are spanned by segmental arches, the rear openings are spanned by a long granite lintel.

The single interruption to the symmetry of the rear wall occurs at the northeast gable of the rear of the building, where a modern wooden entrance shelter, sheathed with painted plywood, is placed just below the window sills to provide access to the furnace room in the basement and offer egress from a basement meeting area.

Between the two rear gables of the building, opposite the portico on the front of the structure, a continuous wall of rubble masonry continues the plane of the gable walls and provides a third grouping of three windows, surmounted by a long, horizontal wooden panel, at the center of the wall. The granite water table of the building extends only to the projecting portion of the rear wall of the building. Beneath the southern and the central rear windows is a one-light-deep basement sash with granite lintel and lug sill.

The interior of the building is a single large hall with a librarian's desk at its center, opposite the front door, and a fireplace at each end. The room is symmetrically divided into three areas or zones by screens of balusters and wooden arches that extend across the space at each side of the central desk area and symbolically differentiate the room into a lobby and two flanking reading areas.

The interior woodwork of the hall is varnished southern yellow pine, with a maple floor.

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**Wiggin Memorial Library  
Rockingham County, NH**

### **Description (continued)**

The most striking feature of the hall is in its roof structure. The ceiling is divided by a series of heavy rafters that project well below the plane of the ceiling. Each of these rafters is braced by a massive curved beam that springs from a moulded wooden corbel set below the cornice line of the room, rises to intersect and support the center of the rafter above, and then continues upward to meet its opposite counterpart. The intersections of these braces create pointed arches with their apexes at horizontal collar beams that span the gap between opposing rafters. The gaps between the rafters and their curved braces are filled with beaded ceiling board, and the ceiling itself is sheathed in the same material, laid vertically. The effect of the heavy trusswork and the beaded sheathing, especially at the valleys of the opposing gables where diagonal rafters intersect, is strikingly architectonic and is made more dramatic by the strong horizontal illumination afforded by the three-part windows in both the front and the rear of the building.

Below the cornice, the wooden detailing of the hall is characterized by attention to detail, with a prevailing palette obtained through the juxtaposition of natural wood coloration with cream-colored plastered walls. Chair rails, baseboards, book shelves and other details of the hall are executed in southern yellow pine of uniform color and grain. The pine mantelpieces at opposite ends of the room are simple and almost reminiscent of American federal-style design. Each has a moulded double architrave around a red brick fireplace opening, a wide frieze area above, and a thin but strongly projecting moulded mantelshelf at the top. Window casings throughout the hall have moulded backbands and crown mouldings.

The lobby area of the room is lighted from behind by the three grouped windows in the center of the rear wall. Directly in front of these windows, on the southeast side of the lobby and beside an abbreviated partition, is a double-run staircase that descends to a basement meeting room. In front of the staircase area is an L-shaped library counter with paneled front. Behind the counter is a small sink and a toilet room.



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### Wiggin Memorial Library Rockingham County, NH

#### Description (continued)

Extending from each side of the stairway/counter area is a low, paneled wainscot, terminating a few feet from the wall at a wooden post with a finial surmounting its moulded top. Opposite are two identical sections and posts that extend from the front wall of the building at each side of the porch walls. Above each wainscot section is a high balustrade composed of six greatly attenuated balusters of inverted double vasiform pattern. Above the ranges of balusters is a moulded rail that extends from each wall of the room to each of the wooden posts. Spanning the wide gap between each pair of opposite posts is a moulded wooden arch. These light wooden barriers of paneling, balusters, and moulded rails and arches provide a symbolic division of the hall into three balanced areas while preserving a nearly uninterrupted view from one end of the room to the other.

The basement is divided into a meeting room and a smaller furnace room. The walls of the meeting room, which occupies the southwestern two-thirds of the basement, are sheathed in striated plywood paneling, largely covered with wooden book shelves. The floor of the meeting room is carpeted, and the ceiling is covered with acoustic tiles. The furnace room is unfinished and has whitewashed walls of stone and sawn joists exposed overhead.

Original appearance: The Wiggin Library has changed little since its completion in 1912. The hall was originally illuminated by single-bulb, hanging light fixtures. These were replaced in 1957 by suspended florescent fixtures. On the exterior, the only change to the building has been the recent addition of a flat-roofed framed structure, sheathed in plywood, above the areaway of the basement stairs.

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**Wiggin Memorial Library  
Rockingham County, NH**

### **Significance**

The Wiggin Memorial Library is significant under National Register Criterion A, in the category of education, as a public library building, in this case given to its community by a private philanthropist. (This set of circumstances was typical of the method by which New Hampshire towns received such buildings in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.) The building is also significant under National Register Criterion C, in the category of architecture, as a design by Charles Howard Walker, a leading New England architect and architectural writer of the era. The period of significance under Criterion A extends from 1912, the date of its completion, to 1943, the arbitrary fifty-year cutoff date for the National Register of Historic Places. Under Criterion C, the period of significance is 1912, the date of completion. The library retains integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.

**Education:** The Wiggin Memorial Library was built for the town of Stratham, New Hampshire, under the terms of a bequest in the will of Emma Jane Blodgett Wiggin (1852-1909). It was named the "George A. and Emma B. Wiggin Public Library" in memory of the donor and her husband, who had predeceased her. In her youth, Emma Blodgett had been a schoolteacher in Stratham. In 1878, she had demonstrated her strong will and her determination to better the educational facilities of her small country town by protesting the condition of the district schoolhouse where she taught, condemning the building as "the most forbidding structure in the district" when it ought to have been the most attractive. In other reports, Miss Blodgett commented on the architectural quality of other public buildings of the town, evincing a concern with public architecture in her community and a determination to improve its quality.

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## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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**Wiggin Memorial Library  
Rockingham County, NH**

### **Significance (continued)**

In 1883, Emma Blodgett married George A. Wiggin (1848-1903), a widower who had been superintendent of schools in Stratham during Miss Blodgett's tenure as teacher. Through this marriage, Mrs. Wiggin inherited an estate that gave her the means upon her own death in 1909 to provide for the construction of a public edifice of the character and permanence she had long wished for in the older town buildings of Stratham. Emma Blodgett Wiggin's will established a committee of three trustees, and this board was placed in possession of a bequest of \$10,000 with the obligation to "purchase a suitable lot on the main road near the village in Stratham, in some elevated site, convenient of access," and "to erect thereon a library building . . . of brick or stone."<sup>1</sup> In 1910, the trustees purchased a two-acre lot with some inconsequential buildings and, after selling the structures, employed architect C. Howard Walker of Boston to design a library structure.<sup>2</sup> By the end of June, 1912, the Stratham Public Library's existing collection of about 2,000 volumes was moved from its former home in a room in the town hall to the capacious new Wiggin Memorial Library building.<sup>3</sup>

The town of Stratham had had a library since 1793, when a group of proprietors founded a social library (a private library supported by its members), the common form of "public" library in early New England. This institution eventually disappeared, but other proprietary organizations succeeded it throughout the nineteenth century. In 1891, the town agreed to accept the collections of the last of these, the Union Library, and appropriated \$100 for its support. In 1896, in response to state laws that strongly encouraged the establishment of free public libraries and offered books worth \$100 to any town that did so, the town of Stratham made this library the Stratham Public Library and the following year housed it in a room in the town hall.<sup>4</sup> There it remained until 1912, when it was moved to the new Wiggin Memorial Building. The Stratham Public Library continued to occupy this structure until 1989, when it again moved to greatly expanded quarters in a new municipal building. The Wiggin Memorial Building is now occupied as a research library, exhibit hall and meeting place by the Stratham Historical Society.

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## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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**Wiggin Memorial Library  
Rockingham County, NH**

### **Significance (continued)**

The construction of public library buildings by private philanthropy was typical of New Hampshire in the late 1800s and early 1900s. This method of funding library buildings was encouraged by New Hampshire state laws that strongly supported the establishment of public libraries as institutions, yet provided no means to build structures to house them. In 1849, the New Hampshire legislature had passed a law empowering any town to allocate tax money to establish a public library "for the free use of any inhabitant . . . [and] for the general diffusion of intelligence among all classes of the community." The first law of its kind in the United States, the act of 1849 also allowed towns to receive gifts and donations for this purpose, and to purchase land and erect library buildings.<sup>5</sup>

These latter provisions were to have far-reaching effects at the end of the century, when two further laws ensured that the public library would become a fixture in every New Hampshire community. An innovative law of 1891 required the state to assist towns that took advantage of the law of 1849. This legislation provided that the state must offer books worth \$100 to any town beginning a library by voting to appropriate an annual sum based on the value of taxable property in the community. The law of 1891 also created a state board of library commissioners whose duties included the provision of professional guidance in librarianship to any such town.<sup>6</sup>

Finally, in 1895, New Hampshire moved to the final stage of state oversight of local public libraries. In that year, the legislature passed a ground-breaking law--again, the first of its kind in the nation--that required each town in the state to appropriate funds for the establishment of a free public library and to appoint a local board of library trustees, unless the electorate specifically voted each year not to do so.<sup>7</sup> The result was an almost universal presence of public libraries in New Hampshire by the first decades of the twentieth century. By 1914, Governor Samuel D. Felker could report that there were only thirteen New Hampshire towns without a public library, and that of those thirteen, six were accumulating funds for the establishment of a library.

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**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

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**Wiggin Memorial Library  
Rockingham County, NH**

**Significance (continued)**

But even when New Hampshire communities appropriated sufficient funds to secure the gift of books from the state, or after 1895 set aside an annual appropriation for a public library, such an institution was by no means secure. New Hampshire town histories abound with tales of book collections housed in out-of-the-way rooms above stores, crowded into chambers not much bigger than closets, locked away and stifled through lack of a librarian's care, and often no more accessible to the general public than had been the collections of the older social libraries. Most New Hampshire public libraries languished under such conditions until someone came forward to endow the construction of a proper library building. Of the 110 library buildings constructed in New Hampshire before 1930, only about ten appear to have been erected wholly by community funds.<sup>8</sup>

Under these circumstances, private initiative and generosity frequently made up for inadequate local revenues. The period from 1890 to 1915 became an age of notable philanthropy in New Hampshire's library history. Local citizens or summer visitors, grown wealthy through business enterprise or careful frugality, often stepped forward to do what the local community could not do for itself. While some donors relished the opportunity of presenting their gifts publicly, often delivering lengthy addresses or publishing commemorative booklets to mark the occasion, others sought anonymity. Many, like Emma Blodgett Wiggin, were not wealthy enough to give such gifts during their lifetimes, yet chose to devote a large portion of their estates to the fulfillment of their purpose. In so doing, many commemorated a spouse or other relative by naming the building for that person. In writing her will, Emma Wiggin made her bequest to the people of Stratham "in memory of my late husband and in accordance with what I know to be his expressed desire for the welfare of his native town and its citizens."

The desire to endow a community with a substantial building to house its public library was always related to a desire to improve public education. The crucial connection between the library and education had been noted by the New Hampshire Library Association when it held its first annual meeting in 1890. A report of that meeting chronicled the contrast between the embryonic town library, housed in a seldom-opened room, and the ideal library with reading and reference space as well as ample collections:

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**Wiggin Memorial Library  
Rockingham County, NH**

### **Significance (continued)**

With unabashed economy the arrangement and management of the [early] library conformed to the earliest Puritanical practice, and rooms set apart for reading and reference were deemed criminally extravagant. The diffusion of knowledge was accompanied by everything tending to its suppression, yet to the public libraries the common school owes its greatest debt. The stern and narrow policy, made necessary by former conditions of our society, has been gradually changing, 'til now the town and city libraries are regarded as much a part of our domestic system as the school and the church.<sup>9</sup>

The educational benefit of the library was certainly clear to Emma Blodgett Wiggin and to her late husband, since both had earned their living as teachers. New Hampshire people who accepted such buildings from generous donors were also quick to proclaim the idea that the public library building was not a mere receptacle for books, but was an educational institution that called for strenuous intellectual effort on the part of those to whom the gift was given. Speaking at the dedication of a new library building in Windham, New Hampshire, in 1899, New Hampshire historian Albert E. Pillsbury noted that ". . . these gifts, so freely bestowed, must be wisely used, or they may defeat the purpose of the givers." The speaker warned that "in making this gift our friend [the donor] has laid you under a weightier obligation to yourselves than to him; the obligation to make such use of it [the building] that it will be what he meant it to be,--a perpetual help to your own work, not a substitute for it."<sup>10</sup>

Pillsbury went on to outline the history of the public library movement in New Hampshire, reiterating the strong link between the library and public education:

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**Wiggin Memorial Library  
Rockingham County, NH**

### **Significance (continued)**

[The public library] is a permanent free school, not limited to youth or to three terms a year. Every man, woman and child, of whatever age, situation, or circumstances, can attend it. It brings to the service of every inhabitant of the town the best thought which the best minds have contributed to all forms of literature. It puts in every hand a key to the history of nations, the mysteries of science, the story of great lives, the theories of the economist, the speculations of the philosopher. Upon its wings you may follow the traveller through foreign lands, the explorer to the African jungle or the frozen Arctic, the poet and novelist to the land of romance and of dreams, the astronomer to the stars. . . . More than this. One of the highest and most valuable uses of the free library is yet to be developed, in making it an adjunct or a part of the public school system.<sup>11</sup>

**Architecture:** The Wiggin Memorial Library building was designed by architect Charles Howard Walker (1857-1936) of Boston, who was paid \$371 for his work and who drew a preliminary rendering of the structure that was widely circulated in anticipation of the completion of the actual building. The building was erected by local contractor Sidney S. Truman at a cost of \$7,000.<sup>12</sup>

Walker was a leader in the architectural profession in New England in the late 1800s and early 1900s. Following some years spent in studying archaeology in Asia Minor and architecture in Europe, Walker opened his practice in Boston in 1884, specializing in the design of private homes, apartment houses, schools, and other public buildings. In 1889, he was appointed architect-in-chief of the Trans-Mississippi Exposition in Omaha, Nebraska, and in the early 1900s he was selected to head the board of architects that prepared plans for the Louisiana Purchase Exposition, which opened in St. Louis in 1903. He was a delegate and lecturer at the International Congress of Architects in 1906, and in 1909 President Theodore Roosevelt appointed him to the National Fine Arts Commission. In 1913, just after designing the Wiggin Memorial Library, Walker was appointed director of the Department of Design of the Boston Museum of Fine Arts. He was an early and strong proponent of the registration of architects. An early member of the Boston Society of Architects, Walker was made a Fellow of the American Institute of Architects in 1891 in recognition of his high standing in the profession.

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**Wiggin Memorial Library  
Rockingham County, NH**

### **Significance (continued)**

Walker was a noted architectural writer and teacher. During the early 1900s, he edited The Architectural Review, an influential architectural journal published in Boston until 1921. He lectured frequently at Harvard College, the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, the Lowell Institute, and the Child-Walker School of Fine Arts, of which he was one of the founders. He long served on the faculty of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. In his many articles, Walker wrote on European, American, and New England architecture, urban planning, landscape architecture, architectural polychromy and other decoration, and on problems of housing; he also contributed several articles on the careers of some of his eminent contemporaries. Walker was strongly interested in mouldings, writing articles on the subject and in 1926 publishing his book The Theory of Mouldings, which became a standard text on the subject.<sup>13</sup>

Walker's design for the Wiggin Memorial Library building is strongly eclectic, drawing upon his familiarity with many architectural styles. On the exterior, the building combines elements of classicism in its front portico with a suggestion of Tudor design in its stone walls and grouped windows. On the interior, the structure offers a strong suggestion of the rural Gothic in its arched roof trusses, contrasting these robust framing elements with delicate features like the balustraded screens that divide the hall into three zones and the mantelpieces at each end of the building.

Walker's use of random rubble masonry for the library walls places the structure in a small group of stone library buildings in New Hampshire. Among the others that reflect a similar choice of materials are the libraries in Windham (1898), North Hampton (1907), Hudson (1909), and Center Sandwich (1915). Even these buildings vary widely, however, with the Windham and Hudson libraries reflecting in their fieldstone walls something of the cobblestone masonry that was popular in the late 1800s and early 1900s, while the Sandwich and North Hampton buildings are more strongly Tudor in feeling, with half-timbered gable walls above the stonework. Still other New Hampshire libraries reflect the collegiate Tudor style that was popular in the early 1900s, including those in Franconia (1912) and Litchfield (1924), both of which have brick walls and stone trim.



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**Wiggin Memorial Library  
Rockingham County, NH**

### Significance (continued)

While other New Hampshire library buildings reflect some of the characteristics seen in the Wiggin Memorial Building, there is no other New Hampshire library that expresses the same fluent eclecticism seen in the Stratham building.

On the interior, Walker adhered to the standard small library plan of the late 1800s and early 1900s. This plan consistently called for a symmetrical design that placed a lobby and circulation desk at the center of the building, with reading and book rooms on either side. Typically, as in Stratham, these flanking spaces were furnished with comfortable chairs and heavy reading tables, were illuminated by large windows, and were provided with fireplaces that imparted a homelike and contemplative atmosphere to the rooms. In most libraries of the period, however, the central area and the flanking rooms are separated from one another by solid partitions, often pierced by broad doorways with flanking columns.<sup>14</sup> Walker's design for the Wiggin Memorial Building is unusual in expressing the building's interior as a single large hall separated only by symbolic screens. This design permits the small building to attain a monumental interior effect, and this effect is strengthened by the uninterrupted view of the massive trusses overhead and by the strong buttressing arches that intersect at the crossings of the main roof and the front and rear gables.

### Notes

<sup>1</sup>Rockingham County [N.H.] Register of Probate #14563, Will of Emma B. Wiggin, 9 April, 1908.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., First Account of Loughton, Odell and Scammon, trustees under the will of Emma B. Wiggin; see also, Rockingham County Probate volume 256, page 441.

<sup>3</sup>Exeter News-Letter, June 28, 1912.

<sup>4</sup>Charles B. Nelson, History of Stratham, New Hampshire, 1631-1900 (Somersworth, N.H.: New Hampshire Publishing Company, 1965), 275-277.

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**Wiggin Memorial Library  
Rockingham County, NH**

**Significance (continued)**

<sup>5</sup>Chapter 861, New Hampshire Laws of 1849.

<sup>6</sup>Chapter 62, New Hampshire Laws of 1891.

<sup>7</sup>Chapter 118, New Hampshire Laws of 1895.

<sup>8</sup>Shirley Gray Adamovich, ed., The Road Taken: The New Hampshire Library Association, 1889-1989 (West Kennebunk, Maine: Phoenix Publishing, 1989), 62.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., 9.

<sup>10</sup>Leonard Allison Morrison, Dedication Exercises of Armstrong Building for Nesmith Library, Windham, New Hampshire, January 4, 1899 (Boston: George W. Armstrong, 1899), 20-21.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., 22-23.

<sup>12</sup>First Account of Loughton, Odell and Scammon.

<sup>13</sup>Henry F. Withey and Elsie Rathburn Withey, Biographical Dictionary of American Architects (Deceased) (Los Angeles: Hennessey & Ingalls, Inc., 1970), 623-624; obituary in The Architectural Forum 64 (June 1936), 72, 74.

<sup>14</sup>Adamovich, ed., The Road Taken, 59.

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Adamovich, Shirley Gray, ed. The Road Taken: The New Hampshire Library Association, 1889-1989. West Kennebunk, Maine: Phoenix Publishing, 1989.

The Architectural Forum 64 (June 1936), 72; 74 (obituary of Charles Howard Walker).

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**Wiggin Memorial Library  
Rockingham County, NH**

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Morrison, Leonard Allison. Dedication Exercises of Armstrong Building for Nesmith Library, Windham, New Hampshire, January 4, 1899. Boston: George W. Armstrong, 1899.

Nelson, Charles B. History of Stratham, New Hampshire, 1631-1900. Somersworth, N.H.: New Hampshire Publishing Company, 1965.

### **Verbal Boundary Description**

Map 11, Parcel 36. Boundaries of the nominated property are shown on the attached sketch map.

### **Boundary Justification**

The nominated property represents the remaining portion of the two-acre parcel purchased for the library in 1910 and upon which the Wiggin Memorial Library was erected in 1912.

This certifies that the appearance has not changed since the photographs were taken.

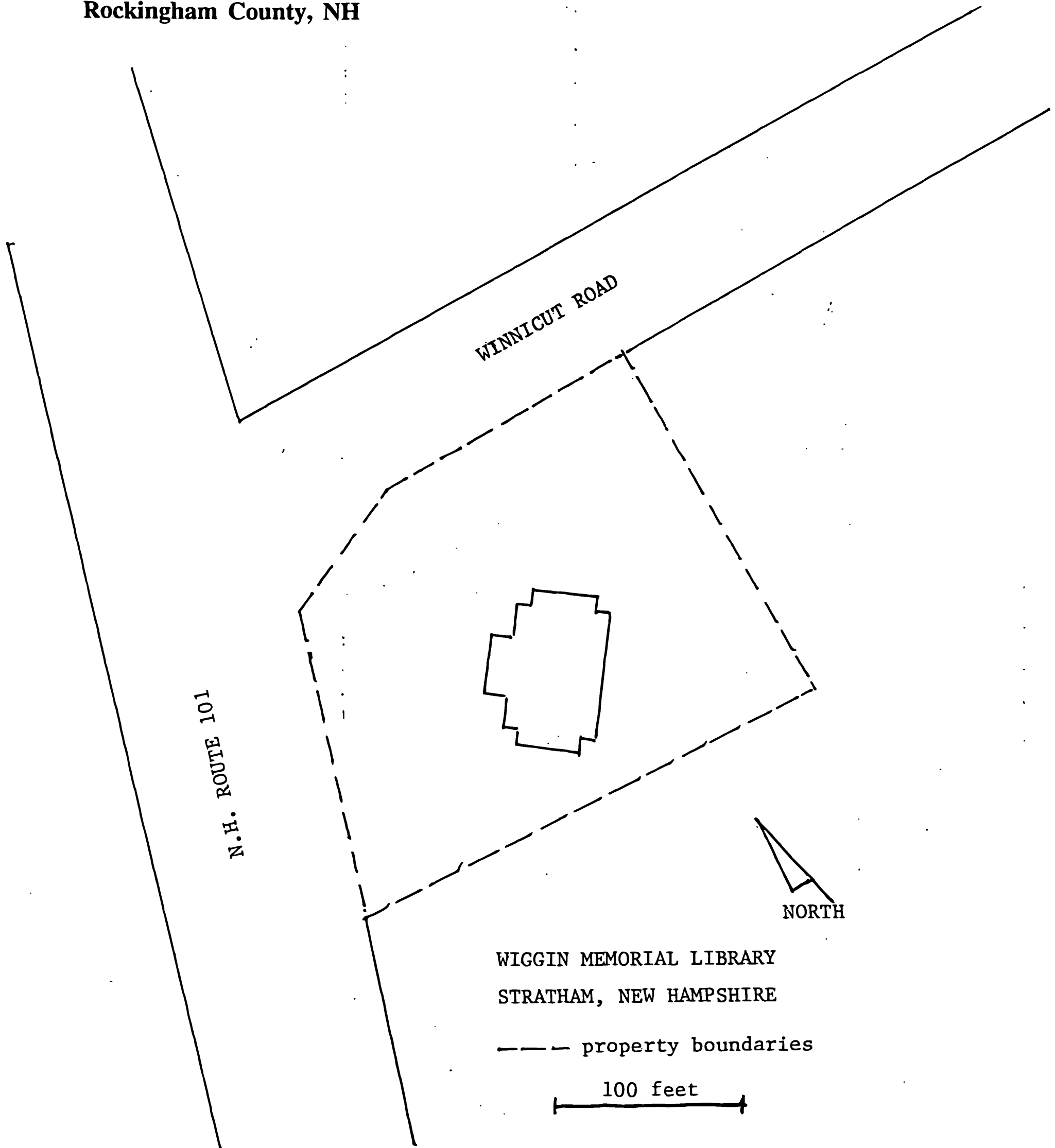
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Additional Documentation

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Wigin Memorial Library  
Rockingham County, NH



WIGIN MEMORIAL LIBRARY  
STRATHAM, NEW HAMPSHIRE

--- property boundaries

100 feet