

6-26-73

Form 10-300
(Rev. 6-72)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM**

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: New Hampshire
COUNTY: Sullivan
FOR NPS USE ONLY
ENTRY DATE APR 26 1973

1. NAME

COMMON: Claremont City Hall (Claremont Opera House)
AND/OR HISTORIC: Claremont Town Hall

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER: Tremont Square			
CITY OR TOWN: Claremont		CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT: Second	
STATE New Hampshire	CODE 33	COUNTY: Sullivan	CODE 019

3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Object <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress	Yes: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/> No
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Park <input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____ _____ _____

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME: City of Claremont, New Hampshire			
STREET AND NUMBER: Claremont City Hall Tremont Square			
CITY OR TOWN: Claremont	STATE: New Hampshire	CODE: 03743	CODE: 33

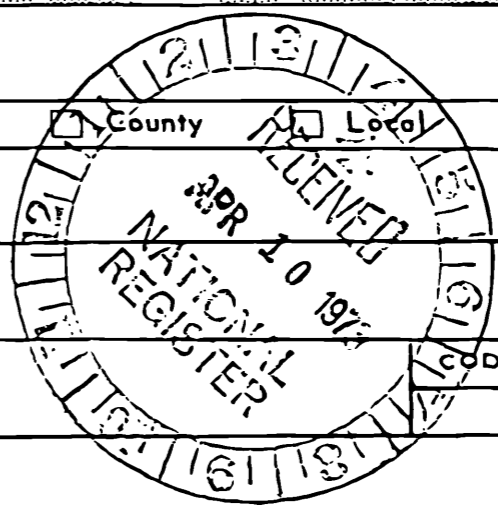
5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.: Sullivan County Registry of Deeds			
STREET AND NUMBER: P. O. Box 448	Sullivan County Records Building 24-A Main Street		
CITY OR TOWN: Newport	STATE: New Hampshire	CODE: 03773	CODE: 33

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY: None		
DATE OF SURVEY: <input type="checkbox"/> Federal <input type="checkbox"/> State <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> County <input type="checkbox"/> Local		
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:		
STREET AND NUMBER:		
CITY OR TOWN:	STATE:	CODE:

SEE INSTRUCTIONS



STATE: New Hampshire
COUNTY: Sullivan
ENTRY NUMBER: APR 26 1973
DATE: APR 26 1973

FOR NPS USE ONLY

7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input type="checkbox"/> Unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Present: The Claremont City Hall (Claremont Opera House) is situated on the southeast corner of Tremont Square, center of the city's business district, on a plot with an 82 foot frontage and 185 foot depth.

Begun October 31, 1895 and dedicated June 23, 1897, it is a brownstone and brick rectangular building, two storeys in height with a square clock tower extending off-center on the south side and a low hip roof.

Except for the south entrance, which was bricked and the west entrance with glass doors, the result of converting the first floor ballroom into City offices and Council Chamber in 1960, the exterior of the building today is for the most part as it was in 1897, including the New Hampshire Coat of Arms over the former south-side entrance.

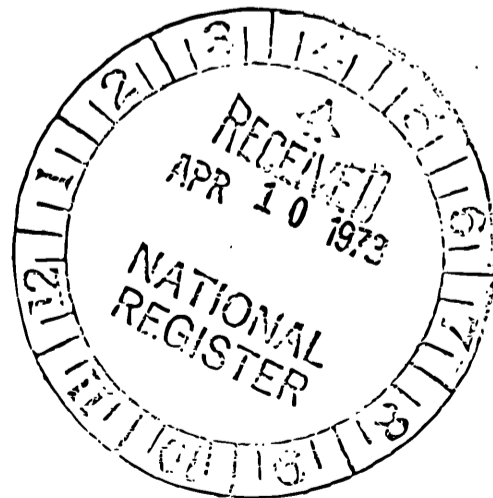
Besides these changes on the first floor in the interior, the staircases have been painted. The Opera House on the second floor, however, remains basically unchanged. It has been unused for some 30 years, acquiring during that time a layer of dirt and dust. The original seats exist and the accoustics remain superb.

Original: From news accounts of the time, the following is known of the building: The ground floor consists of a broad entrance hall off which is an assembly hall 65 feet x 63 feet and 16 feet high which seats 700, and is also used for balls and dances. The Town offices are in the west front, flanking the main entrance. Broad staircases on either side of the rotunda lead to the Opera House on the second floor. Seating capacity is 661 on the main floor of the opera house, and 321 in the gallery, a total of 982. The stage is 26 feet deep back of the curtain and 72 feet wide. Above all, rises a handsome tower with illuminated clock. On each floor are dressing rooms, waiting rooms and toilet facilities, including eight dressing rooms under the stage.

The best of materials are used in its construction. The foundation is of Green Mountain rock, and the base is dressed Connecticut River brownstone from Springfield, Massachusetts. Nearly 1,000,000 Lebanon bricks are laid in the remaining exterior. The corners and frieze beneath the copper cornice are of Massachusetts pressed brick.

The floors are of birch, the dressing and coat rooms finished in natural North Carolina pine and the main staircase of quartered oak. Basswood, painted cream color, is used in the Opera House where decorations include a proscenium arch in moulded plaster-work with decorated stereo-relief and appropriate figures over the center. The walls in the opera hall are in olive green and old rose, with subdued frescoing. Far overhead in the center is the gold decorated grill with its lighting of forty-eight incandescent burners.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS



8. SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

<input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian	<input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century	<input type="checkbox"/> 18th Century	<input type="checkbox"/> 20th Century
<input type="checkbox"/> 15th Century	<input type="checkbox"/> 17th Century	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 19th Century	

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) 1895

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

<input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal	<input type="checkbox"/> Education	<input type="checkbox"/> Political	<input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning
<input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> Engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify)
<input type="checkbox"/> Historic	<input type="checkbox"/> Industry	<input type="checkbox"/> Science	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> Invention	<input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture	_____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Art	<input type="checkbox"/> Literature	<input type="checkbox"/> Theater	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> Military	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Communications	<input type="checkbox"/> Music		_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Conservation			_____

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Architecture: The Claremont City Hall (Claremont Opera House), originally the Town Hall, begun October 31, 1895 and dedicated June 23, 1897, was designed by Charles A. Rich, of Lamb & Rich, New York City.

A native of Beverly, Massachusetts (1855-1943), he graduated from Dartmouth College in 1875 and became professionally associated with Hugh Lamb after studying architecture and spending 1879-1880 in Europe. A noted architectural firm, they designed besides numerous apartments and residences in New York City, college buildings, and Sagamore Hill, Oyster Bay, N.Y., home of Theodore Roosevelt, other opera houses including the East Orange (N.J.) Opera House.

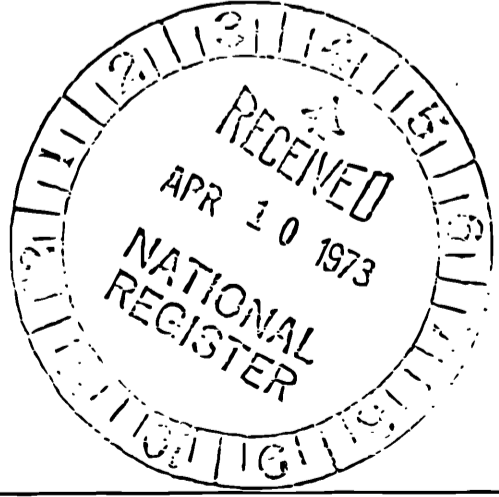
The contractor, Hira Beckwith of Claremont, a builder of high local reputation, erected a number of other public buildings in the area, and built many impressive homes in Claremont. Although he was foremost a contractor, he had attended the Asher Benjamin School of Design to study architecture.

For the Opera House, the interior finishings were furnished almost wholly by Freeman and O'Neil of Claremont, with trimmings by George H. Stowell, scenery by Alexander Boston, fresco by Schupboch and Zeller, Boston, and stage carpentry by Couch, Providence, Rhode Island. The total result for the building: one of the best examples in New Hampshire of the Renaissance Revival style of architecture more typically found in larger urban centers than Claremont.

Social/Humanitarian: Besides housing the key Town offices, the Claremont Town Hall, later City Hall, was a regional center for entertainment. Harry Eaton, a Claremont druggist, its manager for 32 years, brought stock companies to Claremont in plays, road companies for one-night stands, musicals, vaudeville, minstrel shows, and movies. Local musical, theatrical, and political events also took place here.

With the aid of the Claremont Opera House Restoration Committee, restoration of the Hall in regard to the Opera House, unused for 30 years, is anticipated so that it can again become the center it originally was.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS



9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Claremont Advocate, Dedication Number (June 23, 1897).
The National Eagle (June 26, 1897)
 Opera House Programs, Cynthia W. McKee, Claremont, N.H. 03743.

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

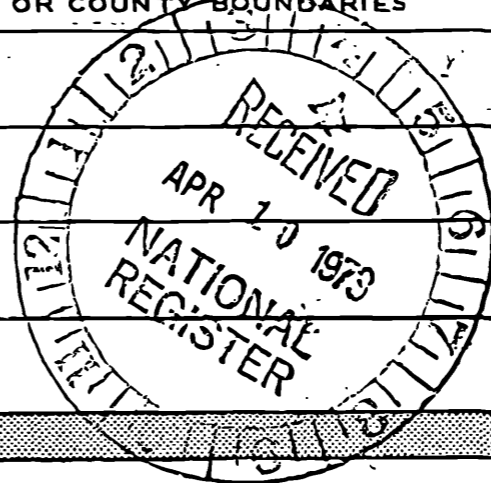
LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			OR	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	
NW	° ' "	° ' "		43° 22' 19"	72° 20' 21"	
NE	° ' "	° ' "				
SE	° ' "	° ' "				
SW	° ' "	° ' "				

UN
 12/715720
 41865400
 10

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: 1/2 acre

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE



SEE INSTRUCTIONS

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:
 Cynthia W. McKee, Secretary

ORGANIZATION: Claremont Opera House Restoration Committee

DATE: March 23, 1973

STREET AND NUMBER:
 89 Chestnut Street

CITY OR TOWN: Claremont

STATE: New Hampshire 03743

CODE: 33

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

<p>As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:</p> <p>National <input type="checkbox"/> State <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Local <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Name: <u>George Gilman</u></p> <p>Title: <u>Commissioner</u> <u>Department of Resources and Economic Development</u></p> <p>Date: <u>March 29, 1973</u></p>	<p>NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION</p> <p>I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.</p> <p><u>Robert H. Utley</u> Director, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation</p> <p>Date: <u>4/26/73</u></p> <p>ATTEST:</p> <p><u>[Signature]</u> Keeper of The National Register</p> <p>Date: <u>4 21 73</u></p>
--	---

ITEM 7, continued:

APPROVED
Signature <i>[Handwritten Signature]</i> 10/12/78

The architect was Charles A. Rich, of Land and Rich, New York City; the contractor was a local resident, Hira Beckwith, who had studied architecture at the Asher Benjamin School of Design in nearby Windsor, Vermont. The choice of a sophisticated design by a New York architect for its seat of government, and center of community activities, reflected Claremont's economic, social and political ambitions at the end of the 19th century, and its aspirations to transform itself from a small industrial city to a regional service and cultural center. These ambitions are only now becoming attainable, through renewed commitment to the community by its citizens--a commitment sparked by recognition of the quality and potential value of its heritage and natural resources.

The City Hall / Opera House is remarkable not only for the clarity and coherence of its design, and the excellence of its execution, but also as the generator, focus and symbol of Claremont's nationally-recognized center city revitalization program. Receipt of an EDA-LPW-Round One grant for the Police-Court/Civic Center components of the City Hall preservation program initiated a comprehensive historical survey and planning process, which culminated in the first Multiple Resource designation in the National Register of Historic Places. This, in turn, generated a summer HAER/TPS Rehab Action Project in Claremont, in which the US Departments of HUD and Energy also participated; a comprehensive storefront enhancement project; self-help community preservation workshops; a preservation film production program; and related heritage/recreation/conservation efforts.

Work proposed for HPF assistance will restore the Opera House interior finishes and furnishings to their former intricacy and beauty.

Under terms of the EDA project, the interior seating and all movable elements in the Opera House have been stored to prevent damage, but--by contract--must be replaced by December 1978. In order to meet this deadline, it was necessary to begin potential HPF-assisted work on May 1, 1978. Therefore, approval of preagreement costs (professional fees; research; supervision; restoration and rehabilitation of existing substrates, wood, plaster and masonry; restoration of existing paint surfaces; and restoration of existing light fixtures) is requested, retroactive to May 1, 1978. In addition, because all of New Hampshire's FY 1978 HPF funds have been obligated, it is requested that this project be given advance approval for Fiscal Year 1979 grant-in-aid funds.

It is understood and agreed that no reimbursement requests will be forwarded to or accepted by the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service for this project until the following fiscal year*Annual Program Grant has been awarded and acknowledged, and the standard OMB construction and nonconstruction applications have been approved by HCRS. Project work will be in accordance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Acquisition and Development Projects.

* (FY 1979)