

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

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**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

received FEB 13 1981

date entered FEB 25 1981

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic STRAFFORD COUNTY ^{FARM} ALMS HOUSE, COUNTY JAIL, AND LAUNDRY & BOILER HOUSES

and/or common

2. Location

street & number County Farm Road ___ not for publication

city, town Dover ___ vicinity of congressional district First

state New Hampshire code 33 county Strafford code 017

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Strafford County

street & number County Farm Road

city, town Dover ___ vicinity of state New Hampshire 03820

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Strafford County Registry of Deeds, Strafford County Courthouse

street & number County Farm Road

city, town Dover state New Hampshire 03820

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title N/A has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date ___ federal ___ state ___ county ___ local

depository for survey records

city, town state

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> original site
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Strafford County Alms House

Original Appearance: The Strafford County Alms House is a large three-story brick building with full basement and attic and was designed to house 250-300 people. It is constructed in a U floor plan with corridors running the entire length of the main block and both wings. The main block was primarily administrative and the two wings were used to separate and house the opposite sexes. There was a hospital in each wing. The original construction included cells in the basements to contain misdemeanants.

The dimensions of the main block are approximately 140' x 40' and the wings are 102' x 38'. The roof is gabled and includes a large center gable in the main block front facade. There are two double-window hipped dormers in the main block and four single-window gabled dormers in each wing. The main block is 19 bays by five bays. The 6/6 sash windows all have granite footings. The main entrance was originally in the center of the front facade gable. There was a hipped-roof portico with closed sides (an arched window in each side) and a granite lintel.

The original tank is an open circular tank (15' in diameter) made of cast iron, with a holding capacity of 10,000 gallons and seems to be in good repair. Water was pumped to this tank by windmill from a spring a half mile away.

The Alms House was originally approached by a long gravel drive which then circled in the front and continued around the eastern flank to the barn. The drive was lined with flower beds and shrubs. The Boiler House and Smokestack are directly behind the Alms House with the Laundry and House of Correction on either side. Most of the barns, sheds, and outbuildings are to the rear and on the eastern slope.

Present Appearance: The Strafford County Alms House remained virtually unchanged in appearance up until 1964 with the exception of its two porches (one on the outside face of each wing). Both porches were originally screened porches (1930's) and were screened in ca. 1954 and later closed and winterized in 1963.

The interior has undergone repeated renovation although the basic structural layout is the same. Most of the original doors and woodwork remain, as well as the pressed tin ceiling ("steel sheathing") that was installed in 1899. The floors (except in the basement) are all hardwood and sections of the attic are finished with matched boarding.

There have been two major additions to the building since 1963, both of them tending to obscure the original appearance and design. In 1964 a one-story concrete block kitchen and dining area (approximately 70' x 36') was added between the wings and joining at the back of the main block. There was apparently no attempt to harmonize with the original building or compliment it. In 1970 a new County Nursing Home was built in front of the Alms House and connected to it at its main entrance by means of a closed corridor. Unfortunately, this has resulted in obscuring the aesthetic and architectural qualities of the main facade. One now approaches the Alms House from the side and enters the east wing through a porch. The impressive main block facade no longer dominates the long drive from its position on top of the hill.

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CONTINUATION SHEET #1-DESCRIPTION ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 2

House of Correction

The Strafford County House of Correction was built in 1907 "on the most approved design" and when completed was considered by the State Board of Charities and Correction to be "a first class building in every particular and by far the best House of Correction in the state."¹ It was designed by G. Brown and built by Herman Lord. All of the steel construction (cell blocks and window gratings) was done by Van Dorn Ironworks of Ohio.

Original Appearance: It appears to be a 2½ story common-bond brick building approximately 34' x 68' with many Classical Revival characteristics including gable front orientation and a closed triangular pediment. It is actually clear span. The cornice is enriched with brick dentils and modillions; the pediment is pierced with a demilune with granite sill and keystone above. The front facade has a rough-cut granite sill course running under the second floor windows and a granite water table course. The original door was recessed (see photo Strafford County Report 1911) with a stepped brick reveal and had a fanlight with radiating muntins. The structural opening is arched with a central keystone. There is a coursed granite block platform porch.

According to a description in the New Hampshire State Board of Charities and Correction Report of 1907, 1908, "The walls are the best hard-burned brick with a course of wire-cut brick on the outside. The walls are 24" thick for 18' above the foundation and 20" thick above that. Twenty-four windows of the prison proper have tool-proof steel window guard gratings. The administrative portion is separated from the prisoners' quarters by a heavy brick wall and a door of steel. Leading from the dining room are a smoking room, a barber shop, and lavatories with all the appliances of a model prison. There is a bathroom with seven shower baths. From the dining room extends a subterranean passageway to the kitchen of the main farm building (Alms House) through which the prisoners' meals are sent. The prisoners' cage consists of two tiers of double cells, 24 cells in a tier, thus accomodating 96 prisoners."¹ Although this report of the jail construction describes only two tiers of cells, there are three tiers and the original blueprint (xerox enclosed) does show plans for three tiers. The cell block is supported by 12 steel posts and girders (8'4" from the basement floor) so that it is basically free-standing with a space of several feet between it and the east and west walls. On the north end there is a steel walkway, stairwell, and series of locked steel doors.

Present Appearance: The House of Correction has undergone little structural change other than the renovation of the administrative section and lavatory and dining facilities. The underground passageway was blocked off ca. 1940. The only change to the cell-block has been the modernization of the lock system. Minor changes to the exterior include the removal of the fanlight in the gable end and the addition of a flat-roofed portico to the entranceway. In 1978 a one-story brick extension

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CONTINUATION SHEET #2-DESCRIPTION ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 3

Present Appearance (cont.):

(primarily administrative) was added to the west elevation to connect a relatively recent concrete block garage.

Boiler House and Laundry Building

The Boiler House was built at the same time as the Alms House and was constructed with similar materials and workmanship. It is a one-story brick building approximately 30' x 40' and three bays by four bays. The double doorway and all the windows have elliptical-arched structural openings and radiating voussoir lintels. The smokestack is an impressive brick structure appearing to be approximately 60 feet tall with a corbelled cap and tapering squared sides. It is similar to many of the mill smokestacks constructed in this area ca. 1860-1900. The Boiler House originally contained two boilers which heated the entire Alms House and later the jail.

The Laundry Building was built in 1905 and is similar in design and dimension to the Boiler House. It is also a one-story building, 30' x 40', three bays by four bays. The doorways and windows are similarly treated. These two buildings and the smokestack have undergone little or no alteration. The Boiler House still houses the heating system for the entire complex; the laundry is presently not in use.

The House of Correction, Boiler House, and Laundry maintain their original grouping in the rear though there has been a new addition to the jail and a concrete garage was built between it and the Boiler House on an earlier foundation. All of the original barns have been lost due to fire or age though there are several large relatively modern barns and sheds to the east of the main complex on the hill.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400–1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500–1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600–1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> social/ humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

Specific dates

Builder/Architect

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Strafford County Farm Alms House, County Jail and Laundry and Boiler Houses are significant as surviving elements of late 19th and early 20th century county facilities for criminals and the poor. Despite changes and new construction on the Strafford County Farm property, this complex of buildings maintains visual and physical continuity with social/humanitarian philosophies and practices of over a century ago, as well as being fairly intact examples of the architecture of such facilities.

Originally the 'poor-farm population' generally consisted of the aged poor, vagrants, paupers, orphans, the simple-minded, the insane, drunks, and petty criminals; very little separation or distinction was made among them. This changed gradually as many people became more socially conscious and the state started to assume and/or regulate many of the counties' functions. Around the turn of the century, the number of children, insane, simple-minded, or handicapped people housed in county Alms Houses declined as specialized institutions or facilities were established for their care. It is significant that in 1910, New Hampshire (and also Connecticut) had the highest ratio of paupers (anyone supported by the county at an Alms House) per capita in the entire country.

The growth of the Strafford County Farm reflects the growth of most of the sociopolitical trends and humanitarian ideas of its time and the history of the Alms House in particular is representative as it typifies Alms Houses throughout the state.

In 1866 the New Hampshire State Legislature authorized the counties to purchase land to establish County Farms and by the end of the following year the Strafford County Commissioners had purchased 90 percent of the present acreage (290 acres originally making up two private farms). At its height it was a large-scale farm operation including the Alms House, slaughterhouse, blacksmith and carpenter shops, windmill, and cemetery. The basement of the Alms House was used to hold prisoners convicted of misdemeanors and sentenced for up to one year. The prisoners and those inmates of the Alms House considered sufficiently able-bodied, worked on the farm and constituted its labor force. In 1910, 90 percent of the staff working in county alms houses and asylums were prisoners. Significantly much of the food and raw materials needed to support the County Farm community was produced on the farm.

The historically significant buildings which survive as part of the present County Farm Complex include the Alms House (built in 1881), the Boiler House and Smokestack (built at the same time). The Alms House was designed by F.N. Footman, an architect from Great Falls (Somersworth, New Hampshire) and built by Fall and Moulton, a local contracting firm. It was considered at the time to be "the best arranged public building for the purpose for which it was designed in the state."¹ "In fact, the general details of the plan have been copied and approved by committees from other states interested in the erection of buildings for a similar purpose."² Although it was common practice to confine petty criminals at poor farms (eight of the ten county farms in New Hampshire had Houses of Correction or prison cells on their premises) and the Alms House originally included cells in the basement,

9. Major Bibliographical References

NH State Board of Charities and Corrections Report, 1890-1908.
 Paupers in Alms Houses, Dept. of Commerce, US Bureau of the Census, 1910.
 Portrait of an Aging Population - Pilot Study - Report of the Supt. of the Strafford Court
 Home, Dover, NH, 1958/
 Strafford County Report, Strafford County Archives, 1879 to 1968,

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 3 ⁺
 UTM ~~NOT VERIFIED~~ Quadrangle name Dover West, NH Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UMT References

A	1 9	3 4 2 2 6 2	4 7 8 6 5 9 0	B			
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
C				D			
E				F			
G				H			

Verbal boundary description and justification

-see continuation sheet #4, Item 10, page 2-

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code
state	code	county	code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Gretchen Langheld, Preservation Advisor
(assisted by) Jeannie Fogman, County Land Manager, Strafford County Farm
 organization Strafford-Rockingham date March 1979
Regional Council
 street & number One Water Street telephone (603) 778-0885
 city or town Exeter state New Hampshire 03833

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

As the designated State Historic Preservation 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 Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature [Signature]
 title Commissioner, NH Department of Resources & Economic Development date February 5, 1981
NH State Historic Preservation Officer

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I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

[Signature] date 2/25/81
 Keeper of the National Register

Attest: _____ date _____
 Chief of Registration

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CONTINUATION SHEET #3-SIGNIFICANCE ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 2

overcrowding at the turn of the century, and public sentiment calling for separation of prisoners and paupers necessitated a change. Reflecting a national trend towards humanitarian enlightenment, the New Hampshire State Board of Charities and Correction Report for the year 1900 states, "The law making our county Alms Houses also house of correction and compelling the aged and respectable poor to associate with criminals is wrong and should be repealed. There is a strong public sentiment to this effect all over the state." As a result, in 1907, money was appropriated by the County to build a jailhouse and, in that year, the Strafford County House of Correction was erected just behind the Alms House and connected to it by an underground tunnel. It is still used as the County House of Correction and its excellence of design and construction has necessitated only minor modification and renovation in order to conform to present prison standards. The prison cells in the basement of the Alms House were converted into storerooms although their original use is still apparent, especially in the heavily reinforced oak doors.

The Boiler House and Smokestack were built at the same time as the Alms House and are complementary brick structures. The smokestack is typical of mill smokestacks built during that period and is still used. Although the Laundry Building was constructed at a later date (1905), it was built on the same plan as the Boiler House with similar materials and workmanship.

Although Strafford County liquidated its farm operation assets in 1971, the complex's original identity and integrity remain. Of 290 acres owned by the county, approximately 150 acres were leased out to local farmers and the rest has been put into forest management and recreational land use programs. The farm property dominated the entire surrounding rural landscape. The Alms House is a significant entity both historically and architecturally, as is the House of Correction, and both should be preserved in context. The complex is significant as an important use of on-going county care facilities. It has stood testimony to Strafford County's social/humanitarian heritage for almost a century.

¹Strafford County Report, 1882.

²Strafford County Report, 1883.

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VERBAL
BOUNDARY
CONTINUATION SHEET #4-DESCRIPTION ITEM NUMBER 10 PAGE 2

The nominated property consists of a complex of buildings including the Alms House, County Jail, and Laundry and Boiler Houses. The boundaries of the property are indicated in red on the attached sketch map (continuation sheet #5, Item 10, page 3).

The nominated property is limited to this complex of buildings whose fundamental integrity as surviving facilities for criminals and the poor is maintained to the present day. Although an intrusion, the rest home (linked to the Alms House and thus technically a part of it) is included. However, apart from the historically and architecturally significant Alms House, Jail, and Laundry and Boiler Houses, there are no other surviving structures on the County Farm property which retain their integrity or are otherwise eligible for the National Register.

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Continuation sheet #5-SKETCH MAP

Item number 10

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