

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

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

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

For HCRS use only
received JAN 29 1980
date entered APR 10 1980

1. Name

historic HAMPSTEAD MEETING HOUSE

and/or common HAMPSTEAD TOWN HALL

2. Location

street & number Emerson Avenue _____ not for publication

city, town Hampstead _____ vicinity of _____ congressional district First

state New Hampshire code 33 county Rockingham code 015

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<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:

4. Owner of Property

name Town of Hampstead

street & number Town Office Building, Main Street

city, town Hampstead _____ vicinity of _____ state New Hampshire 03841

5. Location of Legal Description

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

street & number Hampton Road

city, town Exeter _____ state New Hampshire 03833

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title NA 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" 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

Present appearance: The Hampstead meeting house is a two-story gable-roofed frame structure with a five-bay facade. On the west end of the structure a wooden tower rises against the gable wall to a point well above the ridge; the tower is surmounted by an arcaded octagonal belfry which, in turn, is capped by an ogee dome and a tall spire. On the east end of the structure is an enclosed wooden "porch" with a hipped roof. A two-story addition on the northwest corner of the main building extends the body of the house an additional bay and brings the wall of the main building flush with that of the tower; this addition was built in 1936 to provide kitchen facilities.

Original appearance: The meeting house was built before 1749 as a rectangular building measuring about 40 by 50 feet, with the main entrance in the center of the long south elevation and a pulpit opposite. Most elements of the frame are oak, although in keeping with later practice in other meeting houses of the region, the longer timbers of the roof frame are pine.¹ Before 1856, according to one description, the interior was finished in much the same manner as the interiors of the later meeting houses in the neighboring towns of Danville (1760) and Sandown (1774): it had square box pews with paneled sides and with top rails decorated with miniature balustrades, and a

"high pulpit on the north side of the room (with) a broad aisle leading from the front door directly to it. (The pulpit) was eleven feet from the floor, with winding stairs on the left side of it, and a broad step to the minister's seat. A sounding board eight feet in diameter, of octagon shape, (overhung) the pulpit, about six feet above it."²

The pulpit was illuminated by an arched window below the sounding board.

The house was not completed for a number of years. In 1749 the main floor was finished, the first floor windows were glazed, and the ends and rear were clapboarded, but clapboarding and glazing were not completed until 1752, and the interior appears not to have been plastered until 1768.³ Three galleries, reached by winding stairs in the southeast and southwest corners of the building, were constructed by 1749, but were not supported by the introduction of six columns until 1752,⁴ when additional pews were constructed in the galleries.

The building remained a simple rectangular structure, like the nearby meeting houses in Danville and Sandown, until 1793. At that time the building had fallen into a state of disrepair, and members of the Congregational Church, which shared the use of the building with the town, voted to paint and improve the structure, eventually paying for these improvements through an increased assessment on the ministerial tax.⁵ Among the alterations carried out in 1793 were the addition of the tower and steeple on the west elevation and the construction of the porch, probably entered by a now-hidden doorway, on the east. The tower is eleven feet square and rises to a height of 48 feet to the bell deck; the octagonal spire rises an additional 50 feet. The arcaded belfry and ogee dome repeat a steeple form which had become traditional in New England since its introduction in the early eighteenth century in Massachusetts meeting houses like the "Old Brick" in Boston and the "Old Ship" in Hingham. The steeple and porch were built by Abner Rogers and Col. Thomas Reed, who were partly paid by a deed to two pews, probably constructed on floorspace made available by the removal of the two original inside staircases.⁶ A weathervane was made by Stephen Colby of Haverhill, Massachusetts, while serving an apprenticeship with Daniel Nichols, Sr. The present vane, in the form of a cock, was placed on the spire in 1882 and may

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DESCRIPTION (Continued)

be presumed to be a replica of the original.⁷

The meeting house was without a bell until 1809, when Deacon Timothy Huse of West Newbury, Massachusetts, gave the present bell to the town. The bell was acquired through George Handel Holbrook, then of Brookfield, Massachusetts, a partner in the copper foundry of Paul Revere, Jr. The bell bears the inscription, "Revere Boston," and may be the only surviving bell cast by the short-lived partnership (1801-1813) of Revere and Holbrook.⁸

The main body of the house, the belltower, and the eastern "porch" all share the same type of cornice, having a crown moulding of an ogee over a cavetto and a bed moulding of an ovolo over a cavetto. The two surviving doorways of the building, one on the south base of the tower and one in the center of the south facade of the main house, have rather heavy detailing which suggests an origin during the period of the Greek Revival--possibly from 1837, when the Congregational Church relinquished its rights in the building and turned it over to the use of the town and other religious groups. The present doors are twentieth-century reproductions. The window casings, being simple square-edged boards, suggest the Greek Revival period. Despite these changes, the building retains a high percentage of original clapboards and hand-forged nails.

The second major alteration of the building, following the erection of the tower and porch, occurred in 1856. At that time, the pulpit and pews were removed and a new floor was constructed at the gallery level, supported by a row of columns running longitudinally through the center of the first story.⁹ The structure was thus divided into two stories, and the second floor was provided with a small stage and dressing rooms for dramatic presentations. Also in 1856, new window sash were installed; these were replaced by sash of 16/12 lights in 1979.

The third major change was the addition, in 1936, of a kitchen bay in the north-west angle between the body of the house and the tower.

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DESCRIPTION (Continued)

¹Harriette Eliza Noyes, A Memorial History of Hampstead, NH, Vol. II, Congregational Church 1752-1902, p. 16.

²Ibid., pp. 17-18.

³Harriette Eliza Noyes, A Memorial of the Town of Hampstead, NH (Vol. I), pp. 23-24.

⁴Ibid.

⁵John Kelly, "Historical Sketch of the Town of Hampstead, State of New-Hampshire," Collections of the New Hampshire Historical Society, V (1837), p. 186.

⁶Noyes, A Memorial of the Town of Hampstead, NH (Vol. I), p. 161.

⁷Noyes, A Memorial History of Hampstead, NH, Vol. II, Congregational Church, pp. 16-17.

⁸Eva A. Speare, Historic Bells in New Hampshire (Plymouth, NH: the author, 1944), pp. 29-30, 33-35. Edward C. Stickney, Revere Bells (Bedford, Mass.: the author, 1956), pp. 1-4, 17.

⁹Noyes, A Memorial History of Hampstead, NH, Vol. II, Congregational Church, pp. 17-19.

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 type="checkbox"/> social/ humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input checked="" 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 C, 1748

Builder/Architect

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Architecture: The Hampstead meeting house is one of very few surviving eighteenth-century structures of its type in New England. It stands in a New Hampshire town which was set off as a separate parish from Haverhill, Massachusetts, in 1733, before the boundary line between Massachusetts and New Hampshire was established. Other meeting houses of similar design and construction survive in the neighboring towns of Danville, Sandown and Fremont, and this coherent group of buildings--the largest group surviving in a restricted area of New England--is of great importance in preserving part of the unique architectural heritage of the region.

The Hampstead meeting house is typical of the "second generation" of such structures. Its type first appeared in the early eighteenth century, supplanting an older form, often square in plan and covered by a gabled roof, which had become common in the last half of the seventeenth century. The Hampstead house displayed all of the chief characteristics of the "second generation" of New England meeting houses: it is rectangular in plan; its entrance is on the long south side; its roof is gabled; it has a five-bay facade; and, in its original condition, it had box pews and a high pulpit on the center of the long north wall. As in many other New England meeting houses of its simple rectangular type, it gained an added tower and porch as need for additional pew space developed. Thus, the Hampstead meeting house became the most fully developed structure in New England's largest coherent group of such buildings, and is therefore an important monument in the architectural history of the region.

¹Rev. Charles A. Place, "From Meeting House to Church in New England," Old-Time New England, XIII, 2 (October 1922)-XIV, 1 (July 1923). Edmund W. Sinnott, Meetinghouse & Church in Early New England (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1963), pp. 15-26.

9. Major Bibliographical References

- *Kelly, John. "Historical Sketch of the Town of Hampstead, State of New-Hampshire," Collect-ions of the New Hampshire Historical Society, V (1837), pp. 179-199.
- *Noyes, Harriette Eliza, A Memorial of the Town of Hampstead, NH. (Vol. 1), Boston: George G. Reed, 1899.
- *-----, A Memorial History of Hampstead, NH, Vol. II, Congregational Church 1752-1902. Boston: George B. Reed, 1903.

10. Geographical Data

UMT NOT VERIFIED
ACREAGE NOT VERIFIED

Acreeage of nominated property less than one
 Quadrangle name Haverhill, NH - MA Quadrangle scale 15'

UMT References

A	<u>119</u>	<u>321191510</u>	<u>41741911010</u>	B			
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
C				D			
E				F			
G				H			

Verbal boundary description and justification

Town of Hampstead, Tax Map 7, Parcel 47.

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

state	code	county	code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title _____

organization Town of Hampstead date March 28, 1978

street & number Town Offices, Main Street telephone _____

city or town Hampstead state New Hampshire 03841

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, Dept. Resources & Economic Development date June 20, 1978
NH State Historic Preservation Officer

For HCRS use only

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

for Sally G. DeLaha date 4/10/80
 Keeper of the National Register

Attest: [Signature] date 4-8-80
 Chief of Registration

