

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any 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.

RECEIVED 2280

AUG 14 2015

Nat. Register of Historic Places
National Park Service

1. Name of Property

Historic name: Bristol Town Hall

Other names/site number: Bristol Town House

Name of related multiple property listing:

n/a

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

2. Location

Street & number: 45 Summer Street

City or town: Bristol State: NH County: Grafton

Not For Publication: n/a Vicinity: n/a

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 at the following level(s) of significance:

national statewide local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

A B C D

<u>E. J. Muzzey</u>	<u>8/3/15</u>
Signature of certifying official/Title:	Date
<u>Director and SHPO, NH Division of Historical Resources</u>	
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government	

In my opinion, the property <input type="checkbox"/> meets <input type="checkbox"/> does not meet the National Register criteria.	
Signature of commenting official:	Date
Title :	State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

Bristol Town Hall
Name of Property

Grafton, NH
County and State

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
- determined eligible for the National Register
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain:)

Joe Edison H. Beall
Signature of the Keeper

9.29.15
Date of Action

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

Bristol Town Hall
Name of Property

Grafton, NH
County and State

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	buildings
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	sites
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	structures
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	objects
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register _____

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

GOVERNMENT: Town Hall

SOCIAL: Meeting Hall

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

GOVERNMENT: Town Hall

SOCIAL: Meeting Hall

Bristol Town Hall
Name of Property

Grafton, NH
County and State

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Greek Revival

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: Granite, Clapboard, Metal

Narrative Description

Summary Paragraph

The 1849 Bristol Town Hall is located in the Town of Bristol, New Hampshire. It sits on a small lot on Summer Street near the "Central Square" of the town's principal village, which is a historic district listed in the National Register of Historic Places. The town hall is a 1 ½ story timber-framed Greek Revival building that is in very good condition and is remarkably intact on both the exterior and interior. Greek Revival features include the front-gable massing, bold corner and doorway pilasters, pedimented gable, tall entablature, and recessed entrance porch, and the added side wing and rear vault are historic features as well. Historic interior features include the meeting and performance hall, stage, meeting rooms, vault, wood floors, and pressed-tin ceiling and joist casings. The Bristol Town Hall retains its integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association.

Narrative Description

Setting

The Bristol Town Hall sits on a quarter-acre lot on the north side of Summer Street, which is generally a residential street of nineteenth century and early twentieth century homes. Summer Street is one of the streets in Bristol village that radiates out from the Central Square, and as it leaves the square it rises immediately to a bluff. The town hall sits on this bluff, which also rises

Bristol Town Hall

Grafton, NH

Name of Property

County and State

slightly above street level, providing it with a view to the square below. There is a small stand of mature evergreen trees at the southwest corner of the property near the street, and a few deciduous trees along the east side of the property. The building is set back behind a small paved parking lot.

Exterior

The town hall consists of a wood-framed, rectangular, symmetrical, front-gable main block, a wood-framed shed-roofed parallel wing that spans most of the west eaves side of the main block, and a brick former town clerk's vault at the rear of the wing. The main block is 45' wide by 74' deep with a centered 14' wide by 5' deep recessed entrance porch, and the wing is 12' wide. The main block of the town hall was constructed in 1849 and between 1872 and 1915 it was expanded several times to create today's rear stage area (1872), side wing (1872/1891/1912/1915), and vault (1912). With the exception of the removal of a small rear 1891 jail structure, the building now appears as it did one hundred years ago.

The three bay by five bay main block has a split granite underpinning over a fieldstone foundation, clapboard siding (except for the entrance recess, which has beaded matchboard siding), a pedimented front gable wall, a steep standing-seam metal roof with boxed cornices with a slight overhang, three early twentieth century slender brick chimneys – one interior chimney at the west roof slope near the front façade and two exterior chimneys at the rear wall – and two metal interior ridge ventilators that were added in 1912. The vault has a flat concrete roof and projects from the north end of the wing and beyond the rear plane of the main block. The recessed porch is accessed by two full-width granite steps, and in front of the steps there is a modern wood deck that is the landing of a removed handicap ramp. (This deck is slated for removal in the near future.) There is also a mid twentieth century bulkhead at the left end of the gable wall of the main block, which has poured concrete cheek walls and steps, and metal doors.

Original architectural trim includes large paneled pilasters at the front building corners, the rear corner of the east elevation, and flanking the recessed entrance porch, a full entablature at the front gable wall and at the eaves where not concealed by the wing, a front gable rake that matches the entablature, molded roof fascia trim at both the front gable and eaves, and flat-stock window and door casings and water tables. The pedimented gable is relatively large and could be considered the dominant feature of the building. The rear gable wall lacks a roof overhang and trim. The front entrance is centered within the recessed porch and contains tall double-leaf wood doors with diagonal matchboard exterior sheathing and four-panel interior sides. The doorknobs have been replaced with a single metal lever on each side. The doorway is flanked by matching framed wood boards that appear to be bulletin boards, and the porch has tongue-and-groove decking.

The main block has regularly-spaced window openings, including paired, narrow one-over-one wood windows that flank the recessed porch and are centered in between the pilasters. The front gable contains two two-over-two wood windows. There is a small square window at the east side of the recessed porch. The east elevation has five six-over-six wood windows, and the right end of the west elevation, where not concealed by the wing, there is a wood twelve-over-twelve

Bristol Town Hall

Grafton, NH

Name of Property

County and State

window. There is a modern veneer door adjacent to the fifth window of the east elevation, which provides access to the interior from a modern wood handicap ramp that runs parallel to the east elevation. The rear gable wall has had its first story fenestration covered with clapboards, and its second story windows blocked up with wood boards. The original rear window openings consisted of two vertical windows at the first story and three square windows in the gable. The main block originally had twelve-over-twelve windows in the extant window openings, and the front windows were replaced in 1912.

The wing spans most of the west elevation of the main block, leaving one bay of the main block exposed at the right end. The rear half of the wing, which dates to 1872/1891, has a fieldstone foundation and split granite underpinning, and the front half, which dates to 1912/1915, has a poured concrete foundation. The wing also has clapboard siding and a standing-seam metal shed roof with boxed cornices that rises to intersect the west roof slope of the main block. Original architectural trim of the wing includes heavily molded cornices and cornice returns, friezeboard with bed molding, molded gable rakes, slim corner pilasters, and flat-stock window and door casings. There is a doorway centered on the front (south) elevation that contains a wood door with two lower vertical panels, a horizontal middle panel and two upper vertical lights. The door is above grade but lacks access stairs. (A 1969 photograph shows this doorway accessed by a ramp.) The long (west) elevation has six almost regularly-spaced six-over-six wood windows.

Interior

The building is about 2,500 square feet in area. The current floor plan of the main block dates to 1912 and consists of a large hall that is directly accessed from the front entrance, and a raised stage at the rear of the building that spans most of the rear wall. The front interior walls of the hall are flush with the entrance, creating shallow east and west rooms on each side of the recessed porch. The east room is used for storage and utilities and contains a hatch door to the attic, and at the west side there are two modern bathrooms. There is a ramp and a modern bathroom in between the stage and the east exterior wall, and the west side of the stage is accessed from the hall via a wood staircase. The three bathrooms each have a toilet and sink, and the bathroom next to the stage is handicap accessible. The current floor plan of the wing dates to 1915, and it consists of two long rooms of similar size, with the vault accessed from the rear room. (See Figure 1 for floor plan.)

The wing is accessed from the hall via three doorways that were created from the original exterior window openings. The one intact interior window opening, which is in the center of the wall, contains an original twelve-over-twelve wood window. There are also doorways on each side of the stage that lead to the steps and the ramp. The stage proscenium is a simple almost-full-height rectangular opening. In 1912, the original ceiling of the hall was raised six feet, exposing the second story floor joists and the lower slope of the roof. The joists are supported from above by metal pipes.

The hall and front room of the wing have narrow-board tongue-and-groove wood flooring, the rear room of the wing has random-width flooring, and the stage and the adjacent bathroom have linoleum flooring. The hall has pressed-tin ceilings at the horizontal ceiling and the exposed roof

Bristol Town Hall

Grafton, NH

Name of Property

County and State

slopes, which were installed at the time that the ceiling was raised. The horizontal ceiling has a grid pattern with filigree, and a filigree border, and the roof slopes have a smaller grid pattern. The exposed joists are also encased in pressed tin with a filigree pattern. The hall has plaster walls, except the proscenium wall that faces the hall, which terminates at the original ceiling height and has gypsum board sheathing with strips of wood at the seams. The front rooms and wing have gypsum-board walls and ceilings. The stage has gypsum-board walls, except for the interior side of the proscenium wall, which has unfinished horizontal pine sheathing.

The hall and wing are encircled with matchboard wainscoting with a chair rail; the hall has wide boards and the wing has narrow boards. The doors and windows have flat-stock casings with molded cornices. The proscenium has double-band architrave casings, and its wall facing the hall has a denticulated crown molding. There is also an old unfinished pine cabinet near the southwest corner of the stage. There is a large metal ventilation grate near the southwest corner of the hall floor, and a large square hole in the ceiling near the front entrance.

The three doorways to the front rooms, the three doorways to the wing, and the doorway to the stage steps each contain plain four-panel wood doors, which are probably original to the building, and the doorway between the two wing rooms has a wood door with molded panels that dates to the 1910s. The doors at the front rooms of the main block, and the door to the stage steps have a Suffolk latches. The doorways from the hall to the wing have Norfolk latches, and the door between the two wing rooms has molded brass doorknobs with stamped brass back plates. The wall between the two wing rooms also has a small two-pane awning window. The original steel vault door has a decorative gold border and is inscribed, "E.T. Barnum, Detroit, Mich."

The attic has not been used for over one hundred years and is unfinished except for the remnants of the original plastered ceiling and scraps of wallpaper at the front gable wall. The basement was originally a crawl space, and in 1912 a 25' x 25' basement was created at the southwest corner in order to create a mechanical room. Poured concrete bolsters were added at the perimeter of this space in the late twentieth century.

Bristol Town Hall
Name of Property

Grafton, NH
County and State

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.)

- A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C. 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.
- D. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

- A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- B. Removed from its original location
- C. A birthplace or grave
- D. A cemetery
- E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- F. A commemorative property
- G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

Bristol Town Hall
Name of Property

Grafton, NH
County and State

Areas of Significance
(Enter categories from instructions.)

- Architecture
- Politics/Government
- Social History
- _____
- _____
- _____

Period of Significance
1849-1966

Significant Dates
1849
1872, 1891, 1912, 1915

Significant Person
(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder
Caleb S. Beede

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph

The 1849 Bristol Town Hall is one of Bristol’s most important landmarks. It is significant under Criterion C for its distinctive Greek Revival architecture and as an intact and well-preserved example of rural New England civic architecture of the mid nineteenth century. It embodies a vernacular building form, the town hall, which evolved in New Hampshire after the State of New Hampshire’s 1819 Toleration Act, which essentially required the “separation of church and state”. The town hall building type later became a symbol of New England's democratic

Bristol Town Hall

Grafton, NH

Name of Property

County and State

institution of town government. The Bristol Town Hall also symbolizes the prosperity of nineteenth century Bristol and is significant under Criterion A for its contribution to the social history of the town as well as its history of politics and government. The building has served as the location of town meetings and social functions since its construction, as well as the location of the town clerk's office from about 1912 to 1966. The Bristol Town Hall holds local significance and its period of significance is from 1849 to 1966. This period ends about fifty years ago and 1966 is also the year that a new municipal building was constructed. There are no potential threats to the integrity of the town hall, as the Town, which owns the building, intends to preserve it into the foreseeable future and continue its historical uses.

Narrative Statement of Significance

Historical Background and Significance

Bristol is located in the "Lakes Region" of New Hampshire and about thirty-five miles north of Concord, the state capital. Bristol village, the location of the town hall, was developed near the water privileges at the confluence of the Newfound and Pemigewasset Rivers. The "Central Square," the village's commercial center, is a historic district listed in the National Register of Historic Places. Summer Street begins at the square, and the town hall is located a short distance from the historic district.

Bristol was settled by families from Rockingham County, New Hampshire. In 1753, a group of proprietors from Chester was granted an area of land that encompassed the present towns of Bristol, Bridgewater and Hill, and named the area New Chester. While still living in Chester, the proprietors raised money to help build roads and survey the land in order to divide it into lots, and the land was surveyed and "lotted" in the early 1760s. Permanent settlement by residents of Chester and the adjacent town of Sandown began in what is now Bristol in 1769 when the first saw and grist mills were constructed at the falls of the Newfound River, near what is now the upper bridge on Water Street. The first house in Bristol village was a log cabin built in 1769 on what was to become Central Square and was the home of the first miller.

In 1773, there were thirty-seven families in New Chester, and by the 1780s, a small village had begun to develop in the Central Square area. The first store and tavern on the square both opened about 1790. The village became an important stopping point on an early road between Concord and Haverhill, a town on the Connecticut River. What is now Summer Street was part of an early road that ran from Franklin and along the Pemigewasset River toward New Hampton and Plymouth. In the late eighteenth century and nineteenth century it was called the River Road and the Plymouth Road, and was named Summer Street by the late nineteenth century. Local school classes began in 1786 and were held in various homes. The first schoolhouse in Bristol was constructed on Summer Street about 1790, while other district schoolhouses were not constructed until 1801-1805. In 1788, New Chester was divided into two entities, Bridgewater and New Chester. Early town meetings were first held in private homes, and by the early nineteenth century, in meeting houses in Bridgewater and New Chester.

Bristol Town Hall

Grafton, NH
County and State

Name of Property

The Town of Bristol was incorporated in 1819, and its land included parts of Bridgewater and New Chester. It was named after a city in England at the suggestion of State legislator Captain James Minot. The first town meeting was held in 1819 in a schoolhouse on the west side of North Main Street. Later meetings were held in the Methodist Chapel, also on North Main. By then, Bristol had become an important industrial center for the region, and the village around the Central Square included the original saw and grist mills, blacksmith shops, a harness shop, two tanneries, a shoe shop, a fulling mill, and residences. After only ferry service provided a crossing over the Pemigewasset River for many years, a bridge was finally erected in 1823.

The year 1819 also saw the passing of the New Hampshire Toleration Act, which severed the connection between church and government. Despite the passing of this act, for many years afterwards most towns did not build new structures for civic use and continued to meet in meeting houses and churches that had been constructed in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Several towns divided their meeting house into two stories to separate religious worship from civic functions, but it is unknown if the Methodist Chapel was altered in such a way. Based on a review of other town halls, it is evident that by the 1830s, the town hall type of structure began to appear in New Hampshire, although most date to the 1840s or later.

Bristol continued to grow and prosper into the mid nineteenth century, primarily as a result of the successful and emerging industrial concerns. By 1840, the population was 1,153, almost doubling the 1820 population of 675, and the Methodist Chapel could no longer support the Town's needs. In 1848, the town's first rail line, the Franklin and Bristol Railroad, was established. It connected with the Northern Railroad in Franklin, which ran between Concord, New Hampshire, and White River Junction, Vermont. This also contributed to the prosperity and growth of the town and village.

The idea to construct a town hall was first proposed at town meeting in 1841, and argued over for the next several years. Two options included the acquisition of the Methodist Chapel and the construction of a town hall in connection with an academy. The sale of the town's poor farm added \$300 to the town coffers. At the 1846 meeting the voters approved adding \$200 to this amount and building a town hall, but no action was taken. In 1847, the Methodist Chapel was acquired by the Baptist Church, which may have had an impact on the Town's decision to build a separate town hall. In 1848, Caleb S. Beede, Joseph Moore, and S.S. Merrill were elected as the building committee. At the 1849 town meeting, the purchase of the town hall lot was approved, and a new committee of S.C. Brown, Levi Bartlett and Joseph Moore was elected and directed to draft plans for a town hall that would cost no more than \$1,200. This ended several years of deliberation and the town hall was constructed that year by Caleb S. Beede. Beede was a Methodist preacher turned contractor, and he also built the Methodist Chapel. The town hall was called the "town house" until about the 1880s, and thereafter called the town hall. The first town meeting in the new building took place in March 1850. The town hall soon became Bristol's resource for both political and social functions.

Details about the original appearance of the Bristol Town Hall and its numerous upgrades are provided in local historian Richard Musgrove's (1840-1914) 1904 *History of the Town of Bristol, New Hampshire*, as well as in annual town reports. The town hall was originally a 45' wide by

Bristol Town Hall

Grafton, NH

Name of Property

County and State

54' long structure with no side wing and rear stage section. The recessed entrance porch was originally 13' deep and was flanked by 14 ½' by 13' rooms; the west room was the selectmen's room, and the east room contained a stairway to the attic and was used for wood storage. The hall had a sloped floor and an aisle as wide as the recessed porch that was flanked by fixed pine benches arranged "amphitheater style". At the north end of the hall, there was an 8' square platform with an 18" rise and a matchboard 3' railing that "kept the voters from crowding upon the town officials at town meetings". For theatrical entertainment, a temporary stage was installed above the seats on the east side, and the open floor space with filled with settees. The town hall also originally had a finished attic space with a floor that was level with the top of the exterior walls and supported by the joists that are now visible in the hall.

As with most town halls in New Hampshire, the Bristol Town Hall was used by local organizations and community events as well as for town meetings. The 1857 town report notes that in 1856, the town hall was used for the Teachers Institute, an organization for the training of teachers. The attic was used as meeting space for local organizations, including the Independent Order of Odd Fellows (I.O.O.F.) and the Union Lodge No. 79 of the Masonic Order. The I.O.O.F. may have met there as early as 1849 and until the local lodge disbanded in 1855. Other nearby lodges moved to Bristol in 1855 and 1856 and united in 1856, and this new lodge met at the town hall until 1866. The Masons held meetings in the town hall from 1870 to 1873, and then moved to a location on the Central Square. The local grange, called the Newfound Lake Grange, was organized in 1891 and held an annual fair at the town hall, but did not meet there. Old Home Week events and dinners were held at the town hall starting in 1901. The attic was also reportedly used as an armory for "local military companies" during the nineteenth century. A local newspaper article from 1891 reported that the attic was being used by "the band" and the "Train Rifles." According to Charles Greenwood's 1969 book on Bristol's history, the first seventy-five years of the hall saw performances by traveling troupes, band concerts, musicals, school programs and graduations, political meetings, prominent speakers, and community suppers.

Based on a review of other town halls, it is evident that many nineteenth century town halls in New Hampshire were expanded in the late nineteenth century or early twentieth century to accommodate the addition of a stage, and Bristol was no exception. By the 1860s, it was clear that the town needed a proper stage as well as a larger hall, and in 1872 the first improvements to the building were undertaken. The building was extended 20' to the rear to accommodate a raised stage, the recessed porch was reduced in size, and the entire front interior wall of the hall was moved about 8' south. As the front rooms were reduced to the size of large closets, a new selectmen's meeting room was needed, and a small addition was constructed at the north end of the west (side) elevation to accommodate a meeting room. The cost of the 1872 upgrades was about \$2,000.

Bristol continued to grow during the third quarter of the nineteenth century. By 1875, there were at least thirty manufacturing concerns, including an axle manufacturer, grist mills, straw board mills, paper mills, lumber mills, woolen mills, a glove factory, and a bedstead factory. There were also about thirty stores, a bank, a hotel, three churches, a high school, three physicians and three attorneys. Hamilton Child, in his 1886 Gazetteer of Grafton County, claimed that the

Bristol Town Hall

Grafton, NH

Name of Property

County and State

Newfound River provided "one of the finest water-powers in New England". He lists a croquet equipment manufacturer in addition to the list of mills of 1875. The 1860 Walling map and an 1884 bird's eye view of Bristol provide a view of the village during this time period (Figures 2 and 3).

Bristol's Newfound Lake is the fourth largest body of water in the state, and the town has a mountainous topography. By the late nineteenth century, the town's high elevation, picturesque mountains and large lake had transformed the area into a summer resort. The industrial concerns were still growing strong, and Bristol continued to expand and prosper during this time. The last three decades of the nineteenth century saw many infrastructure improvements. Telegraph service was established in 1870, and concrete sidewalks were laid between the 1870s and 1890s. Water service was established in 1886 when pipe was laid from Newfound Lake to Bristol village. This first served the fire department, and then over the next several years two-thirds of the village residents had plumbing installed. In 1900, plumbing and a sink was added to the town hall. A hydropower electric generating station was built in 1890. It first powered street lights, and soon after, all of the buildings in the village were electrified, including the town hall, which received power in 1891. Telephone service was established in 1893, and after the Town purchased a stone crusher in 1898, the village roads were macadamized. The 1892 Hurd Atlas of Bristol (Figure 4) provides a view of the village during this time period.

Progress also apparently led to a need for a new jail, as well as a larger selectmen's room. The town's first jail was located in the basement of a building on Central Square, and it eventually became insufficient. In 1891, the 1872 wing was doubled in size and a 12' x 28' jail structure was added to the northeast corner of the main block. It held two cells, space for a "police court", and was used mostly for the confinement of "tramps". According to Richard Musgrove's book, despite the perceived need, it was actually little used, then subsequently leased by the Town to a meat market, and then needed again, so two cells were created in the attic. The commercial use of the meat market is not shown on the 1912 Sanborn insurance map (Figure 5), however. A photograph in Musgrove's 1904 book provides an image of the building at that time (Figure 7).

The town hall was expanded and upgraded in 1912 (after the Sanborn map of that year was created). The wing was enlarged from 11' by 15' to 11' by 27', extending it along the west elevation of the main block, and the vault was also constructed at this time. The wing became the selectmen's room and town clerk's office. The extant first story front windows date to this time as well. On the interior, the ceiling was raised six feet, and the pressed-tin ceiling and joists sheathing were added. This was likely done to create more of the "opera hall" feel that was popular at the time, or for improved acoustics. The raising of the ceiling eliminated the use of the attic, and the jail moved back into its original location. The stage was widened and raised one foot, likely to its current configuration. A 25' by 25' cellar was excavated at the southwest corner of the building to create a boiler room with a large wood furnace, and the two extant metal roof ventilators were installed. It is likely that the metal grate in the floor dates to this time. Three toilet rooms "connecting with the hall and selectmen's rooms" were added, and were probably in the same location as the extant bathrooms. The electric lights were replaced with a new lighting system that included a switchboard for the stage. The contractor for the

Bristol Town Hall

Grafton, NH

Name of Property

County and State

project was Albro Wells. According to a local newspaper article, the work was completed in December and was commemorated with a New Year's Eve dance.

In 1915, the wing was extended again, bringing its length to today's 58'. At this point, it is likely that the wing had the two extant rooms. Local historian Charles Greenwood stated in his 1969 history of the town hall that the front room was used as a cloak room. (It is likely that the small window between the two rooms was originally an exterior window.) The 1923 Sanborn insurance map (Figure 6) shows the footprint of the building at the time. Despite the improvements, Greenwood's book states that the selectmen moved their office to a location on Central Square in the mid-1920s.

By the 1920s, community groups that were using the building included the Bristol Women's Club, who had acquired a piano for the hall, and the American Legion. In 1930, the town voted to allow basketball games in the town hall, which continued into the 1950s. Town reports and newspaper articles indicate that other twentieth century activities at the town hall included dances (Figure 8), school proms, graduations, plays, movies, and variety shows, events for Federal holiday celebrations, and the "Bristol Fanfare", a three-day mercantile and commercial exhibition.

After the onset of the Depression, annual town reports of the 1930s indicate that the town hall was suffering from deterioration and in 1935 there was a vote at town meeting regarding raising \$2,900 for upgrades. The vote did not pass, and at the 1939 meeting there was vote on whether or not to demolish the building altogether, although there is no mention of a substitute building. The vote obviously did not pass, and the building was repainted the next year. Later reports do not indicate any substantial repairs to the town hall, only routine maintenance and its continued use as a social, political and government resource.

By the mid twentieth century it was clear that the wing of the town hall and the jail could no longer meet the Town's governmental functions, and in 1966 a new municipal building with a police station was constructed a little over a half mile north of the Central Square. (The jail structure was removed in the 1970s.) The replacement of old town halls was a common occurrence in many towns that had municipal offices located in nineteenth-century town halls. The old town hall remained in use as the location of town meetings, voting, and community events. In 1994, building upgrades included new wiring and plumbing, the gypsum-board finishes, and the handicap accessible bathroom and front ramp. The side ramp was added later. The extant bathroom fixtures in the two front bathrooms also appear to date to the late twentieth century, with one sink that may date to the 1950s. From 1995 to 2000, the Bristol Historical Society occupied the wing of the building as it needed to temporarily vacate its home in the old fire station.

The building remains in use as the location of town meetings and elections, as well as community events, and is slated for rehabilitation in the near future. After the rehabilitation, the local historical society intends use the hall for events and displays related to local history. The building continues to depict its important role in the town's social, political and government

Bristol Town Hall

Grafton, NH

Name of Property

County and State

history, through its intact exterior appearance as well as the intact interior spaces such as the hall, stage, and meeting rooms.

Architectural Significance

The Bristol Town Hall is an excellent and well-preserved example of a 1 ½ story Greek Revival town hall. Greek Revival was the dominant style of architecture for town halls, churches, granges, schools and residences in New Hampshire from the 1830s to the 1850s, with later examples in rural areas. Although there are several other examples of 1 ½ story Greek Revival town halls in New Hampshire, the Bristol town hall is differentiated from most of the other town halls with its unique large and dominant pediment, tall entablature, and recessed entrance porch framed by large paneled pilasters that match the building's corner pilasters. Based on a review of other town halls, it is evident that most of New Hampshire's 1 ½ story town halls of the Greek Revival period are front-gable structures but most lack a pediment, entablature, and paneled corner pilasters and instead retain Federal period features such as cornice returns, narrow corner pilasters and simpler trim. Several 1 ½ story town halls were also originally 2 ½ story meeting houses that were reduced in size in the mid nineteenth century, while the Bristol town hall retains its original form.

Other significant exterior features include the front-gable massing, the split granite foundation, the symmetry of the main block, the wood trim, and the regularly-spaced windows that are at least one hundred years old, including two of the original twelve-over-twelve windows. Significant interior features include the hall space, the stage, the decorative pressed-tin sheathing on the ceiling and joists, the wood floors, window and door casings, wainscoting, and the former selectmen's room, town clerk's office and one hundred year old vault. Although the town hall has been upgraded and expanded since its original construction, the major changes date to at least one hundred years ago and depict the history of the building during its period of significance. The only exception is the loss of the 1891 jail addition. The side handicap ramp is only a minor – and necessary – intrusion.

The Bristol Town Hall complements the Summer Street streetscape in its scale, materials, setback, and spacing. There are other examples of Greek Revival architecture in Bristol, but few are as intact or display all the high style features such as a pediment, entablature and paneled pilasters. As mentioned in the 1994 annual town report, the town hall is "one of the oldest buildings in town still being used for what it was originally intended."

Bristol Town Hall
Name of Property

Grafton, NH
County and State

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

Bristol Enterprise. August 20, 1891, January 2, 1913, and August 7, 1942.

Bristol Historical Society. Manuscript Collection.

Child, Hamilton. *Gazetteer of Grafton County, N.H.* Syracuse, N.Y.: Hamilton Child, 1886.

D.H. Hurd Co., *Town and City Atlas of the State of New Hampshire*. Boston, 1892.

Driemeyer, Laura B. Inventory Form for Kensington Town Hall. New Hampshire Division of Historical Resources. 2012.

Fogg, Alonzo J. *The Statistics and Gazetteer of New Hampshire, Seventh Edition*. Concord, N.H.: D.L. Guernsey, 1875.

Garvin, James. "Old Strafford Town Hall." New Hampshire Division of Historical Resources. 2014.

Greenwood, Charles E. *History of Bristol, 1819-1969*. Meredith, N.H.: 1969.

Harvey, Bruce. Inventory Form for Bristol Town Hall. New Hampshire Division of Historical Resources. 2013.

Musgrove, Richard W. *History of the Town of Bristol, Grafton County, New Hampshire*. Volume I: Annals. Bristol, N.H.: Richard W. Musgrove, 1904.

New Hampshire State Register of Historic Places. http://www.nh.gov/nhdhr/programs/state_register.html.

Norris, George E. *Bird's-Eye View of Bristol, NH*. Brocton, M.A.: 1884.

Preservation Company. Bristol Town-Wide Area Form. New Hampshire Division of Historical Resources. 1993.

Ruell, David. National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form for the Central Square Historic District. New Hampshire Division of Historical Resources. 1993.

Sanborn Map Company. Maps of Bristol, N.H. 1912, 1923, and 1929.

Town of Bristol Annual Reports. 1851-2009. <http://www.library.unh.edu/>

Bristol Town Hall
Name of Property

Grafton, NH
County and State

Walling, H.F. Map of Grafton County, N.H. 1860.

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 # _____
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other
- Name of repository: _____

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property .25 acres

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates (decimal degrees)

Datum if other than WGS84: _____

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

1. Latitude: _____ Longitude: _____

2. Latitude: _____ Longitude: _____

Bristol Town Hall
Name of Property

Grafton, NH
County and State

3. Latitude: Longitude:

4. Latitude: Longitude:

Or

UTM References

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

NAD 1927 or NAD 1983

1. Zone: 19 Easting: 279185 Northing: 4830234

2. Zone: Easting: Northing:

3. Zone: Easting: Northing:

4. Zone: Easting: Northing:

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The boundary of the Bristol Town Hall property is its tax parcel boundary. The tax parcel is #114-047.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The parcel boundary has remained the same since the construction of the town hall.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Paula Sagerman, Historic Preservation Consultant

organization: for the Town of Bristol

street & number: P.O. Box 365

city or town: Brattleboro state: VT zip code: 05302

e-mail: pj.sage@ymail.com

telephone: 802-345-1092

date: April 20, 2015

Bristol Town Hall
Name of Property

Grafton, NH
County and State

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Photo Log

Name of Property: Bristol Town Hall

City or Vicinity: Bristol

County: Grafton State: New Hampshire

Photographer: Paula Sagerman

Date Photographed: April 14, 2015

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

1 of 8: NH_Grafton_BristolTownHall_0001

Setting: Facing west, town hall is on right; in distance on left is the Central Square.

2 of 8: NH_Grafton_BristolTownHall_0002

Facing northeast toward front (south) elevation of town hall

Bristol Town Hall

Grafton, NH
County and State

Name of Property

3 of 8: NH_Grafton_BristolTownHall_0003

Facing northwest toward front (south) and east elevation of town hall

4 of 8: NH_Grafton_BristolTownHall_0004

Facing north toward front (south) elevation of town hall

5 of 8: NH_Grafton_BristolTownHall_0005

Facing northeast toward side (west) wing of town hall

6 of 8: NH_Grafton_BristolTownHall_0006

Facing southwest toward east and rear (north) elevations of town hall

7 of 8: NH_Grafton_BristolTownHall_0007

Facing northwest in hall of town hall

8 of 8: NH_Grafton_BristolTownHall_0008

Facing southeast in hall of town hall

Index of Figures

Figure 1 of 8: Existing Floor Plan of Town Hall

Figure 2 of 8: 1860 Walling Map of Bristol Village

Figure 3 of 8: 1884 George E. Norris Bird's Eye View of Bristol Village

Figure 4 of 8: 1892 D.H. Hurd & Co. Atlas Map of Bristol Village

Figure 5 of 8: March 1912 Sanborn Insurance Map

Figure 6 of 8: August 1923 Sanborn Insurance Map

Figure 7 of 8: Ca. 1904 Photograph of Town Hall

Figure 8 of 8: 1950s Photograph of Hall

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.460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 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 Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Bristol Town Hall

Name of Property

Grafton, VT

County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Aerial Photograph

Google Earth Aerial Photograph

Yellow thumbtack points to Bristol Town Hall

See bottom of image for scale and latitude and longitude



United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Bristol Town Hall
Name of Property
Grafton, VT
County and State
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number USGS Map

Bristol USGS Quadrangle Map (Partial)



United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Bristol Town Hall

Name of Property

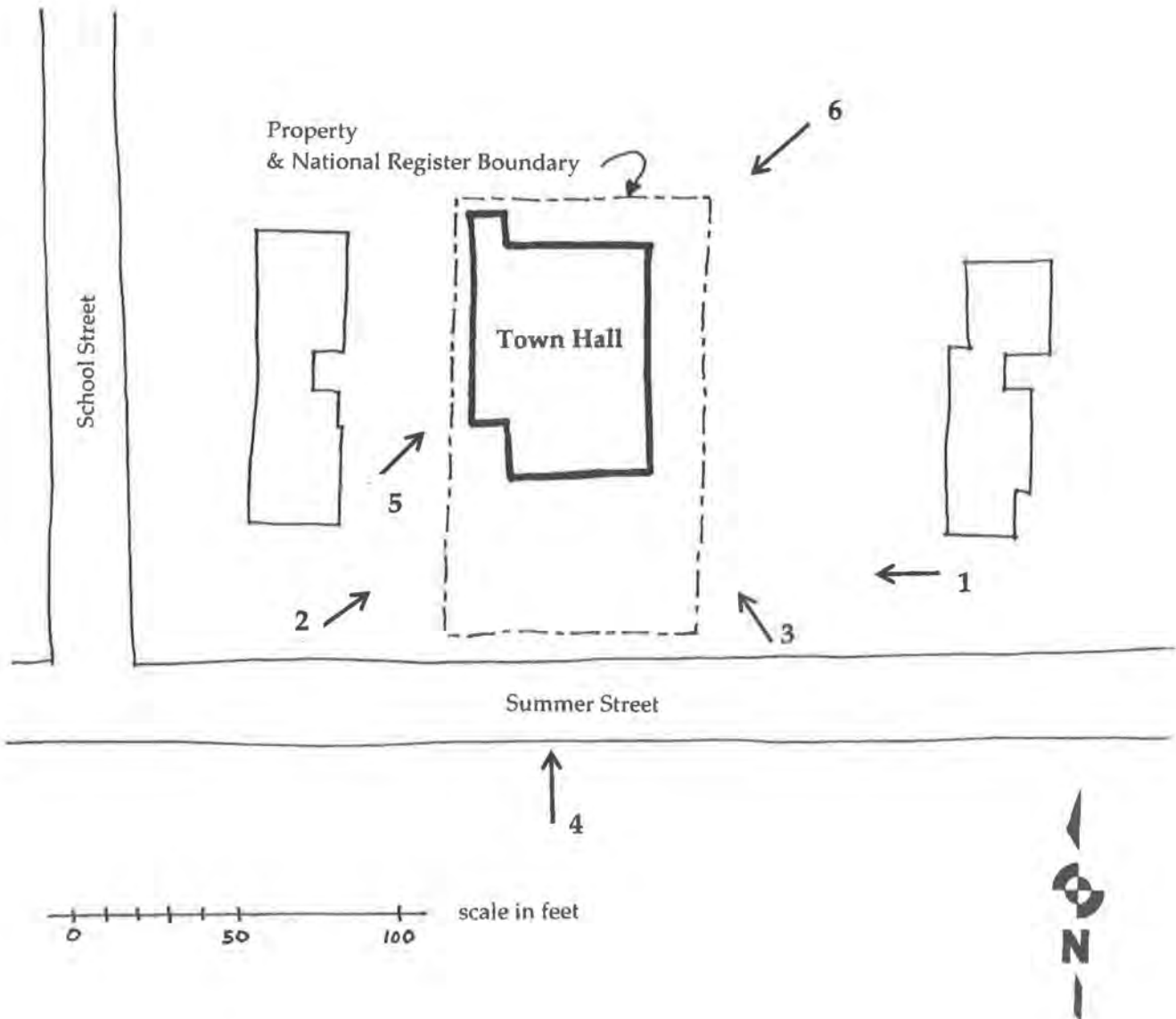
Grafton, VT

County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Sketch Map

Sketch Map and Photograph Key



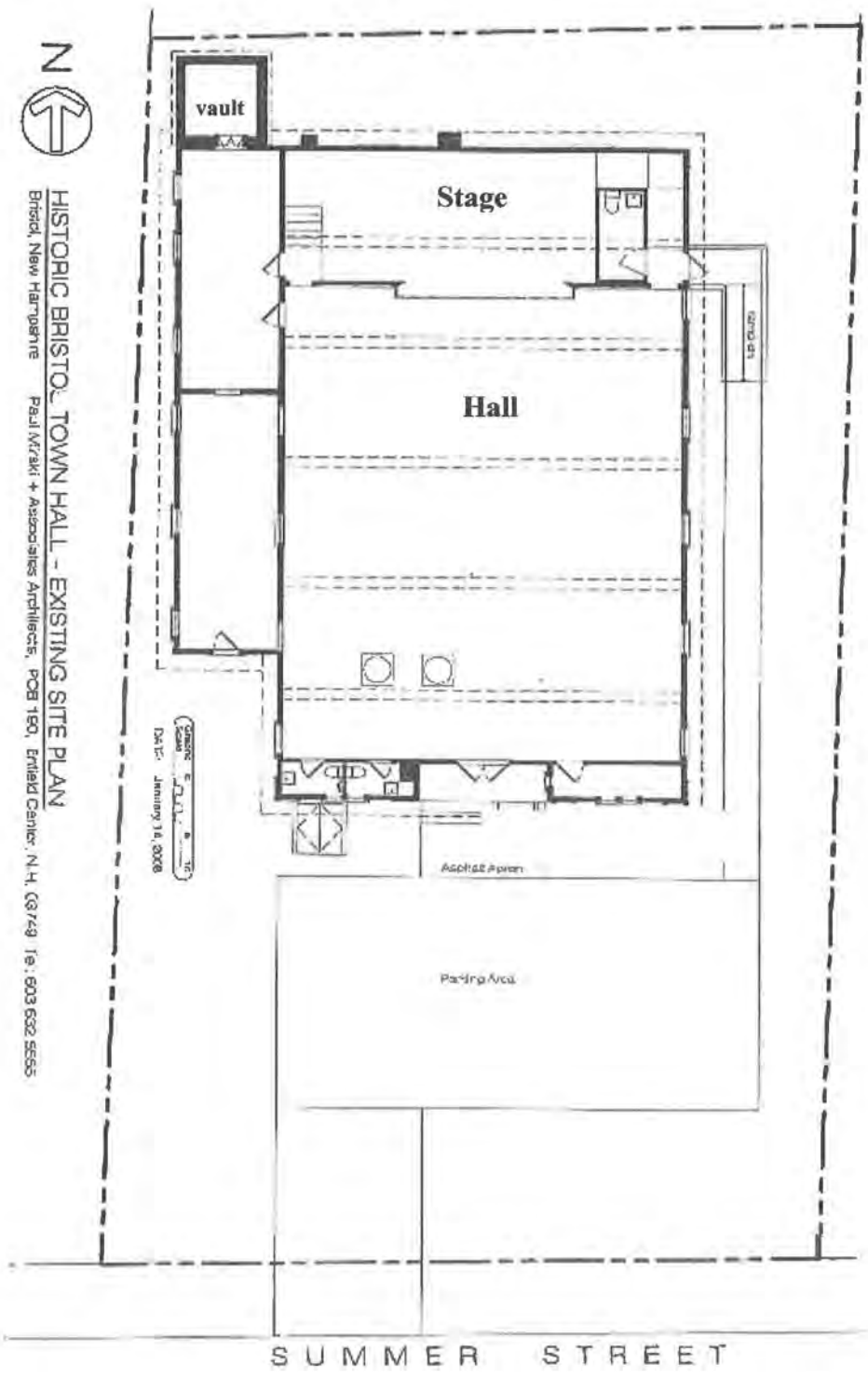
United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Bristol Town Hall
Name of Property
Grafton, VT
County and State
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Floor Plan

Figure 1. Existing Floor Plan, by Paul Mirski + Associates Architects



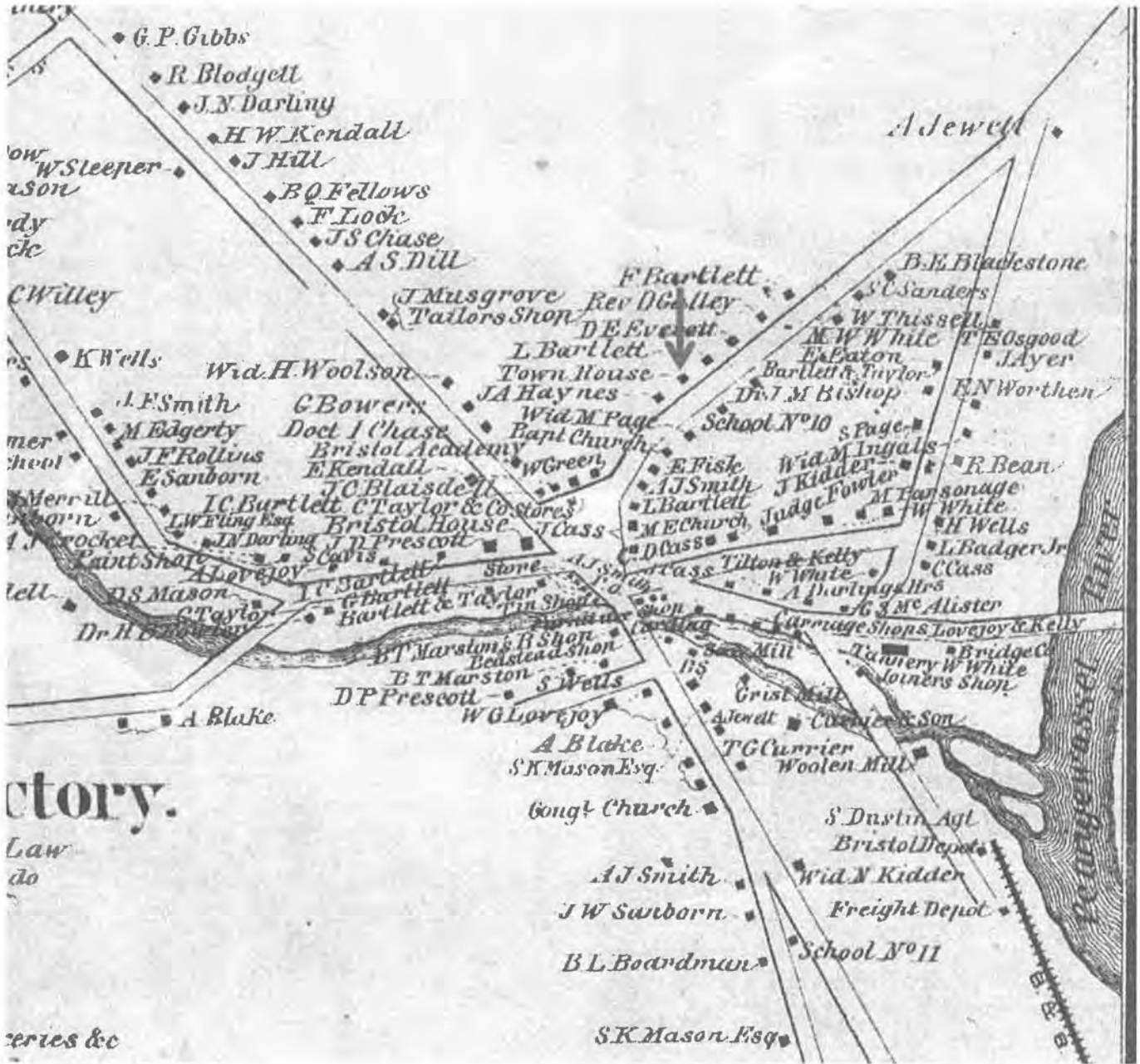
United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Bristol Town Hall
Name of Property
Grafton, VT
County and State
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Historic Map s

Figure 2
1860 Walling Map of Bristol Village



**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Bristol Town Hall

Name of Property

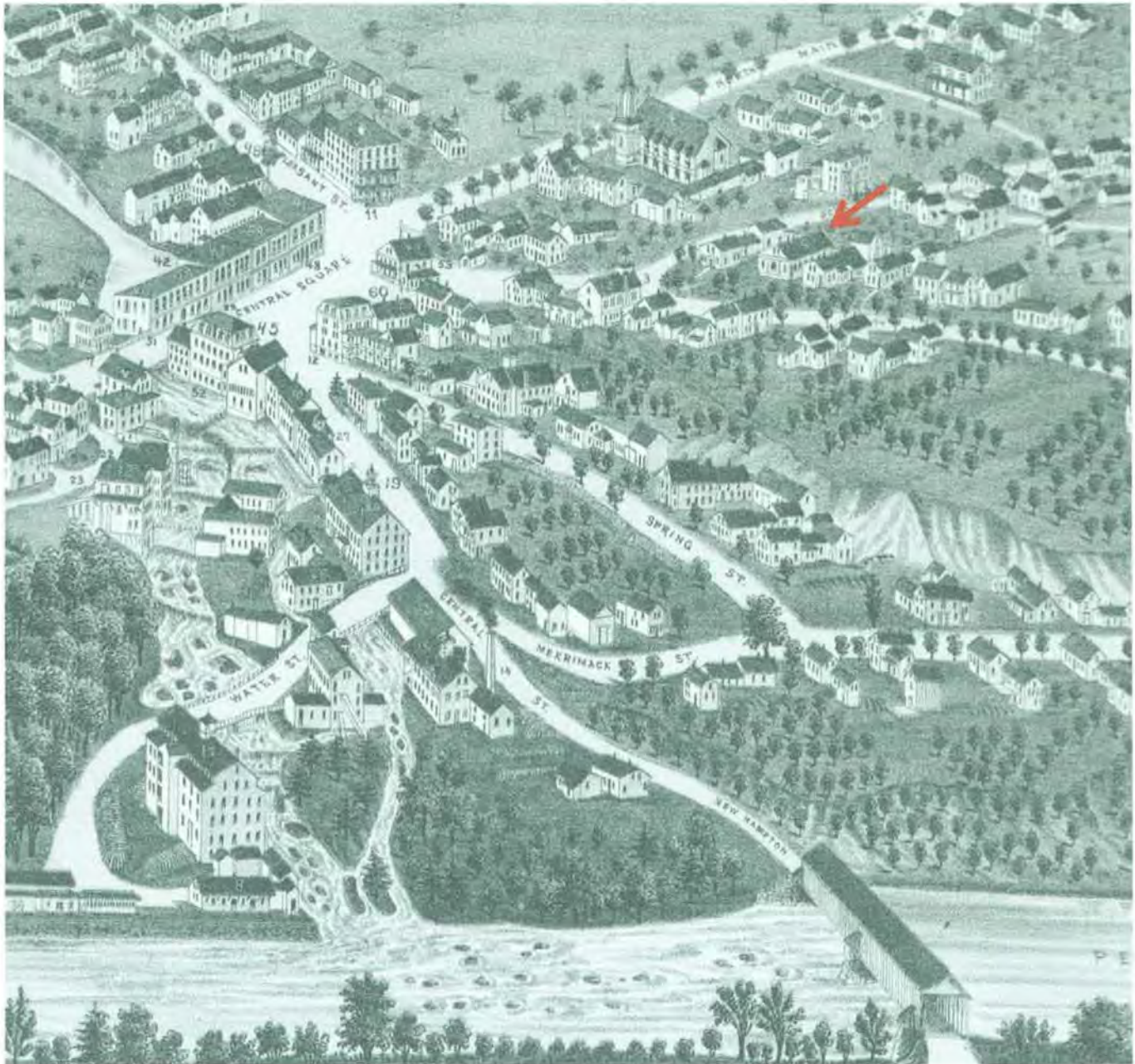
Grafton, VT

County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Historic Maps

**Figure 3
1884 George E. Norris Bird's Eye View of Bristol Village**



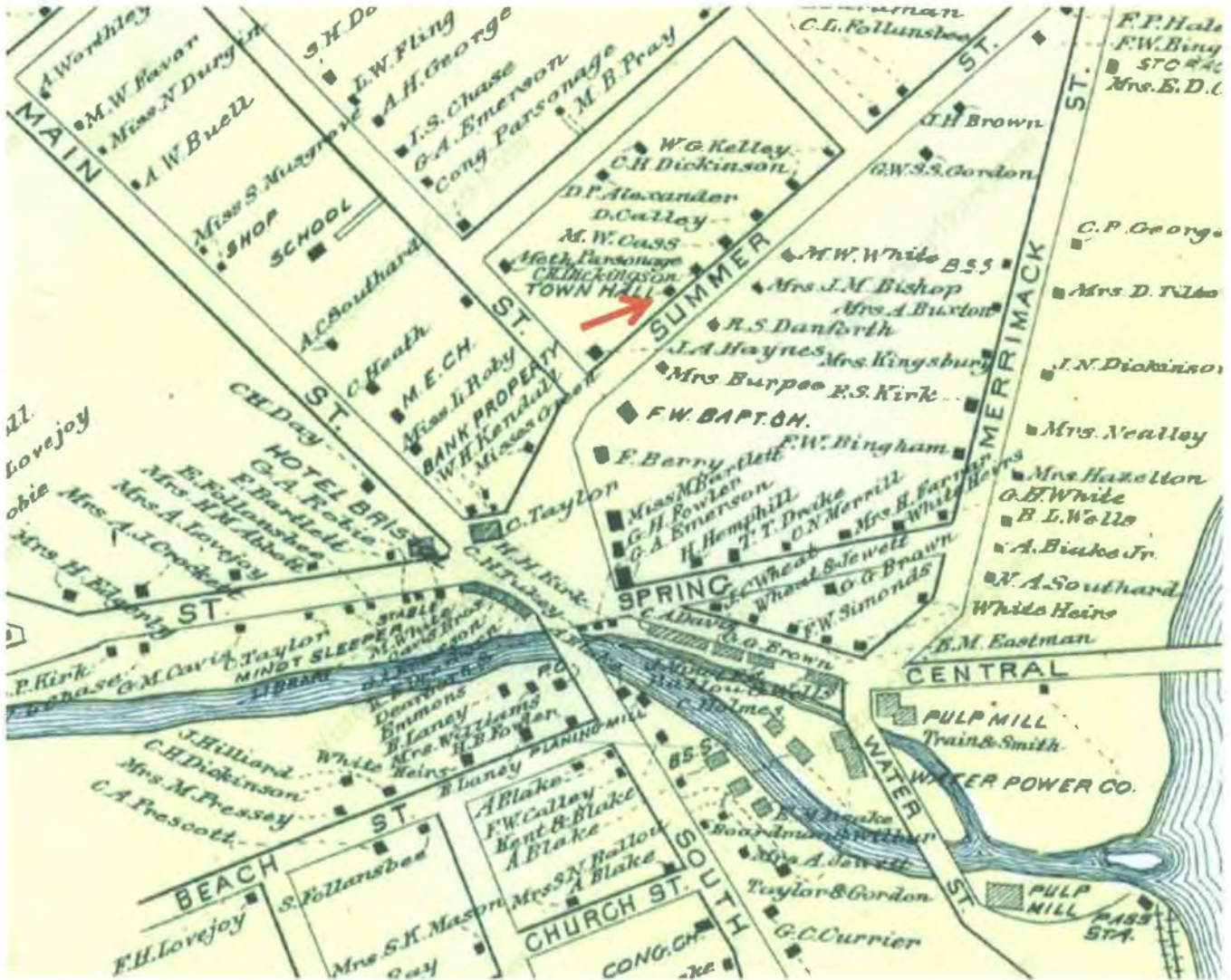
United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Bristol Town Hall
Name of Property
Grafton, VT
County and State
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Historic Map s

Figure 4
1892 D.H. Hurd & Co. Atlas Map of Bristol Village



United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Bristol Town Hall

Name of Property

Grafton, VT

County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Historic Maps

Figure 5
March 1912 Sanborn Insurance Map
Note size of side wing, jail addition, and former house to east

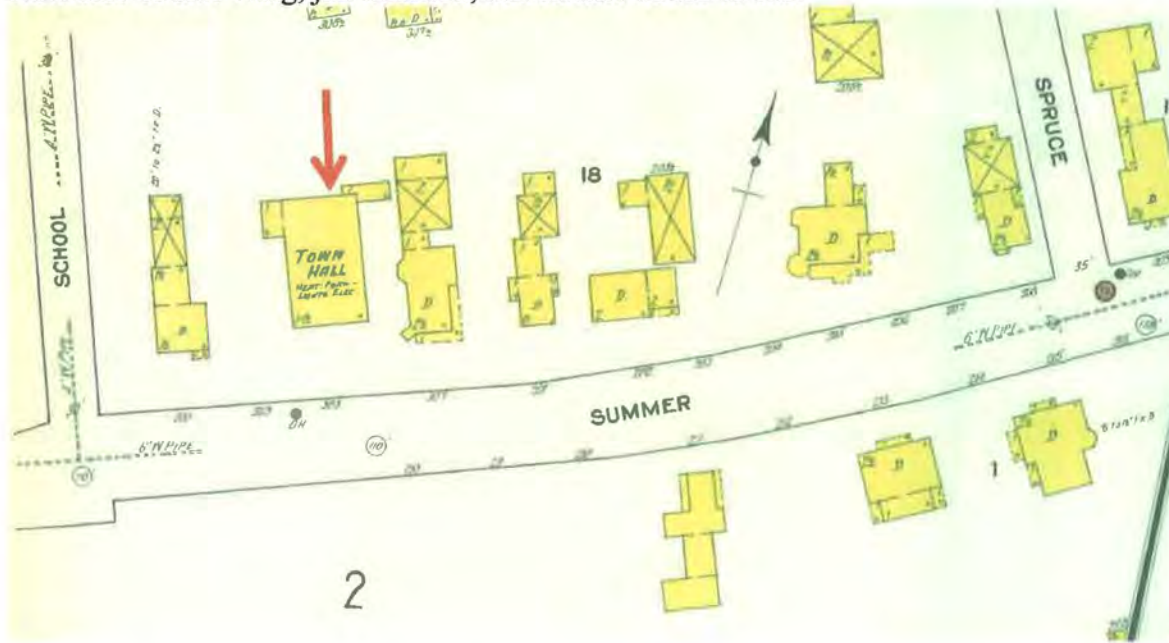
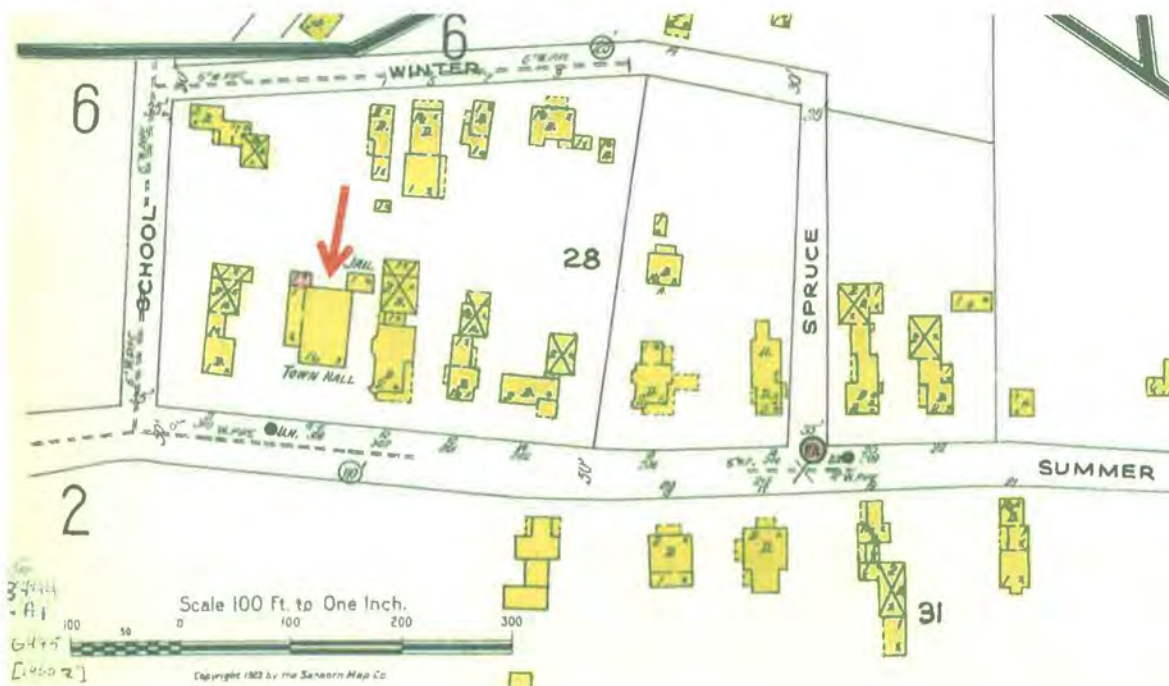


Figure 6
August 1923 Sanborn Insurance Map
Note extension to side wing, and vault addition



**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Bristol Town Hall

Name of Property

Grafton, VT

County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Historic Photographs

Figure 7

Ca. 1904, from Musgrove's *History of the Town of Bristol*

Note the small side addition and twelve-over-twelve windows



United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Bristol Town Hall

Name of Property

Grafton, VT

County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Historic Photographs

Figure 8

1950s

Courtesy of Bristol Historical Society







1896

1896





1848

1848







BUSINESS ON BRISTOL SQUARE 1879





UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY Bristol Town Hall
NAME:

MULTIPLE
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: NEW HAMPSHIRE, Grafton

DATE RECEIVED: 8/14/15 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 9/09/15
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 9/24/15 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 9/29/15
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 15000668

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N
OTHER: N PDIL: N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N
REQUEST: N SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: N NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

ACCEPT RETURN REJECT 9.29.15 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

**Entered in
The National Register
of
Historic Places**

RECOM./CRITERIA _____

REVIEWER _____ DISCIPLINE _____

TELEPHONE _____ DATE _____

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N

If a nomination is returned to the nominating authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the NPS.

RECEIVED 2280

AUG 14 2015

Nat. Register of Historic Places
Park Service



NEW HAMPSHIRE DIVISION OF HISTORICAL RESOURCES

MEMORANDUM

To: Lisa Deline

From: Peter Michaud

Subject: National Register Nominations

Date: August 10, 2015

Dear Lisa,

Enclosed are five nominations for the National Register. The enclosed disks for Owls Head in Hebron, NH, The Bartlett Roundhouse in Bartlett, NH, Hilltop School in Somersworth, NH, Rollinsford Grade School in Rollinsford, NH, and Bristol Town Hall in Bristol, NH contain the true and correct copy of the nominations for these properties to the National Register of Historic Places.

On a side note, Rollinsford Grade School is my former elementary school and I did the nomination for them on my own time as a gift.

Peter Michaud

National Register, Preservation Tax Incentives,
& Easements Coordinator

19 Pillsbury Street

Concord, NH 03301

(603) 271 3583 *fax* (603) 271 3433

Peter.michaud@dcr.nh.gov