

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC

Franklin Pierce Homestead

AND/OR COMMON

Franklin Pierce Homestead

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

Washington Road (State Route 31)

__ NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Hillsborough (Lower Village) __ VICINITY OF

Second

STATE

CODE

COUNTY

CODE

New Hampshire

033

Hillsborough

011

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"/> MUSEUM
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input 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 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

State of New Hampshire, Division of Parks

STREET & NUMBER

State House Annex

CITY, TOWN

Concord

__ VICINITY OF

STATE

New Hampshire

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,

REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Registry of Deeds

STREET & NUMBER

Hillsborough County Courthouse

CITY, TOWN

Nashua

STATE

New Hampshire

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

Historic American Buildings Survey

DATE

1964

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

Library of Congress, Division of Prints and Photographs

CITY, TOWN

Washington

STATE

District of Columbia

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input 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

The Franklin Pierce Homestead is located on the east side of Washington Road (State Road 31) about 100 yards north of its intersection with Route 9 at Hillsborough Lower Village, New Hampshire. The house stands near Washington Road facing west. The 13 acres of field and woodland now associated with the Homestead are all that remain of an estate of several hundred acres assembled by Benjamin Pierce between 1785 and his death in 1839. Despite the loss of so much of the original property, the historic setting of the Homestead is remarkably unaltered. A grassed parking area has been created just off Washington Road to the north of the Homestead but is screened from it by mature trees. The lawn in front of the house is surrounded by an ornamental fence with urn finials. The Washington Road boundary of the Homestead is marked by a post-and-rail fence; stone walls define the remaining lines of the 13-acre property.

The rectangular main section of the 2-story frame and clapboard house was completed in 1804. Its hipped roof is broken by two interior chimneys. Paneled doorways at the center of the west (front) and south elevations are topped by five-light transoms and flanked by pilasters carrying a full entablature and triangular pediment. The doorway at the center of the east (rear) elevation is topped by a simple molded cornice, as are the 12/12-light sash windows. Louvered blinds flank the windows on the west and south elevations.

The wing at the southeast (rear) corner of the main section may be of slightly later date. It is 2 stories high with a gabled roof broken by one interior chimney. Windows are 12/6 and 12/9-light sash. Attached to the south side of the wing is a small wellhouse, a square gable-roofed structure with arched openings on the west, south, and east sides. At the rear of the wing is a 1-story shed which connects it with the broad gable-roofed barn.

The main section of the house contains seven principal rooms. At the first floor front are the parlor and dining room (left and right) divided by a wide stairhall. A door at the rear of the hall leads into the kitchen which occupies the southeast corner of the first floor. The rear stairway is set against the north wall of this room. The master bedroom is located at the northeast corner of the house. A formal ballroom extends across the front of the house on the second floor. The broad hallway at the center rear of the floor is divided into two sections serving the front and rear stairways. On either side of the hall is a bedroom with an adjoining dressing room. The wing contains a summer kitchen, laundry, and storage room on the first floor and two bedrooms, possibly for servants, on the second.

With the exception of the kitchen, all of the rooms in the main section of the house were originally decorated with stenciling; these patterns have been restored in the master bedroom and second floor rooms. The parlor stenciling was covered in 1824 with a French wallpaper depicting scenes of the Bay of Naples; that paper is still in place and in good condition. The wall paper in the dining room is a reproduction of a pattern called "Bird of New Hampshire," taken from a house of the same period at Peterborough, New Hampshire. Though a few Pierce items remain in the house and some period pieces have been loaned by the New Hampshire Historical

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 type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input 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 checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1804-1834: Pierce residence BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Franklin Pierce, fourteenth President of the United States, held office during one of the most critical periods (1853-57) of the antebellum generation. Under his administration, the apparent calm on the slavery issue produced by the Compromise of 1850 gave way to the Kansas-Nebraska Act, "Bleeding Kansas," and the renewed sectional storms which resulted in the Civil War. Of the extant residences associated with Pierce, the one most typical of his time and background and also the one which he occupied for the longest period is the Franklin Pierce Homestead. Located at Hillsborough Lower Village in New Hampshire, this 2-story frame and clapboard house with hipped roof was built by Franklin's father, Benjamin Pierce. The future President was born about the time the Homestead was completed in 1804 and lived there until his marriage in 1834.

The Franklin Pierce Homestead remained in the Pierce family until 1925 when it was donated to the State of New Hampshire. Restored in 1945-50 and again in the early 1960's, the Homestead is open to the public from nine to five daily (except Sunday) from the third week in June through Labor Day.

Historical Background

Benjamin Pierce moved to Hillsborough, New Hampshire, from Massachusetts in 1785 and began assembling an estate which eventually included several hundred acres. He was a farmer, tavernkeeper, politician, and local militia leader and later served two annual terms as Governor of New Hampshire (1827 and 1829). In 1804 Pierce began construction of a substantial house (the present Pierce Homestead) at Hillsborough lower Village. On November 23 of that year his fourth son, Franklin, was born. It has been suggested that the birth took place in the new house but, according to family tradition, Franklin was brought there as an infant.

The young Pierce attended a local grammar school and then academies at nearby Hancock and Francess town. Following his graduation from Bowdoin College, Brunswick, Maine, in 1824, he read law at Portsmouth, New Hampshire, Northampton, Massachusetts, and Amherst, New Hampshire. Admitted to the bar in 1827, he returned to Hillsborough and opened a law office in a converted shed across the street from his family home. Two years later, Pierce, a Democrat, was elected to the New Hampshire House of Representatives and served as speaker of that body in 1831 and 1832.

In 1833 Pierce was elected to the United States House of Representatives and in 1837 to the Senate, where he was the youngest member (32 years old) at the time of his election. In Congress he won a reputation as a solid Democratic Party man. In 1834 Pierce married Jane Means Appleton of Amherst, New Hampshire; they were to

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Society, the Homestead is largely unfurnished. However, the New Hampshire Division of Parks hopes to trace additional Pierce items and acquire other appropriate pieces as funds allow.

The Pierce Homestead had been altered somewhat and allowed to deteriorate before it was given to the State of New Hampshire in 1925. At that time a one-story porch was removed from the west and south elevations and necessary exterior repairs were made. Research on original colors, repainting, and restoration of the stencils was done in 1945-50. Another extensive restoration was carried out in the early 1960's, including installation of new sills and carrying members throughout the house, and replacement of the large-pane window sash added during the late 19th century. A heating system and fire alarm were also installed and the wiring was altered to provide minimal and concealed outlets. Major structural repairs were also made to the barn during this project. Since the completion of this work, the house has remained in excellent condition.

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have three children, none of whom lived to adulthood. About the time of his marriage, Pierce bought a house in Hillsborough but in 1838 changed his residence to Concord, New Hampshire.

Pierce resigned from the Senate before the end of his term and returned to Concord where, from 1842 to 1846, he practiced law and served as Federal District Attorney for New Hampshire (1845-46). Also taking an active part in State political affairs, he opposed the abolition movement because he felt it contributed to national divisiveness. In 1845 he turned down an offer by the Governor to complete the unexpired portion of a U.S. Senator's term and the next year rejected the position of U.S. Attorney General, proffered by Polk.

On the outbreak of the Mexican War (1846-48), Pierce enlisted as a private, but his political prominence quickly won him the rank of brigadier general under Winfield Scott. He took part in Scott's advance toward Mexico City and was injured at the Battle of Contreras. Back in Concord in 1848, Pierce rejected an offer of the Democratic gubernatorial nomination. He continued his legal and political activity, working to gain support for the Compromise of 1850 in the State and serving as president of the constitutional convention (1850).

In 1852 Pierce won the Democratic presidential nomination on the 49th ballot as a "dark horse" after the convention was unable to agree on any one of the three major candidates: Lewis Cass, James Buchanan, and Stephen A. Douglas. Both the Democrats and the Whigs were too badly divided for any real party issues to appear in the campaign. The primary question for the voters was the finality of the Compromise of 1850. Though both parties declared themselves in favor of this measure, the Democrats were more firmly united in its support, and Pierce defeated his opponent and former commander, Winfield Scott, by a wide majority. However, for Pierce the victory was overshadowed by the death of his last surviving child, a boy of 13, in a train wreck. Pierce took office in a state of grief and nervous exhaustion, and his wife was unable to attend the inauguration.

Pierce appointed an intersectional cabinet, but relied primarily on pro-southern advisers and his father. His assertiveness and expansionism in foreign affairs and his pro-southern domestic policies irritated northerners, who feared attempts to extend slavery into new areas. Pierce's attempt to purchase Cuba from Spain ended in failure and political embarrassment when a secret memorandum of a discussion on that subject among U. S. diplomats in Europe, drafted by U. S. Minister to Britain James Buchanan, leaked out. Known as the Ostend Manifesto, it advocated the use of force if necessary to acquire Cuba and stressed the value of the island as a new base for slavery. Also provocative to the North--though the apparent rationale was facilitation of construction of a transcontinental railroad along a southern route--was Pierce's sponsorship of the Gadsden Purchase (1853), through which the United States acquired the southern strip of the present

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Arizona and the southeastern corner of New Mexico from Mexico for \$10 million.

The North was further angered by the Kansas-Nebraska Act (1854), introduced by Senator Stephen A. Douglas, which divided the relatively unsettled central portion of the Louisiana Purchase into separate Kansas and Nebraska Territories. The principal intent of the act, like that of the Gadsden Purchase, was to aid construction of a transcontinental railroad, this one from Douglas' home state of Illinois through Nebraska to the Pacific. Mindful of Democratic strength in the south, Douglas included in the bill the provision that settlers in the territories could decide for themselves, by the process of popular sovereignty, whether Kansas and Nebraska would enter the Union as slave or free States.

Pierce supported and signed this legislation in the hope that, if Kansas were admitted as a slave and Nebraska as a free State, both North and South would be mollified. Instead, the act reopened the whole question of extending slavery into the West. A storm of protest rose from the North since, by permitting slavery north of 36°30' North Latitude, the legislation virtually repealed the Missouri Compromise of 1820. There was little doubt that Nebraska would enter the Union as a free State but both pro-and anti-slavery settlers poured into the Kansas Territory. Sporadic guerilla warfare broke out between the two factions; elections were often fraudulently conducted and violently disputed. Bitter debates in Congress reflected the regional turmoil. Though Pierce created temporary peace in 1856 by sending in Federal troops and appointing a new territorial governor, his general handling of the Kansas controversy was widely criticized and the Democratic National Convention of that year chose the less-controversial James Buchanan as its presidential candidate.

Pierce returned to New Hampshire in the spring of 1857 but left in November on a leisurely tour of Europe that lasted until the summer of 1859. He spent the first half of the next year in Nassau and then returned permanently to Concord. Still believing in the validity of his policies as President, he opposed the abolitionists and the rise of anti-slavery militance in the North. His outspoken criticism of Lincoln and his denunciation of the Emancipation Proclamation resulted in scathing censure, even in his home community. The death of his wife in 1863 and that of his lifelong friend Nathaniel Hawthorne the following year were severe blows for Pierce. Bitter and in poor health, he remained in virtual isolation at Concord until his own death on October 8, 1869.

The Franklin Pierce Homestead remained in the Pierce family until 1925 when it was acquired by the State of New Hampshire. The house was restored in 1945-50 with the assistance of the New Hampshire Federation of Women's Clubs and substantial work was done by the State in the early 1960's. The Homestead is now in excellent physical condition but largely unfurnished. It is open to the

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CONTINUATION SHEET Boundary

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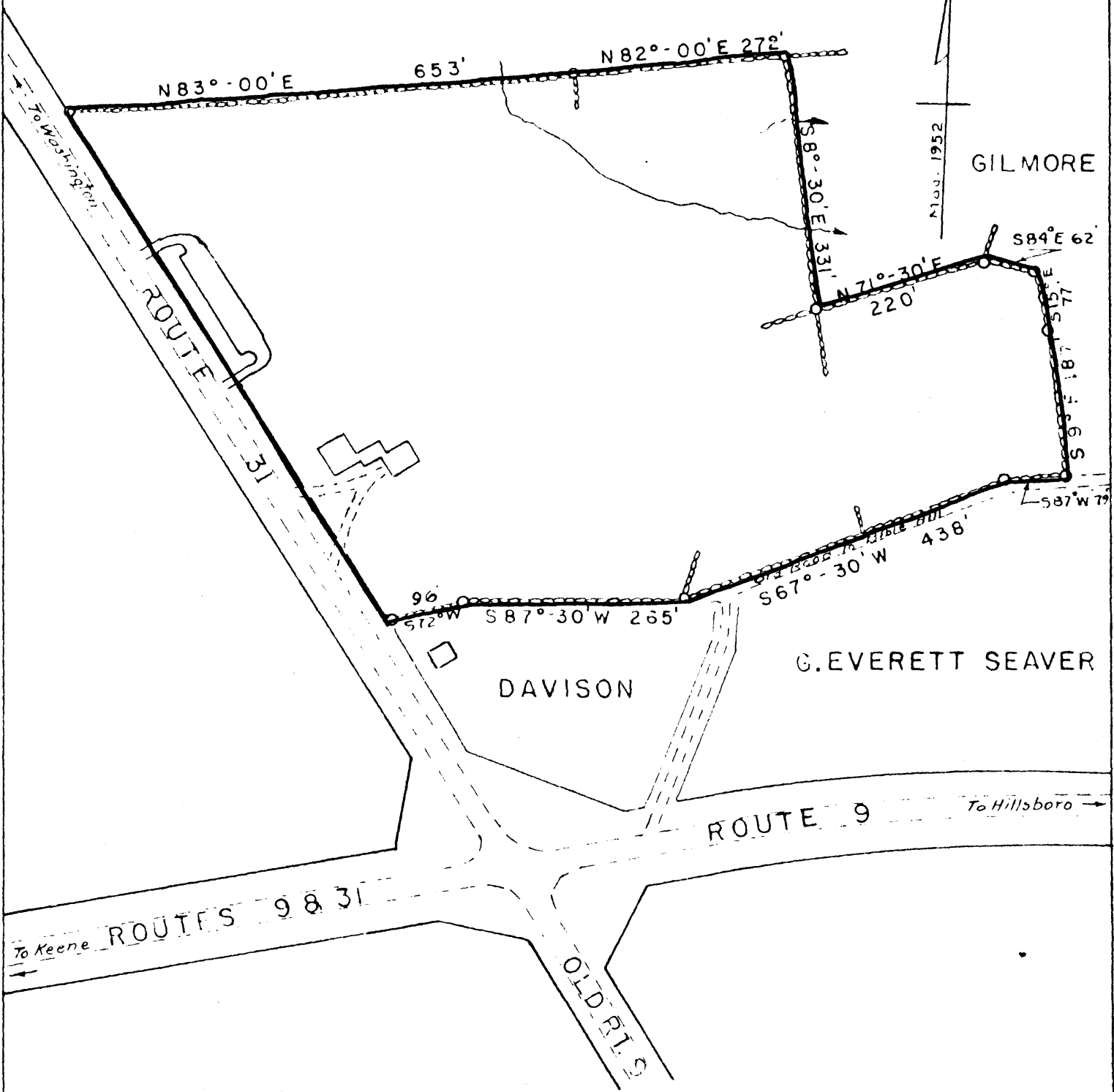
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sections of 77 and 187 feet; southerly by Old Road to Bible Hill (abandoned) and land of G. Everett Seaver 79 feet; southerly again by said road and land of Seaver and of Davision 438 feet; southerly again by land of Davision in sections of 265 and 96 feet to the point of beginning.

Note: all of the above lines except that along Washington Road are marked by stone walls.

GILMORE

GILMORE



DAVISON

G. EVERETT SEAVER

ROUTES 9 & 31

ROUTE 9

OLD RD.

PROPERTY MAP

National Historic Landmark Boundary

STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

DEPT. OF RESOURCES & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

FRANKLIN PIERCE HOMESTEAD

HILLSBORO, N.H.

13 acres

Scale 1" = 175'