

# DATA SHEET

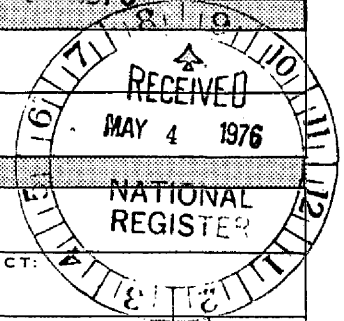
Form 10-300  
(Rev. 6-72)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: New Hampshire
COUNTY: Cheshire
FOR NPS USE ONLY
ENTRY DATE JUN 7 1976



### 1. NAME

COMMON:  
Nelson Schoolhouse *pkh*

AND/OR HISTORIC:  
Old Nelson Schoolhouse, District #1

### 2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:  
Old Sullivan Road, east of Nelson common

CITY OR TOWN:  
Nelson

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT:  
Second

STATE:  
New Hampshire

CODE:  
33

COUNTY:  
Cheshire

CODE:  
005

### 3. CLASSIFICATION

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

### 4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:  
Town of Nelson

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN:  
Nelson

STATE:  
New Hampshire

CODE:  
33

### 5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:  
Cheshire County Registry of Deeds, Cheshire County Courthouse

STREET AND NUMBER:  
12 Court Street

CITY OR TOWN:  
Keene

STATE:  
New Hampshire

CODE:  
33

### 6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:  
None

DATE OF SURVEY:  
 Federal     State     County     Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN:

STATE:

CODE:

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

STATE: New Hampshire

COUNTY: Cheshire

ENTRY NUMBER: JUN 7 1976

DATE: JUN 7 1976

FOR NPS USE ONLY

7. DESCRIPTION

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

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Present Appearance

.Situated at the base of the hill which had been the town's original site, the Nelson Schoolhouse faces west towards the town common. It is separated from the common by the Old Sullivan or Old Lead Mine Road. The Schoolhouse retains much of its original appearance except for a few alteration, the more major ones being to the rear of the building.

The Schoolhouse is a single, detached building, 2½ stories tall, rectangular in plan. It is constructed of deep salmon colored bricks laid in stretcher bond. Settling has formed some cracks in the walls. Two diamond-shaped tie rod anchors connect the north-south walls while two blunted diamond-shaped ones run through the eastern wall. The building is low to the ground with foundations of large cut granite blocks visible.

The main facade of the building is the western gable. Its vertical centerline is given emphasis by several architectural elements. The line is begun by the fish-shaped weather vane that surmounts the inset cupola. The wooden cupola is vertically boarded with cornerboards and louvered windows. The brass bell still hangs within. The line is marked at the attic level by the lancet or center pointed window. This window is now blocked off, giving it a dead look, but the brick surround still lends a bit of distinction. At the second floor, the line is given wide berth by two flanking windows. Then it is narrowly focused upon by the two closely set main doors. These two doors with transom lights act as a single unit, united by their granite lintel, to balance the strong elements of cupola and lancet window above. An 1891 photograph shows the same mismatched doors; the right one a four panel door and the left one with six vertical panels.

The only other embellishment on the facade is provided by the simply molded cornice boxing, underlined by a narrow, plain frieze, that returns at the corners of the building. The roof itself is of medium pitch, covered with mineral surfaced asphalt shingles. The single chimney appears in the middle of the roof's southern side, inset from the edge.

The windows are extremely simple; flat-headed, six over six sash windows lacking surrounds but with slipsills. The north wall has four windows to each floor while the southern wall has three. The eastern gable has three windows to each floor, but the first floor window in the southeast corner is crowded towards the center to make room for the rear entrance. The wooden enclosed porch-woodshed was first added in the 1930's, re-built within the past decade. The clapboards of the eastern gable were changed to wooden shingles at the later date, the cornerboards being retained.

Some remodelling has been done to the interior. Inside

See Continuation Sheet No. 1.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Continuation Sheet) 1

STATE New Hampshire	
COUNTY Cheshire	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
	JUN 7 1976

(Number all entries)

7. DESCRIPTION, continued

Present Appearance, continued: the left-hand main door, part of the wood storage space became the Ladies Aid kitchen, with connection to the schoolroom beyond. The right-hand door opens onto the stair vestibule and the schoolroom. The walls of the schoolroom are horizontally wainscotted by two widths of broad board. Above, the walls are finished in narrow matchboard, probably dating from the late 1800's and replacing the original plaster. Two columns in the middle of the room support the Concert Hall above. The Concert Hall is an uninterrupted space, slightly larger than the schoolroom, with an arched ceiling that gives good acoustical effects. The old matchboarded kitchen, which is no longer in use, takes up what room is left on the second floor at the head of the stairs.

Original Appearance

The appearance of the Nelson Schoolhouse has changed very little since it was built in 1838. The eastern wall was finished in clapboard but the entrance, possibly covered, did not serve as a woodshed. The wood was stored in the northwest room inside the left-hand front entrance. The dimensions of this and possible additional rooms in the front portion of the first floor can be deduced from the evidence left in the floor. Heating was provided originally by the fireplace which was uncovered and re-built not long ago, although not along the correct proportions. Later in the 19th century, a metal stove was substituted to heat the room.

It would seem reasonable that the lancet window was either originally glazed or equipped with a louvred shutter and not the blackened cover that now blocks it. The two windows in the main facade have holes in the surrounding brickwork that indicate they had shutters at one time. The windows of the other walls show no such signs.



**SIGNIFICANCE**

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- Pre-Columbian!       16th Century       18th Century       20th Century  
 15th Century       17th Century       19th Century

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known)

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

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

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Social/Humanitarian

Nelson, New Hampshire had ten school districts in 1808 to accommodate its widely dispersed student population. The town, with a thriving sheep industry, at the time was larger than nearby Keene; Keene prospering and surpassing Nelson in the latter part of the 19th century.

Nelson started on the hill but by the 1830's it was decided to move to the sheltered valley to the north. A new schoolhouse for District #1 was needed. At a school district meeting on January 27, 1838, it was voted to build the first story of a brick schoolhouse at the school district's expense. A subsequent meeting in February raised a subscription for a second floor to the building to be used for "singing and academic schools and for the use of the First Orthodox Congregational Society". Another subscription paid for the belfry.

During the 19th century, school was open for two sessions lasting nine to thirteen weeks each. The winter session would begin in mid-November or December; the summer session in April or May. The schools were considered of good quality for their time and seem to have been inspirational. Several Nelson people sought out missionary careers and it is possible that Dauphin William Osgood, M.D. who founded the Fochow Medical Missionary Hospital in 1870 and Elsie May Priest who worked for the Missionary China Christian Education were graduates of District #1 Schoolhouse.

The second floor with its arched ceiling was equipped with a kitchen to provide refreshments for whatever events were held. When singing masters could be engaged, they rehearsed their pupils in this "Concert Hall". Once a year the singers would perform for the Town. Occasionally, academies for advanced studies were held there in the winter. The church held its Sunday evening and mid-week services, business and social meetings in the Hall. Religious revivals gathered their followers there. Any group that needed a place to meet sought out the upstairs of the Schoolhouse. This tradition has continued even though the school graduated its last class in 1945 when this last of the Nelson schools closed.

The Nelson Schoolhouse, while possessing only modest

See Continuation Sheet #2

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Parke Hardy Struthers, (ed.), A History of Nelson, New Hampshire, 1767-1967 (Keene, NH: The Sentinel Printing Company, Inc., 1968).

Walter Muir Whitehill, "The Right of Cities to be Beautiful", With Heritage So Rich (New York: Random House, 1966), p.55.

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		N LATITUDE	W LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	
NW	° ' "	° ' "		42° 59' 30"	72° 07' 35"	
NE	° ' "	° ' "		Zone 18		
SE	° ' "	° ' "				
SW	° ' "	° ' "		N-4763-450	E-734-	

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY:  $\frac{1}{2}$  A

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

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:  
**Darleen Melis**

ORGANIZATION: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: **May 21, 1974**

STREET AND NUMBER:  
**Wardsboro, Vermont, 05355**

CITY OR TOWN: \_\_\_\_\_ STATE: \_\_\_\_\_ CODE: \_\_\_\_\_

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National  State  Local

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Title NH State Historic Preservation Officer

Date July 7, 1975

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

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

Acting *Seay*  
Director, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date 6/9/76

ATTEST: \_\_\_\_\_

RBR for WJM  
5/28/76

Acting *Olshausen*  
Keeper of The National Register

Date 5.28.76

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Continuation Sheet) 2

STATE New Hampshire	
COUNTY Cheshire	
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(Number all entries)

8. SIGNIFICANCE, continued

Social/Humanitarian, continued: architectural significance, has played an essential role in the Town's history. Much of the daily business of the Town has taken place within its doors and still does to some extent. Because of its structural arrangement it can readily, although at some expense, be rehabilitated to continuing service and use to the Town.

Its location on the town common also makes it a key structure in maintaining the rural New England town vista. Other main public buildings, the First Congregational Church and the Town Hall face onto the common with their gable end in rapport with the school. The church also repeats the lancet window scheme.

As Walter Muir Whitehill says in his essay "The Right of Cities to be Beautiful", "Therefore let us save what we have around us that is good, not for exhibition, not for 'education', but for practical use as places to live in and to work in."



FOOTNOTES

1. Parke Hardy Struthers, ed., A History of Nelson New Hampshire 1767-1967, p.118.
2. Nelson School Record Book, Bemis Papers, Olivia Rodham Memorial Lebrary, Nelson, New Hampshire.
3. Parke Hardy Struthers, op. cit., p.110.
4. Ibid., p. 113.
5. Ibid., p.79.
6. Ibid., p.118.
7. Walter Muir Whitehill, "The Right of Cities to be Beautiful", With Heritage So Rich, p.55.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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

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RECEIVED	MAY 4	1976
DATE ENTERED	JUN 7 1976	

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 10

PAGE 3

GEOGRAPHICAL DATA, Continued

10.2 UTM References

<u>ZONE</u>	<u>EASTING</u>	<u>NORTHING</u>
18	7 · 34 · 125	47 · 63 · 400