

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

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

For NPS use only

received **OCT 30 1985**

date entered **DEC 2 1985**

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

**1. Name**

historic Town House and Universalist Meeting House

and/or common WEARE TOWN HOUSE (preferred)

**2. Location**

street & number Route 114 (approximately 500 yds. north of where Memorial Road intersects with NH Rte. 114) n/a not for publication

city, town Weare, \_\_\_\_\_ vicinity of

state New Hampshire code 33 county Hillsborough code 011

**3. Classification**

|   |  |   |  |  |
|---|--|---|--|--|
| <b>Category</b>                                 | <b>Ownership</b>                           | <b>Status</b>                                       | <b>Present Use</b>                     |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> district               | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied        | <input type="checkbox"/> agriculture   | <input type="checkbox"/> museum                      |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s) | <input type="checkbox"/> private           | <input 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                   | <b>Public Acquisition</b>                  | <b>Accessible</b>                                   | <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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A    | <input type="checkbox"/> no                         | <input type="checkbox"/> military      | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other: Community |

**4. Owner of Property**

name Town of Weare

Box 300  
street & number Memorial Drive

city, town Weare, n/a vicinity of state New Hampshire 03281

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Hillsborough County Courthouse  
Hillsborough County Registry of Deeds  
street & number 19 Temple Street

city, town Nashua, \_\_\_\_\_ vicinity of state New Hampshire 03060

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**

title None has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date N/A  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records N/A

city, town N/A \_\_\_\_\_ vicinity of state

## 7. Description

|  |                                       |   |   |
|--|---------------------------------------|---|---|
| <b>Condition</b>                         |                                       | <b>Check one</b>                            | <b>Check one</b>                                  |
| <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 <u>N/A</u>    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> fair            | <input type="checkbox"/> unexposed    |   |   |

### Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Facing westward on a low hill about fifty feet from Route 114, the Weare Town Hall is a two story white clapboarded structure approximately forty feet in width and sixty feet in length. The building is oriented with its gable front facing the road with a semi-circular paved front drive which slopes toward the road. A small parking area is at the building's southwest corner and is partially shaded by a large maple tree. The building is set on a foundation of granite blocks with chisel and drill marks visible on some of the stones. Some concrete patching is also evident. A single story 14' x 40' flat-roofed stage addition spans the rear of the original structure, continuing the lines of the sidewalls and set upon a concrete block foundation. Recessed two feet from the north wall is a 10' x 10' gable-roofed boiler room added in 1974 when wood stoves were removed from the building. Both additions are clapboarded and compatible with the original structure.

Dominating the facade is a two stage square tower which rises from the facade, squaring off the roof's gable profile at the tower base. Centered on the facade are two contiguous double doorways, each with an individual surround featuring recessed panels and cornerblocks adorned by recessed bullseyes. A five light transom is located over each pair of double doors. Each of the modern doors displays five vertical projecting panels and replace original single six-panel doors. Emerging from the central keystone is the remains of an iron bracket which once supported an electric light but now contains only exposed wires. Three concrete steps with a modern wrought iron railing front the doorways. A rhododendron and two low evergreens are located on each side of the entrance. Three symmetrical doublehung 20/15 windows light the second story of the facade and like the doorways exhibit bullseye cornerblocks and recessed panel surrounds. These windows are indicative of the type which predominate on the building and feature plain wooden sills and exterior storm windows. Resting on the top of the central window is a sign constructed of flush horizontal boards painted white with black raised wooden letters reading "Town Hall/Weare/1837".

Plain cornerboards and a baseboard outline the structure. The cornerboards support shallow cornice returns on the end elevations while the eaves are nearly flush with the walls. The two stage 12' x 12' square tower rising from the front of the gable roof features a shiplap board base articulated by corner pilasters with two vertical grooves extending the height of each pilaster side. The rear elevation of the base features wider boards and a central rectangular louvered vent. Supported by the pilasters is a plain frieze capped by a cornice consisting of a cyma-reversa, fillet and cyma recta molding. Obelisk finials set on square bases mark the corners of the base, spanned by a stick balustrade. The shiplap second stage housing an open belfry is also square in plan with four identical pointed arch openings, the springline of each marked by recessed cornerblocks with a recessed keystone capping each arch. Pilasters also mark the corners of this stage, supporting a plain frieze and simple cyma reversa cornice. Four slightly taller needles set on shorter square bases cap the tower, joined by solid recessed panels.

Within the open belfry the iron bell bears the phrase "Cast by G.H. Holbrook - East Medway, Mass., 1837". Major George H. Holbrook (b. 1767) opened a permanent foundry in East Medway (now Millis) Massachusetts, in 1816 following an apprenticeship to the Paul Revere Foundry and after serving as a partner in the Revere Boston Company. Holbrook apparently withdrew from Revere Boston because he preferred the French bell type which, in his opinion, produced a sweeter tone than the English prototype used by the Reveres. The Weare bell appears to be in good condition and without cracks. According to Weare tradition there is a hole in the facade clapboards above the second story windows through which the bell rope descends to the outside to accommodate the ringing of the bell on the Fourth of July by the town's children without their entering the building.

## 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/         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799            | <input type="checkbox"/> art                     | <input type="checkbox"/> engineering            | <input type="checkbox"/> music                  | <input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian    |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899 | <input type="checkbox"/> commerce                | <input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement | <input type="checkbox"/> philosophy             | <input type="checkbox"/> theater         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1900–                | <input type="checkbox"/> communications          | <input type="checkbox"/> industry               | <input type="checkbox"/> politics/government    | <input type="checkbox"/> transportation  |
|   |  | <input type="checkbox"/> invention              |   | <input type="checkbox"/> other (specify) |

**Specific dates** 1837

**Builder/Architect** Unknown

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Weare Town Hall, formerly the Town Hall and Universalist Meeting House, is significant as a fine example of transitional Federal-Gothic Revival vernacular architecture, reflecting the evolution from the Federal style to more romantic styles such as the Gothic Revival. Signs of the Federal style are apparent in the bullseye cornerblocks of the door and window surrounds while traces of Gothic Revival influence are evident in the corner spires and pointed arches of the belfry. Prescribed by a relatively unique building program dictating a first floor Town House with a second story paid for by the Universalist Church, the structure combines the influence of religious structures of the period with side entrances typical of the meetinghouse form. The structure survives today, relatively unchanged, with alterations limited to the placement of several new partitions, a 1908 stage addition and 1974 boiler room.

Preceded by the construction of a first Town House in 1797, the first meetinghouse in 1764 and the East Weare meetinghouse in 1786, the present Town Hall was constructed in 1837 in what had become the most central village in the town, Weare Center. Much lumber from the first town house was reportedly incorporated into the present structure. The unsatisfactory location of the original town house led to great deliberation concerning a proper location for the new town hall. At the same time the Universalists in the north part of town were also in need of a new meeting house and thus it was concluded that a dual purpose structure would be most cost effective.

A committee of three, Hiram Simons, Squire Gove and Ephraim Leighton was established in 1837 to study a site, make a plan, estimate the cost and report at town meeting. A separate building committee was subsequently chosen to receive proposals to do the work and was comprised of Hiram Simons, Simon Colby and Daniel Page; the building to be completed by November 1, 1837. The structure was probably the product of a local designer and builder.

Although admittedly a much simpler structure, the Weare Town Hall may have been influenced by the nearly contemporary First Congregational Church in Dunbarton, constructed in 1836. Like the Weare building, the church exhibits two square tower stages with a pointed arch open belfry and corner spires, though the more elaborate Dunbarton example is capped by a domed cupola.

The need to reconcile public and religious uses in one structure probably contributed to the building's apparent lack of role models in the region. Economy and thrift clearly also played roles in the simplicity of the structure. It was not until 1845 that funds for a stove were successfully appropriated at town meeting, similarly in 1838 the town voted not to hire anyone to ring the bell. Embellishment on the structure thus is limited to the building exterior. The Town Hall remains a somewhat unusual and interesting exercise in the transitional Federal-Gothic Revival styles and a fine index to the tastes and skills of a rural New Hampshire town.

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

Dearborn, Helen E. Town History of Weare New Hampshire from 1888. Concord: Evans Printing, 1959 (New Hampshire State Library, Concord, NH)  
Little, William. The History of Weare, NH. 1735-1888. Lowell, Mass.: S.W. Huse, 1888. (New Hampshire State Library)

Continued on page 3-9-2)

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property less than one acre

Quadrangle name Weare, NH

Quadrangle scale 1:2400

UTM References

A 

|      |   |   |         |   |   |   |          |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|------|---|---|---------|---|---|---|----------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1    | 9 | 2 | 7       | 7 | 7 | 6 | 0        | 4 | 7 | 7 | 4 | 8 | 7 | 0 |
| Zone |   |   | Easting |   |   |   | Northing |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |

B 

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|      |  |  |         |  |  |  |          |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Zone |  |  | Easting |  |  |  | Northing |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

C 

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|      |  |  |         |  |  |  |          |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Zone |  |  | Easting |  |  |  | Northing |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

D 

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| Zone |  |  | Easting |  |  |  | Northing |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

E 

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| Zone |  |  | Easting |  |  |  | Northing |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

F 

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|------|--|--|---------|--|--|--|----------|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
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| Zone |  |  | Easting |  |  |  | Northing |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

G 

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|------|--|--|---------|--|--|--|----------|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
|      |  |  |         |  |  |  |          |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Zone |  |  | Easting |  |  |  | Northing |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

H 

|      |  |  |         |  |  |  |          |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|------|--|--|---------|--|--|--|----------|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
|      |  |  |         |  |  |  |          |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Zone |  |  | Easting |  |  |  | Northing |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

**Verbal boundary description and justification** The nominated property is that portion of Map 5C, Lot 716 on the local tax assessor's map which is bounded on the north by lot 303; on the east by the stone wall and row of trees separating the front lot from the rear lot; on the south by lot #984 and on the west by New Hampshire Route 114. See continuation sheet.

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

| state | N/A | code | county | code |
|-------|-----|------|--------|------|
|       | N/A |      |        |      |

| state | N/A | code | county | code |
|-------|-----|------|--------|------|
|       | N/A |      |        |      |

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Lisa B. Mausolf

organization Preservation Specialist  
Upper Valley-Lake Sunapee Council date May 1985

street & number 314 National Bank Building telephone (603) 448-1680

city or town Lebanon, state New Hampshire 03766

## 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 National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature *John T. Shaver*

title New Hampshire State Historic Preservation Officer date 10/24/85

For NPS use only

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

*for Deborah Byer*  
Keeper of the National Register

date 12/2/85

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

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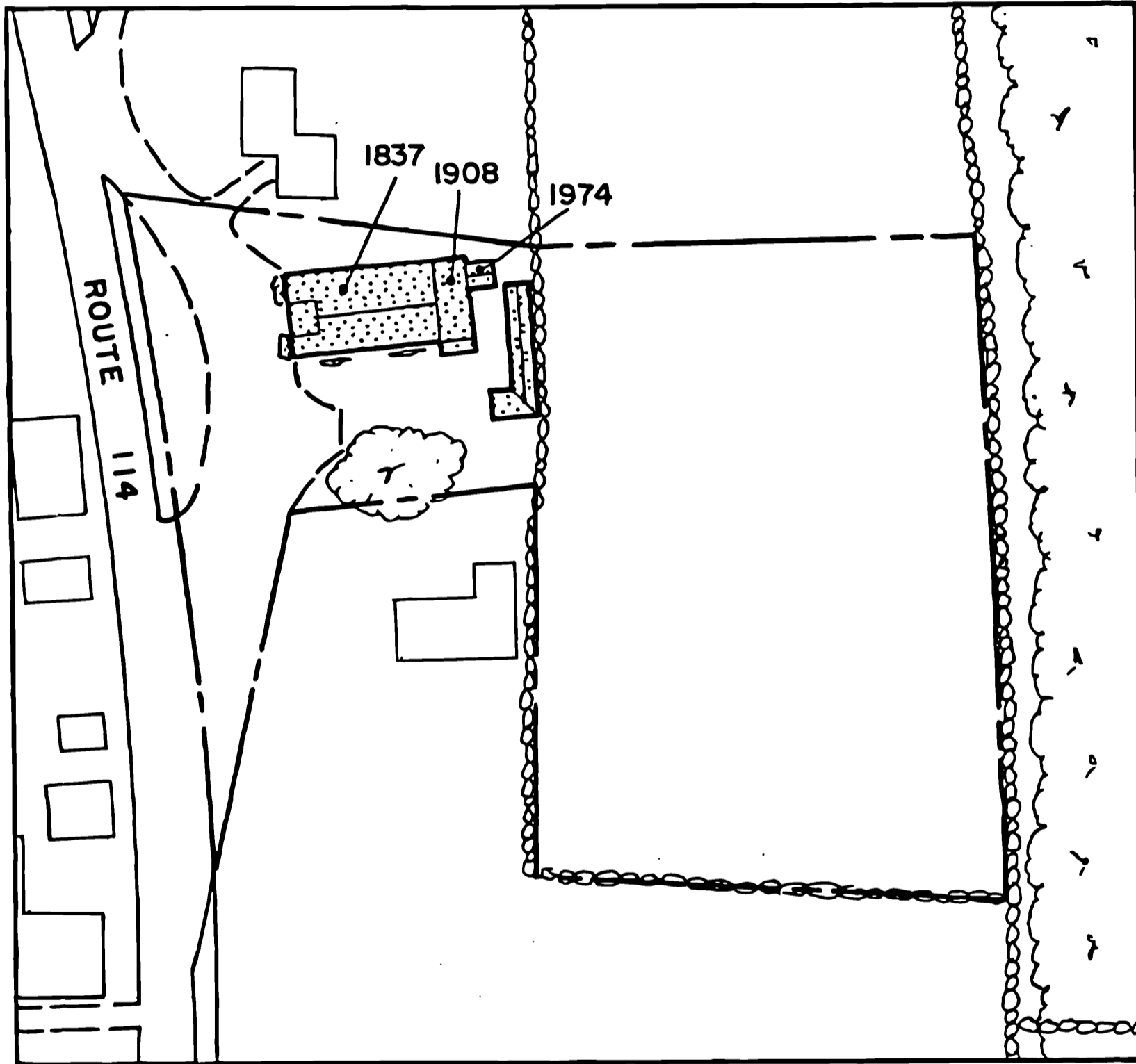
Continuation sheet

5

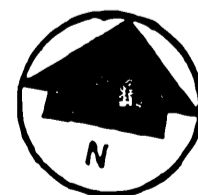
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WEARE TOWN HALL  
WEARE, NEW HAMPSHIRE



KEY:  
--- BOUNDARY

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The roof of the building is sheathed in asphalt shingles. Chimneys were taken down when wood stoves were removed from the interior. Visible from the ground are wood shingles underlying the present asphalt covering.

The south (side) elevation was originally five bays wide with a second story entrance and iron fire escape subsequently added adjacent to the rearmost bay in 1946. The first floor of the structure alternates three 20/15 doublehung windows, identical to those on the facade, with two doorways each containing a pair of double doors like those in front, with transom lights and bullseye cornerblocks. Two granite steps front each doorway. A second story 20/15 window caps each ground floor opening. The second story fire escape entrance is sheltered by a shed doorhood with a recessed triangular panel on each side supported by a simple open triangular bracket. The door contains two recessed panels, one over the other. The cornice on this side and the north elevation consists of a plain frieze with a cavetto molding, topped by an ovolo under the soffit and a cornice comprised of three fillets above which is a cyma recta molding. At the rear of the main structure is a single story 1908 stage addition set above a concrete block foundation. The addition has a flat roof sheathed in tarpaper. A single window is located on the south side, identical to those on the older structure and possibly reused from the rear of the original building.

Like the south elevation, the second story of the north side is five bays wide with 20/15 windows. On the first floor, windows are located in the central and end bays only. The south elevation of the rear stage addition is windowless. A 10' x 10' boiler room addition is located at the rear northeast corner, recessed about two feet from the north elevation, with a tall brick chimney projecting from the north slope of its gable roof.

Offset southeast of the Town Hall is a L-shaped series of ten horsesheds constructed of unpainted vertical wooden slats with a wood shingled roof. The three stalls on the short end appear to be later additions by virtue of their concrete block foundation which contrasts with the dry fieldstone foundation underlying the main line of stalls. Southeast of the building are a series of fenced asphalt tennis courts measuring 110' x 124'. Behind the Town Hall is a discontinuous north-south line formed by a row of maple trees and a partial dry stone wall, separating the building site from the rear open field.

As originally constructed the first floor of the structure served as Town Hall while the second floor was built by and for the Universalist Church. The interior of the Town Hall has seen numerous changes over the years responding to shifting fashions and uses, though key features such as wainscotting and plaster walls survive intact. In 1880 a committee of Albert B. Johnson, Oliver D. Sawyer and Amos J. Strong was chosen to remodel the first floor interior at an expense of \$325. The old benches and sloping spruce floor were removed and replaced by comfortable settees and a level floor of Georgia pine. The stage addition dates to 1908 and electricity was introduced to the building in 1928. Two stairways originally winded upward from the entry vestibule to provide access to the second floor vestibule. The north stairway was removed in 1919 to make room for bathrooms when the upper floor was renovated for use as the first town high school. The first floor vestibule has unfortunately been covered

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The Weare Town House nomination contains two (2) contributing buildings.



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in a no-wax floor covering, a solitary exception to the hardwood floors which predominate elsewhere in the building. The remainder of the first floor houses a large open hall with bathrooms added at the rear. The ceiling, which begins at the top of the window sash is covered in pressed metal. Wide flush board wainscotting encircles the room. Flat piers are located between the openings. On the ceiling, wooden members which apparently originally capped columns are evenly spaced down the center of the room. Above these upstairs, thin metal columns exist. A low wooden stage with curved front spans the front of the hall flanked by a door on each side of the stage. Vertical beadboard wainscotting covers the walls behind the stage. Original stage wings and scenery have long since disappeared.

The upstairs, like the first floor exhibits hardwood floors and wide board wainscotting but is distinguished by an arched plaster ceiling. Water damage has exposed lath in some places. This level which had originally housed the Universalist Church and had remained practically as built was remodeled during the summer of 1919 at a cost of about a thousand dollars to serve the newly established practical arts high school. The large assembly room was partitioned into four rooms with four panel doors between the rooms. As seen today, a large main room spans the south side with three smaller rooms on the north, originally serving as a kitchen for domestic arts, a dining room and a classroom. Echoing the original wideboard wainscotting the newer plaster partitions are painted in two colors to suggest wainscotting. Horizontal beadboard at the west end (front) of this floor are evidence of the 1919 alterations which removed the stairway. Window casings on this level are recessed approximately eight inches. The church pews were also removed in 1919. One is currently owned by the Weare Historical Society.

The area surrounding the Town Hall has historically functioned as the heart of town affairs since the construction of the Town Hall/Universalist Church on the land of John Whittle in 1837. The firehouse, a single story clapboarded structure was originally located just north of the Town House while the Tramp House stood for many years at the end of the horsesheds. A small wooden shed, no larger than an outhouse, the tramp house was moved in the 1940's or 50's to the rear lot, where it still stands in dilapidated condition. It remained in use until the late 1950's giving tramps who passed through town shelter and keeping them off town roads. South of the Town Hall is the former Weare Center Grade School, now functioning as a senior center and the Stone Memorial Building originally constructed in the 1890's as a town office and library and now owned by the Historical Society. Other neighboring buildings include 18th and 19th century residences.

The Weare Town Hall remains an important visible symbol of the local government and has played a central role in community life throughout its history. Though use of the hall has diminished in recent years due to the Town's increasing population, the building has been continuously used for Town Meeting voting since its construction. Over the years a variety of organizations have used the hall including the Stark Fellows Post No. 46 GAR and the Star Rebekkah Lodge. The Weare Grange was headquartered here from 1924 to 1956. The building is rented for outside functions and remains an important landmark in community life.



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Major Bibliographical References

Weare Town Reports 1895-1985. (Weare Town Hall)

Interview with George Hollis by Lisa Mausolf, Weare, N.H., May 22, 1985.

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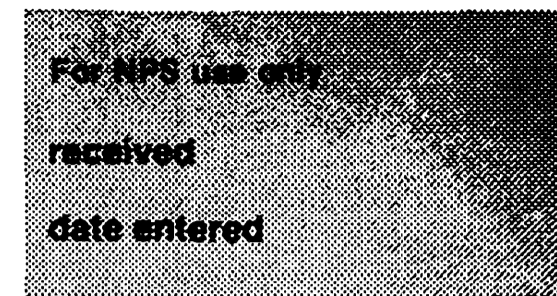
Verbal boundary justification

The boundary is drawn to include that acreage which survives from the original parcel upon which the Town Hall was built and is limited to include only those buildings eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. Using these criteria, the rear of the lot, separated by a stone wall and row of trees and containing tennis courts and the remains of the shed serving as the Town tramp house, also located on this tax map lot have been intentionally excluded.

NOTE: The boundaries of the nominated property have been highlighted in yellow on the attached sketch map.

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This certifies that the appearance has not changed since the photographs were taken.