

MAY 26 1987

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only

received JUL 28 1987
date entered AUG 27 1987

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

1. Name

historic Winchester Town Hall

and/or common Winchester Town Hall

2. Location

street & number Main Street N/A not for publication

city, town Winchester N/A vicinity of

state New Hampshire code 33 county Cheshire code 005

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Town of Winchester

street & number Winchester Town Hall, Main Street

city, town Winchester N/A vicinity of state New Hampshire 03470

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Cheshire County Registry of Deeds (Vol.292, Page 45)
Cheshire County Courthouse

street & number 12 Court Street

city, town Keene state New Hampshire 03431

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title none has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date federal state county local

depository for survey records

city, town state

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one	
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved	date N/A
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed			

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Winchester Town Hall is a brick Gothic Revival town hall that stands on its own lot on the southeast side of Main Street (Routes 10 and 119) in the village of Winchester. (As there are no other buildings on the property, this nomination contains only one contributing building.) The main block of the Town Hall is a tall, one and a half story structure, covered by a roof that is gabled at the northeast end, but hipped beneath a small gable at the southwest end. Attached to the main block are a four story octagonal tower at the north corner and a small, modern, one story basement vestibule on the rear (southeast) side.

The main block and the tower are both built of brick, trimmed with Indiana limestone. Both have high basements of brick laid in common bond, flemish variation, beneath stone watertables and flemish bond brick main walls. The basement is lit by wooden framed windows with concrete sills and stone lintels, typically double windows with two pane sash. The main block's slate roof is trimmed by copper ridge mouldings. On three sides, the roof is trimmed by a moulded wooden cornice with a pronounced cove. The northeast gable has a brick parapet simply trimmed by a stone coping with a small triangular apex stone and a gable springer at the east end. The east slope of the parapet is interrupted by a plain brick chimney, with a simple concrete cap, whose northeast surface was built flush and continuous with the gable end wall. Stone blocks mark the junctions of the chimney and the parapet coping. The small gable on the southwest hipped end of the roof is filled by a triangular louver with wide slats, and is trimmed by close verges. (The hipped section of the roof covers the stage area of the Town Hall.)

The northeast gable end, which faces Richmond Road (Route 119) across the adjoining Common, has three visible bays, the western end of the facade being covered by the octagonal tower. The basement is lit by three double windows of the usual design, all with four pane sash, save for the eastern window, which now has single pane sash. The gable end is dominated by a tall, wide central window, incorporating three levels of windows, four in each story. The windows have moulded stone frames. And all share an outer stone surround of the design found on the major windows of the building, with splayed sill, lintel, and jambs, and with the jambs built of stone blocks laid in in and out bond. The sill of the window frame sits on the watertable. The leaded glass windows have multiple panes and, save for the hinged sash that are sometimes incorporated into the otherwise fixed windows, borders of narrow strips of glass. The two inner windows of the lower level each have twenty-four fixed panes with the usual border, while the two outer windows each have sixteen fixed panes with the border, above eight pane hinged sash. The central level of windows is of the same design, save that the two outer windows have twenty pane upper sections and a single pane hinged sash replacing the lowest row of panes. The lower and central level of windows are separated by a row of four stone panels with moulded frames. The windows of the upper level, directly above the central level, each have sixteen fixed panes with the usual borders. (The

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service****National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**Section number 7 Page 2

Winchester Town Hall

two lower levels of windows are now covered by modern, metal framed storm windows.) To the east of the central window is a modern metal door with no outer trim, which is served by concrete steps with modern wrought metal rails. The door is lit by a simple light fixture, and is sheltered by a modern aluminum hood. Mounted next to the door is a bulletin board with double glass doors and a moulded metal frame topped by a small gable with a simple moulded cornice. The easternmost bay of the gable end is occupied by a double window of the usual design with moulded stone frames and an outer stone surround, like that of the central window, whose sill is again set on the watertable. Each leaded glass window has a lower eight pane hinged sash and a fixed upper section of sixteen panes surrounded by the usual border of narrow glass strips. (These windows are also covered by modern, metal framed storm windows.)

The main block's long northwest and southeast facades are similar in design. Both are seven bays wide, the bays being separated by six brick buttresses in the main level. The buttresses are quite shallow, being only one brick deep. They rise from stone blocks inserted into the watertable to just below the cornice, where they are crowned by sloped stone blocks ornamented by gablets with triangular panels. The fenestration is of the same design on both facades, although on the rear (southeast) facade, the pattern is interrupted by some added elements. The five central bays of the Main Street (northwest) facade each contain double basement windows, usually with two pane sash. Similar basement windows appear in the third and fourth bays from the north on the southeast facade. But, the fifth bay's basement window has been reduced to a single two pane window by the addition of the basement vestibule. And the sixth bay's basement window has been replaced by a screened furnace vent. In the main level of both facades, the northernmost bay is windowless, the northwest facade's bay being covered by the octagonal tower. The southernmost bay in both facades, corresponding to the stage area, contains a leaded glass window having twenty fixed panes with the usual border beneath a hinged, eight pane upper sash; stone sill and lintel; and modern metal framed storm window. (The sill is again set on the watertable.) The five central bays, which correspond to the main hall, are (with one exception) dominated by tall, large double windows. All of the double windows have the same leaded glass, moulded stone frames, metal framed storm windows, and typical outer frames with splayed stone sills, lintels, and jambs (the latter laid in in and out bond). The sills are again set on the watertable. The three southernmost double windows in both facades (in the fourth, fifth and sixth bays from the north) have double lower windows, each with thirty-two fixed panes and the usual border, and double upper windows, each with twelve fixed panes and the usual border above a hinged eight pane lower sash. The northern double windows (in the second and third bay of the northwest facade and the third bay of the southeast facade), although of the same size, have a

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number 7 Page 3

Winchester Town Hall

slightly different design. The double upper windows each have twelve fixed panes with the border, and hinged eight pane upper sash. But the lower windows each only have twenty-four fixed panes with the typical border. The extra space is taken up by two stone panels with moulded frames between the two levels of windows. The rear (southeast) facade does contain some additional features. The second bay from the north contains two entries, double doors to the main hall in the main level and a fire escape door from the balcony in the upper level. The main level doors are beaded board doors, with concrete sill and steps, and a wide gabled hood. The hood has two large brackets with curved braces, chamfered edges, and decoratively sawn ends; a beaded board ceiling with ceiling moulding; a pedimented box cornice with mouldings and narrow frieze; a beaded board gable; and an asphalt shingled gable roof. The metal fire escape door in the upper level opens onto a metal fire escape, supported by plain steel posts, with "grate" landings and steps, and a simple metal railing. From the landing at the door, the fire escape descends along the wall to the north, pauses at a landing, and then descends to the ground at the east corner of the building. In the fifth bay from the north is found the small modern basement vestibule, which has windowless concrete block side walls, a metal framed glass door beneath a plain transom panel in the southeast gable end, and a very low pitched gable roof, sheathed by asphalt roll paper and trimmed by a wide but plain wooden box cornice. The sixth bay from the north features two exterior brick chimneys. The older, now unused, chimney to the north of the window projects slightly from the wall above a broader base that is topped by a continuation of the watertable. The older chimney has been cut off at the eaves and capped by a small, simple wooden shed roof. Its function has been taken over by a tall, plain, square exterior chimney to the south of the window.

The southwest end of the main block has five basement windows with two pane sash, two double windows and three single windows. At the west corner is a basement door, now a modern metal door, with a simply moulded wooden frame and concrete sill, which opens into a shallow, dirt floored, concrete walled well, set one step below ground level. The basement door, topped by the stone watertable, is sheltered by a gabled hood, identical in design to the hood above the double doors in the southeast facade, differing only in its smaller size and metal sheathed roof. A larger hood of the same design shelters the tall, double beaded board doors in the center of the main level of the southwest facade. These doors, which have a stone lintel and use the watertable as their sill, served as loading doors for the stage, and have no steps.

Five of the corner tower's eight sides are fully exposed. The southeast, south, and southwest sides are almost entirely "embedded" in the main block, being fully visible only where the tower rises above the main block roof.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number 7 Page 4 Winchester Town Hall

Only foot wide wide strips of the southeast and southwest sides are fully exposed in all stories. As already noted, the tower has the same high basement of brick, laid in common bond, flemish variation and topped by a stone watertable, as the main block. The corners of the brick basement and of the flemish bond brick main walls have "staggered" junctions, as the rectangular bricks do not completely close the 135° angles. The basement has one four pane window, with the usual wooden frame, concrete sill, and stone lintel, in the northeast side. The building's main entry appears in the north wall, which faces the village's main street intersection. The entry is now a modern metal door with a small builtin window, flanked on the east by a tall, plain framed, single pane sidelight, and topped by a plain transom panel. The original stone frame still survives. The doorway is set in a moulded Tudor arch, which, in turn, is set in a deep moulded rectangular frame, with moulded triangular panels in the spandrels, splayed bases on the jambs (which are laid in the usual in and out bond), and a hoodmould with returns. The entry is served by wide concrete steps and landing, with a brick base and metal pipe railings. A long modern wheelchair ramp, with concrete floor, brick and concrete base, and metal pipe railings, descends from the landing to the east, then turns to the northeast for a short flat section, then turns again to the northwest and descends to the front walk. Directly above the entry and set on its hood-mould, is a triple leaded glass window, whose eight fixed pane sash have the usual borders, and which has the moulded stone frames, splayed stone sill, jambs, and lintel, and in and out bonded jambs, that are found on the other major windows. (Like the other tower windows, the triple window now has modern metal framed storm windows.) The window lights the upper part of the two story high entry-stair hall in the tower. The lower level of the stairhall is lit by two double windows, one in the east wall, one higher in the west wall. Both have leaded glass with the same stone frames and surrounds that distinguish the other major windows. The western window has fixed twenty-four pane sash with the usual borders. The eastern windows each have sixteen fixed panes with the typical border, beneath a hinged eight pane upper sash. Two double windows of the same design as the eastern window light the third story, one in the east wall above the first story window, one in the north wall above the entry. (A large modern electric light is now mounted between the second and third stories of the north wall.) Below the open fourth story, the brick walls are decorated by "panels" formed by header surrounding stretchers, one in each facade, as well as by courses of headers around the tower, one below the "panels" and another just below the sill of the fourth story openings. The stone fourth story has a pair of trefoil arched, screened openings in each facade. The moulded frames of the arches and the small triangular spandrel panels above the arches, are set in large rectangular frames, with splayed sills, jambs, and lintels. A moulded stone cornice tops the solid stone fourth story. The tower's low pitched, metal sheathed octagonal roof is

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service****National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**Section number 7 Page 5 Winchester Town Hall

hidden by a crenelated brick parapet wall. Laid in flemish bond, the parapet is topped by a moulded stone coping, which also trims the sides and bottom of the crenel found in the center of each side.

The main entry opens into the two story high entry-stair hall. While the upper level is octagonal in shape, like the tower, the lower level is seven-sided in shape, as it incorporates a rectangular section of the main block, giving it five outer tower walls (on the west, northwest, north, northeast and east) and two inner walls (southwest and southeast). The lower level and the upper level landing have hardwood floors. The plaster walls are trimmed by vertical beveled board wainscoating with moulded baseboards and rails. The ceilings, the underside of the upper level landing and the second story ceiling, are also plastered. The door frames, like the other original door frames in the building, have moulded side trim with lower cornerblocks and a moulded cornice. The leaded glass windows have same stone surrounds as seen on the outside, with moulded frames and splayed sill, lintel and jambs, the jambs again having their distinctive in and out bond. The lower level of the entry hall is entered by the modern metal outer door with single sidelight and the original interior frame in the north wall. A modern wooden door with builtin window and an original frame in the southeast wall serves the selectmen's office. The southwest inner wall contains a wide deep recess, whose plaster side walls have the same wainscoating as the entry hall, but whose rear wall is built of wide beveled boarding with a moulded baseboard. This rear wall contains the double five panel doors with the typical original frame, to the main hall in the main block. Descending along the northeast, east, and southeast walls are the stairs to the basement, which have board steps and risers, and hardwood floored landings. The stairs are protected by a low partition with beveled board sides and simple coping, and are flanked below the main floor level by outer painted brick and concrete walls and inner beveled board walls. The basement stairs are overlooked by a double window in the east wall with sixteen fixed pane lower sections and hinged eight pane upper sash. A similar double window with twenty-four pane sash in the west wall lights the stairs that rise along the west, northwest, and north walls, over the main entry, to the upper level landing. The wainscoating follows the stairs as they rise, as does the stairway's curving inner wall, which is plaster with the usual wainscoating on the hall side, beveled boarding on the stairs side, and is capped by a simple moulded coping. The board steps are interrupted by hardwood floored landings, beneath the western double window and the triple window with eight pane sash in the north wall. The upper level landing, which occupies the south-east half of the tower, is protected from the open hall below by a low beveled board partition with moulded coping, like the inner stair wall. A modern door with steel frame, set within a wider original wooden frame, in the south wall, leads to the main block balcony. A beaded board trapdoor, set in a ceiling well with beaded board sides and moulded frame, serves

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service****National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**Section number 7 Page 6

Winchester Town Hall

the third story of the tower. So does an enclosed stairway, which rises from the northwest side of the landing along the southwest, west, and northwest walls. The enclosed stairway is plastered on the outside to blend with the stairhall's walls and ceiling, and is entered by a five panel door with the usual frame.

The enclosed stairway has board steps and unfinished walls. The octagonal third story of the tower is also unfinished, with a plain board floor, exposed brick walls, and a high ceiling with exposed joists. It is lit by two double leaded glass windows with the typical stone surrounds, like those in the stairhall. A tall ladder serves a trapdoor in the ceiling, which opens into the open fourth story. The fourth story has a metal sheathed floor, an unfinished ceiling with exposed rafters and beams, and brick and stone walls, which are punctuated by sixteen trefoil arched screened openings, two in each of the eight sides.

The main level of the main block is divided into three distinct sections. The large, tall main hall itself occupies most of the building. To the southwest of the hall is the stage area, flanked on the southeast by two recently installed restrooms and on the northwest by the stairs to the stage and to a stairhall serving the southwestern outer door and the basement. To the northeast of the hall, the main block is divided into two levels by the former balcony, not counting the north corner, which was included in the entry-stair hall. The lower level houses two offices for the selectmen and the town clerk, while the upper balcony level has been enclosed to create another office and a meeting room.

The main hall, which occupies the five central bays of the main block, is a wide and tall space with a hardwood floor. Three walls, the southwest stage wall, and the northwest and southeast side walls, are plastered above vertical beveled board wainscoating with moulded baseboards and rails. (In the northern bay of the southeast wall, which contains the side entry, simply framed, double, two paneled doors, the wainscoating was replaced by a moulded baseboard.) The northwest and southeast side walls are each topped by an elaborate cornice, incorporating a pronounced cove. The hall is well lit by double windows in the five bays of the northwest (Main Street) wall, and in the four southern bays of the five bay southeast wall. The leaded glass windows have the same stone frames and surrounds already described for the entry-stair hall windows. The three southernmost windows in each side wall are tall windows with thirty-two fixed pane lower windows, and upper windows with twelve fixed panes above hinged eight pane lower sash. The northern windowed bays (two on the northwest and one on the southeast) have two tiers of separately framed double windows, lower windows with twenty-four fixed panes and upper windows with twelve fixed panes beneath hinged eight pane upper sash. The northeast end wall is divided into three distinct sections. The lower level is sheathed with

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service****National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**Section number 7 Page 7

Winchester Town Hall

wide beveled boarding, with a moulded baseboard and a simple top moulding. The lower level contains, to the west, the double five panel doors, to the entry-stair hall, with the typical frame of moulded side trim with lower cornerblocks and a moulded cornice, and, to the east, three plain framed double sliding windows to the selectmen's and town clerk's offices. Beneath each window is a simple shelf on plain brackets. Above the lower level is the board front of the balcony, which was also continued as a narrow walkway along the north bay of the southeast wall to reach the fire escape door. (The underside of the balcony extension is plastered.) The balcony front has a moulded rail, vertical beveled boarding on the main balcony, and vertical beaded boarding on the extension. The balcony and the extension have been enclosed by plasterboard walls above the railings. These new upper plaster walls are punctuated by one over one sash windows with simply moulded frames, three in the main balcony wall, one in the northwest side of the balcony extension. In the center of the southwest end of the hall is the tall, wide stage opening, which is raised three feet above the hall floor. The stage opening, closed by the usual curtains, has an elaborate frame, which might best be described as two heavily moulded frames, an outer frame and a recessed inner frame, connected by a very pronounced cove. To the west of the stage, a five panel door with the usual frame leads to the stairs to the stage and the rear door, while to the east of the stage, two plain modern wooden doors, with frames of the original design, serve the two new restrooms. Originally, the hall had a high, three pitched ceiling with a flat central section and pitched sections along the northeast and southwest sides. This original ceiling, with its beaded board sheathing, moulded rafters and purlins, and massive trusses, can still be seen in the attics above the main hall and the balcony. (The two attics, separated by a beaded board wall above the balcony front, still retain the plaster walls at the southwest end of the main hall attic and at the northeast end of the balcony attic, and the quadruple leaded glass window in the northeast wall that once helped to light the balcony.) But, a new flat beaded board ceiling with ceiling mouldings was subsequently installed at the tie beam level of the five trusses. The tiebeams, with their chamfered edges, are still visible, as are the large brackets which support each end of the tiebeams. The brackets, set on decorative stone corbels, have large curved braces with chamfered edges. Modern light fixtures and fans are now mounted on the ceiling.

The stage area occupies the entire southwest end of the main block. The south corner, once shared by the stage area and a stairhall, has now been converted to two restrooms. But the plaster walls and plywood ceiling of the restrooms rise only five feet above the stage's hardwood floor. The high space above the restrooms is still open to the two story high stage area. The stage area has plaster walls with moulded baseboards (and a chairrail on the northwest wall). The beaded board ceiling, as high as the main hall ceiling, is trimmed by ceiling mouldings and a frieze of

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number 7 Page 8

Winchester Town Hall

beaded boarding, and is divided by beams, diagonal beams in the south and west corners and four transverse (northeast to southwest) beams. (A plain framed, beaded board trapdoor in the ceiling serves the unused attic above the stage.) The typical frame, with moulded side trim, lower cornerblocks and cornice, graces the large double doors (four paneled on the inside) in the center of the rear (southwest) stage wall. Similar frames with moulded side trim and moulded cornices are found on the leaded glass windows, with twenty fixed panes and hinged, eight pane upper sash, found in each side (northwest and southeast) wall. (The southeast window is largely hidden by the new restrooms.) The northeast wall is dominated by the great projecting frame of the stage opening. At the west end of the northeast wall can be found the side door into the main hall, a five panel door with moulded side trim, lower cornerblocks, and a plain lintel. This side door opens onto a small landing at the floor level of the main hall. From this landing, a short flight of steps descends along the outer wall to the plain framed four panel door of the small rear hall underneath the stage, while another short flight of steps ascends (parallel to the descending stairs) to the stage area itself. The stage stairs are protected on the southeast (stage) side by a low partition of beveled boarding with moulded baseboard and coping. A balustrade, with turned balusters, moulded rail, and square newelposts with chamfered edges and crowning globes, separates the two stairs and protects the stairwell on the southwest. The same wainscoating that is found in the main hall appears on the walls of the landing and the descending stairs. (The rear entry hall has a hardwood floor, concrete and brick outer walls, beaded boarding and composition board on the inner walls, the plain framed southwestern rear entry door, and an unfinished ceiling with exposed joists.) The two new restrooms have tile floors, plaster walls with tile wainscoating, plain framed doors, plaster ceilings with modern light fixtures, the expected fixtures, and metal partitions. The western restroom is windowless, but the eastern restroom is lit by the leaded glass window that it now shares with the stage area.

The two offices for the selectmen and the town clerk under the balcony at the northeast end of the main block share such basic features as linoleum tile floors, modern tile ceilings with builtin light fixtures, southwestern walls of modern grooved wooden "paneling", and other walls of plaster with moulded baseboards. The typical frames with moulded side trim, lower cornerblocks, and cornices surround the three doorways, the door from the west office to the entry-stair hall, the now doorless opening between the two offices, and the modern outer door in the northeast wall of the east office. Plain frames surround the double sliding windows into the main hall, two in the eastern office, one in the western office. However, the leaded glass windows in the northeast walls, the quadruple window in the west office and the double window in the east office, have the usual moulded stone frames, and splayed stone sills and jambs (the latter with in and out bonded blocks).

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service****National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**Section number 7 Page 9

Winchester Town Hall

In shape, the balcony area was a rectangle modified by a narrow extension along the southeast wall of the main hall to reach the fire escape door and by the "removal" of the north corner, where the octagonal tower's second story left a narrow space at the northwest end of the balcony. When the balcony was enclosed, this narrow northwestern space was partitioned off as a closet. And a new office was partitioned off above the lower western office. The remaining space includes a corridor from the stairhall along the southwest front of the balcony, which opens directly into a meeting room in the east corner of the main block, which in turn opens directly into the corridor to the fire escape door. The balcony spaces retain their outer plaster walls, still decorated on the northwest and southeast by the elaborate cornices continued from the main hall's side walls. But, these walls now have simple baseboards and, in the office and meeting room, chairrails. The inner balcony walls still have their beveled board base with simple baseboard and moulded rail, although they are now plastered with a simple ceiling moulding above that old balcony front. The new walls are of plasterboard with plain baseboards. And the floors are now all carpeted. The tiebeam of a roof truss (like those in the main hall) still appears in the ceiling above the corridor and meeting room. One large bracket on a stone corbel is still visible in the meeting room, but the tiebeam's other bracket is now hidden in the small western closet. To the southwest of the tiebeam, the ceiling retains its beaded boarding. But to its northeast, the spaces are covered by modern tile ceilings with builtin light fixtures. Plain frames surround the doorway to the stair hall, the double hinged, louvred door on the closet, the plain modern door to the closet, and the metal fire escape door. Plain frames also surround the one over one sash windows overlooking the main hall, two in the corridor, one in the meeting room, and one in the fire escape corridor. The quadruple leaded glass window in the office does retain its moulded stone surround with its typical ornate design.

The full basement is divided by three transverse (northwest to southeast) brick walls, creating two narrow sections at the southwest end of the basement, a large central section, and a narrow section at the northeast end which was further divided by two brick walls into three spaces. Wooden and concrete block partitions have further subdivided these basement spaces. The original spaces had concrete floors, outer brick and concrete walls, and unfinished ceilings with exposed joists. Segmental arched doorways punctuate the interior brick walls. The remodeling of parts of the basement for offices has included the installation of plastered and "paneled" walls, plaster and composition board ceilings, and simply framed modern doors. The basement is lit by high, simply framed basement windows.

The stairs from the entry-stairhall in the tower lead down to a corridor in the westernmost of the three spaces at the northeast end of the basement. A door in the beveled board wall on the northwest side of the corridor

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service****National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**Section number 7 Page 10

Winchester Town Hall

serves the records room that occupies most of this western space in the north corner of the building. Another door in the brick southeast wall leads into the north furnace room which occupies the central northeastern space. (The eastern space has been converted into part of the Community Development Office.) Doorways in the southwest brick wall of the furnace room lead into an office on the west and a small hall, both in the large central space. This central space has been partially subdivided by concrete block and plasterboard walls. Along the southeast wall are now found four offices, one each for the Tax Collector and the Water Department, two for the Community Development Office. Two more offices (now unused) were built along the northwest wall, at its north end. Part of the north end of the space left between the two rows of offices has been partitioned off to create the already mentioned small hall. The rest of the central area is still one large open space, now somewhat irregularly shaped, with a wide "corridor" between the two rows of offices. and another corridor at the southwest end of the easterly row of offices to the basement vestibule. (The vestibule is a simple space with carpeted steps, concrete block walls, and a plaster ceiling.) In the southwest brick wall of the remaining central space, a door beneath a brick arch leads into the first of the two southwestern spaces, part of which has been partitioned off by a plasterboard wall to serve as another furnace room. Another door in an arched opening leads into the southerly of the two southwestern spaces, which is also served by stairs up to the southwest rear entry hall, under the stage. This last basement space was partitioned by walls of plaster and composition board, sometimes ornamented by beveled board wainscoting. A long corridor along the inner transverse brick wall runs from the stairs at the west end to a small storage room (formerly a stairhall) at the east end, passing the doors to a small workroom and the two original restrooms. Each restroom actually consists of an anteroom and an inner toilet room, the latter with a raised wooden floor.

Grassed lawns are found on the northeast, northwest and southwest sides of the Town Hall. The northeast end of the lot is marked by a concrete sidewalk, which formerly served a short street, that, in 1984, was grassed over and included in the adjoining Town Common. A concrete sidewalk also marks the Main Street (northwest) frontage. From the former street corner at the north corner of the lot, a concrete walk leads, past the wheelchair ramp, to the main entry steps. Another concrete walk leads from the northeast sidewalk to the side door in the northeast end of the main block. The Main Street lawn now features a tall metal flagpole and two war memorials. The northerly World War I monument, erected in 1926, is a bronze plaque mounted on a rough granite boulder. The plaque, which includes a list of the town's soldiers and sailors, is ornamented by small bas-reliefs of World War I artillerymen and infantry in action, the Town Seal, and an ornate frame topped by a carved eagle. The southerly monument was dedicated in 1984 to the veterans and war dead of World War II, the Korean and Vietnam

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

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 11 Winchester Town Hall

Wars, and other "Special Conflicts", whose names are inscribed in long lists on the monument. The large monument, erected by the Keene Monument Co., consists of three large granite slabs, set on a granite base and a concrete foundation. The central slab is taller and deeper than the flanking slabs, and is decorated by a shaped top with an incised and carved eagle. Shrubs flanking this southerly monument and a tree near the main entry walk are the only foliage on the lot. Along the rear (southeast) side of the building is a partially paved driveway from the street (still paved to the east of the Town Hall) to a municipal parking lot behind the adjoining Conant Public Library.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
___ prehistoric	___ archeology-prehistoric	___ community planning	___ landscape architecture	___ religion
___ 1400-1499	___ archeology-historic	___ conservation	___ law	___ science
___ 1500-1599	___ agriculture	___ economics	___ literature	___ sculpture
___ 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	___ education	___ military	___ social/
___ 1700-1799	___ art	___ engineering	___ music	___ humanitarian
___ 1800-1899	___ commerce	___ exploration/settlement	___ philosophy	___ theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	___ communications	___ industry	___ politics:government	___ transportation
		___ invention		___ other (specify)

Specific dates 1911-1912 **Builder/Architect** S. Winthrop St. Clair, architect

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Winchester Town Hall is significant architecturally (and is eligible under Criterion C) as a fine Gothic Revival town hall, indeed the only medieval style town hall in Cheshire County, and one of the county's best town halls.

Winchester was forced to build a new town hall, when the old wooden meetinghouse, which the Town shared with the Universalist Church, burned in the early morning hours of Sunday, September 12, 1909. The fire was not discovered until it was well underway; and the historic building, built in 1795 to 1800, was a total loss. The meetinghouse site, on the easterly side of the small common at the main intersection in the village, was subsequently deeded by the Town to the Universalists, who erected their new church there. The Town already had a suitable site for its new town hall. In the 1880's, the Town had considered the construction of a new town hall, even going so far as to commission plans for such a building. A Main Street lot on the southerly side of the Common was purchased in 1889 to serve as the site for a town hall and the town library. The Conant Public Library was, in fact, built on the southern part of the lot in 1890-91. But, the northern portion of the lot, the proposed town hall site, remained vacant for the next two decades.

At the annual town meeting in March 1910 (held at the Grange Hall), the voters instructed the selectmen to appoint a three man committee to report at the next annual meeting on building a new town hall. At that March 1911 meeting, the committee reported, presenting two plans, one designed by architect S. Winthrop St. Clair of Boston, the other by architect L.G.H. Kinsman of Springfield, Mass., "both formerly of Winchester".¹ Following "a stirring plea"² by a committee member, the voters appropriated \$20,000 for a town hall, the money to be raised by the sale of town notes. The Main Street site north of the library was formally designated as the site of the new building. The voters then decided to consider the question of the Town Hall further at an adjourned meeting two months later. At the adjourned meeting on May 6, the committee reported that it had obtained plans and specifications from four architects, the two former residents of Winchester whose designs had been presented earlier, as well as architects P.J. Varney of Lynn, Mass. and W.P. Crabtree of New Britain Conn. The architects or their representatives all explained their plans to the meeting. The committee then asked for a ballot vote on the plans, as a non-binding expression of opinion by the voters. Only fifty-four ballots were cast.

1. The Winchester Star (Winchester, N.H.) March 14, 1911

2. Ibid.

9. Major Bibliographical References

(see Continuation Sheet)

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property .44 acre

Quadrangle name Keene, N.H.-Vt.

Quadrangle scale 1:62500

UTM References

A

1	8	7	1	4	0	4	0	4	7	3	8	6	8	0
Zone		Easting				Northing								

B

Zone		Easting				Northing								

C

Zone		Easting				Northing								

D

Zone		Easting				Northing								

E

Zone		Easting				Northing								

F

Zone		Easting				Northing								

G

Zone		Easting				Northing								

H

Zone		Easting				Northing								

Verbal boundary description and justification

(see Continuation Sheet)

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

state N/A code county code

state N/A code county code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title David L. Ruell

organization

date April 14, 1987

street & number 16 Hill Street

telephone 968-7716

city or town Ashland

state New Hampshire

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

title New Hampshire State Historic Preservation Officer

date July 23, 1987

For NPS use only

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

Keeper of the National Register

date 8/27/87

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number 8 Page 2 Winchester Town Hall

St. Clair's design won easily with 30 votes, followed by Crabtree's with 19 votes. Kinsman's plans received just four votes and Varney's only one vote. The building committee did, in fact, choose St. Clair's plans for the Town Hall.³ As we know nothing of the other plans presented, it is now difficult to say why St. Clair's plans won the ballot vote and the committee's approval. But, the quality of the building suggests that St. Clair's victory was not due entirely to sentiment for the native son. After blessing St. Clair's design, the voters decided to proceed with the construction of the building in the same year, to add two members to the study committee and to continue it as the building committee, and, finally, to instruct the committee to advertise for bids from contractors for the building. The building committee did advertise for bids, but found that they all exceeded the appropriation. So, on August 7, a special town meeting was held at which the committee explained its dilemma. On a 33 to 1 vote, the meeting appropriated an additional \$5000 for the town hall. (The additional appropriation was subsequently reaffirmed at the annual March 1912 meeting.)

With sufficient funds available, the construction of the Town Hall began almost immediately. The contract was awarded to builder Charles J. Poingdester of Belmont, Mass. On August 17, workmen began excavating the basement. At that time, Poingdester informed the local newspaper that he hoped to finish the building by February 1, 1912. The progress (and, sometimes, lack of progress) of the work can be followed in the Winchester newspaper. Mid-September saw the pouring of the concrete foundation. And, in late September, the masons began laying bricks. The masonry was slowed by the difficulty of placing the stone trim, and by delays in the arrival of materials. The roof timbers were erected in January; and the roof boarded in by early February. On February 6, the newspaper suggested that the building would be ready "for a 4th of July dance".⁴ March saw the slaters at work; and April saw the plasterers beginning their labors on the interiors. In May, the plastering was delayed by a hod carriers' strike; and the newspaper noted complaints about the slowness of the construction. In July, the floors and interior trim were being installed; and the paper reported that the building might be completed "in a few weeks"⁵. It was not, however, until early October that the newspaper announced that, "At last, the town hall is completed."⁶ In the evening of October 9, "A meeting of the Town Hall building committee, contractor, and architect was held...

3. Architect St. Clair also designed the new Colonial Revival Universalist Church erected on the site of the old meetinghouse.

4. The Winchester Star February 6, 1912

5. The Winchester Star July 16, 1912

6. The Winchester Star October 8, 1912

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 3 Winchester Town Hall

and the hall was accepted by the committee".⁷ The new building was opened for public inspection on October 23 and 24. At the formal dedication exercises in the evening of October 24, the chairman of the building committee was somewhat apologetic about the slowness of the construction, explaining that a building contract with a specified date of completion would have been more expensive for the Town. (As it was, the next town report noted that all but \$22.33 of the \$25,000 appropriation had been spent.) But, the local newspaper reported that "The prevailing opinion among the townspeople... is that the hall is a winner- something of which we can well feel proud".⁸ The selectmen were also pleased with the building, stating in their 1913 annual report, that the Town Hall "stands as a monument declaring to all corners 'our belief in ourselves' and of our civic pride in Winchester."⁹

Over the years, the Town Hall has been altered to accomodate changing uses and to meet new concerns about fire safety and access for the handicapped. The exterior has seen a few significant changes. A fire escape from the balcony was insatlled in 1946. A new side door was added to the northeast gable end as part of the 1956 interior renovations. The basement vestibule and the new exterior chimney were apparently built in the 1960's. Storm windows were installed in 1983. In 1986, new fireproof metal doors replaced the original main entry doors and the southwestern basement door, and the main entry steps were rebuilt and provided with a wheelchair ramp. A large electric light has been installed above the main entry. And, of course, necessary maintenance, such as the recent reslating of the roof, has been done. But, most of the exterior remains unchanged. The interior, as is often the case, has seen more alterations. In the 1930's, the new lowered ceiling was installed over the main hall. The most significant interior change was the enlargement of the main hall in 1956. Originally, a hallway seperated the entry-stairhall and the two offices under the balcony from the main hall; and the balcony extended over the hallway and into the main hall. In order to make the main hall large enough for basketball games, the hallway was incorporated into the main hall and the balcony was cut back to its present position. (This renovation apparently included the remodeling of the wall between the now enlarged main hall and the offices and entry hall.) In 1983, the balcony was enclosed and partitioned off to create a new office and a meeting room. The original first story offices have also seen some remodeling, as is apparent in their modern floors, doors, ceilings, and, most recently (in 1983) the sliding windows into the main hall. Changes in 1987 have included the installation of two restrooms, accessible to the handicapped, in place of the former stairhall in the south corner

7. The Winchester Star October 15, 1912

8. The Winchester Star October 22, 1912

9. ANNUAL REPORTS OF THE TOWN OFFICERS OF WINCHESTER, N.H. FOR THE YEAR ENDING FEBRUARY 15, 1913 (Winchester, N.H.: 1913) p.25

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number 8 Page 4

Winchester Town Hall

of the main block, and the replacement of some doors in the basement and in the balcony area. The history of the basement is more obscure. But, it is apparent that, over the years, the basement has been remodeled and partitioned off to create new rooms, usually for town offices. Despite this list of alterations, the interiors still retain most of their original architectural features. And many of the renovations were sympathetic, employing the original style door frames and the beveled boarding of the original design. Today, the exterior appears much as it did in 1912 and the interiors still retain their basic original architectural character.

The Winchester Town Hall is a fine example of early twentieth century Gothic Revival architecture. (The medieval style may have been chosen for its compatibility with the neighboring Romanesque Revival Conant Public Library, as the Winchester newspaper did note, in an early description, that the Town Hall was "of a style of architecture harmonizing well with the present library"¹⁰.) The elements of the Town Hall are most suggestive of the late Gothic style of Tudor England, an influence particularly noticeable in the Tudor arch of the main entry and in the large leaded glass windows with their stone surrounds enriched by in and out bonded jambs. This English Tudor style of Gothic was popular in the early twentieth century. And the architect seems to have been quite comfortable working with the style, as St. Clair certainly did produce a fine building. The form is dignified but pleasingly asymmetrical, with the large rectangular main block covered by a grand slate roof, that is gabled at one end and hipped at the other; and the tall octagonal corner tower, facing the village's main intersection and giving the building's two most public facades the emphasis that they need. The Gothic details, the fine main entry and the impressive windows, the buttressed sides of the main block, the trefoil arched fourth story and the crenelated parapet of the tower, enliven the exteriors. The main interior space, the hall itself, has been altered by a lowered ceiling and a rebuilt northeast end, but it remains an impressive space, with many fine elements, the hardwood floor, the high plaster walls with their wainscoating, the great windows, the excellent frame surrounding the wide stage opening, and even, the altered ceiling, with its beaded boarding and beams supported by large brackets. The subsidiary spaces, the entry-stair hall, the offices, and the stage area, are all pleasing rooms, with fine trim around the doors and windows, and the wainscoating and curving stairway of the entry-stair hall. The Winchester Town Hall is indeed a monument, to the skill of its architect, as well as to the civic pride and good taste of the citizens of Winchester.

Among the town halls of Cheshire County, the Winchester building is unique as the only Medieval style town hall. It is also one of three masonry

10. The Winchester Star May 16, 1911

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8 Page 5

Winchester Town Hall

town halls in the county (with the stone Chesterfield Town Hall and the brick Hinsdale Town Hall). The majority of the town halls in Cheshire County are wooden nineteenth century buildings, usually in the Federal, Greek Revival, or vernacular styles. Many are relatively plain buildings. But, the county can boast of a number of architecturally significant town halls- the Federal style meetinghouses of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries in Jaffrey, Rindge, Fitzwilliam, and Troy; the unusual stone mid nineteenth century vernacular town hall in Chesterfield; the large Classical Revival Hinsdale Town Hall of 1900-1901; the twentieth century Colonial Revival town halls in Westmoreland and Walpole; and, of course, the Winchester Town Hall. These nine buildings represent the best of Cheshire County's town halls. The Winchester Town Hall is not as well known as some of its companions on this list, but it certainly deserves to be. Of the twentieth century town halls, only the Hinsdale Town Hall could be considered its equal. And, when compared to all of the other town halls in the county, the Winchester Town Hall would still be given a high place among the buildings.

In summary, the Winchester Town Hall is an excellent example of the Gothic Revival style of the early twentieth century, and one of the most architecturally important town halls in Cheshire County.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 9 Page 2

Winchester Town Hall

ANNUAL REPORTS OF THE TOWN OFFICERS OF WINCHESTER, N.H. FOR THE YEAR
ENDING FEBRUARY 15,1912 (Winchester, N.H.: 1912)

ANNUAL REPORTS OF THE TOWN OFFICERS OF WINCHESTER, N.H. FOR THE YEAR
ENDING FEBRUARY 15,1913 (Winchester, N.H.: 1913)

Keene Evening Sentinel (Keene,N.H.) September 13,1909; May 9,1911

The Winchester Star (Winchester,N.H.) March 8,1910; March 14,May 9 & 16,
July 11 & 25, August 8,15,22 & 29, September 5,12 & 26, October 3,
November 14,21 & 28, December 5 & 26, 1911; January 2, 23 & 30,
February 6 & 27, March 12, April 2,9,16 & 23, May 7,14 & 21, June 4 & 25
July 2 & 16, August 13, October 8,15, 22 & 29, 1912

interviews, Rob Nichols, March 20, April 8,9 & 14, 1987

interviews, Edith Atkins, March 30, April 8, 1987 (March 30 interview
conducted by Rob Nichols)

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 10 Page 2

Winchester Town Hall

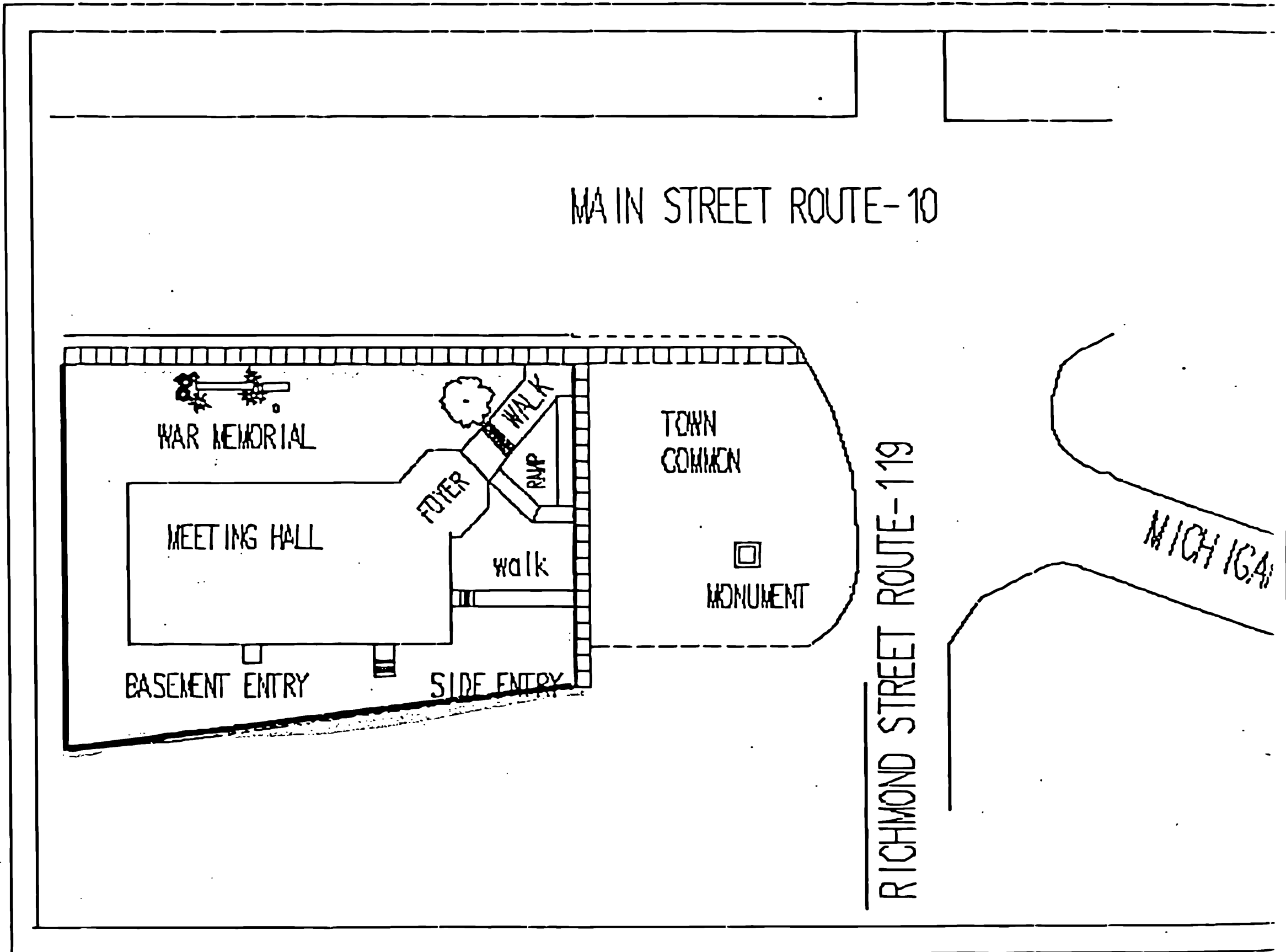
The boundary of the nominated property is shown as a line on the accompanying map entitled "Winchester Town Hall, Winchester, N.H.". The property is bounded on the northwest by Main Street; on the northeast by the sidewalk of the now closed street that formerly bordered the Common and the Town Hall lot; on the southeast by the historic property boundary of the original town owned lot; and on the southwest by an arbitrary line that parallels the southwest wall of the Town Hall at a distance of twenty-one feet, and which represents the approximate boundary between the grounds of the Town Hall and the grounds of the Conant Public Library. The nominated property includes the Winchester Town Hall and its historic grounds, being that portion of the original town owned lot that was occupied by the Town Hall. Adjoining land later acquired by the Town of Winchester has not been included in the nominated property. (Winchester Tax Map 26, Lot 55)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Winchester Town Hall

Section number 10 Page 3



WINCHESTER TOWN HALL
WINCHESTER NH

