

**United States Department of the Interior  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

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

For HCRS use only

received NOV 15 1979

date entered 11 9 79

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*

Type all entries—complete applicable sections

## 1. Name

historic RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS MEETINGHOUSE

and/or common RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS MEETINGHOUSE

## 2. Location

street &amp; number 141 Central Avenue \_\_\_\_\_ not for publication

city, town Dover \_\_\_\_\_ vicinity of \_\_\_\_\_ congressional district First

state New Hampshire code 33 county Strafford code 017

## 3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" 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	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<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:

## 4. Owner of Property

name Religious Society of Friends

street &amp; number 141 Central Avenue

city, town Dover \_\_\_\_\_ vicinity of \_\_\_\_\_ state New Hampshire 03820

## 5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Strafford County Registry of Deeds  
Strafford County Courthouse

street &amp; number County Farm Road

city, town Dover \_\_\_\_\_ state New Hampshire 03820

## 6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title NH Historic Preservation Plan has this property been determined eligible?  yes  nodate 1970 \_\_\_\_\_ federal  state \_\_\_\_\_ county \_\_\_\_\_ local

depository for survey records Dept. of Resources &amp; Economic Development

city, town Concord \_\_\_\_\_ state New Hampshire 03301

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## 7. Description

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

new chimney - Litchfield 2/22/80

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

The Friends Meetinghouse in Dover, New Hampshire, is a 2-story, 5-bay, gable-roofed, clapboarded building of post and beam construction. Built in 1768, it is typical of the oblong, almost barnlike meetinghouse with main entrance on the long side that began to appear in New England in the early eighteenth century. It also displays important features that were found only in Friends meetinghouses of the time.

The heavily massed, rectangular main block of the building is 50' long and 37' wide. A molded cornice under the lateral eaves is continued across both gable ends. The windows, with 12/12 and 12/8 sash, feature three-part caps of cyma recta and cavetto molding and sills supported by miniature brackets. A small chimney, not original to the structure, rests on the center of the ridge line.

A 1-story vestibule on the main (south) facade, probably added in the first part of the nineteenth century, features a flush-boarded gable and three simple pilasters rising to a broad triangular pediment. The front (south) elevation of the vestibule contains the separate entrances for men and women common to Friends meetinghouses, in this case two six-panelled doors with simple surrounds. The east and west elevations of the vestibule each contain a narrow window with 6/1 sash and molded window caps and bracketed sills identical to those of the main block. A cement step unit, installed in 1951, leads up to the main entry.

Two six-panelled doors inside the vestibule lead to the meetinghouse interior, which is basically intact in spite of the partitions added to provide kitchen and nursery space in the west half of the building. (Weekly meetings are now held only in the east half of the building.) A floor-to-ceiling wall, commonly found in Friends meetinghouses through the late nineteenth century, divides the interior in half. The wall is composed of four raised panel sections approximately 8' x 10' that are operated by pulleys.

Running the entire length of the north side of the interior is a raised platform designed to accommodate the "facing bench" traditionally reserved for the Society's elders. Stairways at the southeast and southwest corners lead to a three-sided gallery that overlooks the first floor. The gallery has a slanted floor and is framed by raised panelling topped with crown molding. The gallery at the east end has been closed off to increase heating efficiency.

Partitions added to the interior of the building are not of a permanent nature and could be removed in the event of future restoration. The exterior has remained unchanged since the addition of the vestibule in the early nineteenth century.

The meetinghouse is set among ancient trees and is surrounded on the south and east by the city-owned Pine Hill Cemetery, on the north by a Federal style private residence and on the west by Central Avenue. Its nearest neighbor on the south is the Gothic Revival Ricker Memorial Chapel.

There are no auxiliary structures on the nominated property.

## 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 checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> social/
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	humanitarian
<input 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

**Specific dates** 1768 **Builder/Architect** Unknown

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Architecturally, the Society of Friends Meetinghouse in Dover is significant as the last surviving example of eighteenth century Quaker meetinghouse design in the State of New Hampshire. Historically, its significance lies in its role as the Central Meeting of Friends Societies in New Hampshire and Maine, and as a center of social and political activity in Dover since the time of its construction.

Built in 1768, the nominated building exemplifies the oblong, almost barnlike type of meetinghouse with entry on the long side that emerged in New England at the beginning of the eighteenth century. At the same time, it incorporates important features that were exclusively characteristic of Quaker meetinghouses of the period (see below).

At a time when the religious architecture of the major denominations in New England continued to reflect the influence of James Gibbs, English architect and student of Christopher Wren, with the addition of ornate towers, steeples and spires and increasingly elaborate pulpits and interior detail, the Friends clung to the more primitive tradition of the seventeenth century meetinghouse. Almost devoid of ornamentation in keeping with the Quakers' concern for simplicity in every aspect of their lives, their meetinghouses remained domestic in character rather than ecclesiastical.

Features peculiar to the eighteenth century Quaker meetinghouse, all surviving in the nominated building, are the separate entrances for men and women on the long side, the separator wall designed to divide the interior in two, and the raised platform along the length of the interior to accommodate the "facing bench" traditionally reserved for the Society's elders. The absence of a pulpit, reflecting the egalitarian spirit that informed the Friends' approach to religious worship, also distinguished the Quaker meetinghouse from its contemporaries in other denominations.

The arrival in 1662 of three Englishwomen missionaries marked the beginning of the Quaker movement in the Dover area. The Quaker doctrine was considered dangerously individualist by the Puritans and the women were "whipped out of town" on the order of the local magistrate. However, the women returned the following year and, in spite of brutal persecution, they and their followers continued to spread the ideas of the Friends.

By 1680, the Dover Monthly Meeting had been established and the first Quaker meetinghouse had been built at Dover Neck, a few miles south of present-day Dover. As the population shifted to the north, a second meetinghouse was built in 1712, and by the time the existing structure was built in 1768 it was estimated that a third of the population of the town had become Quakers. They were an influential minority and their meetinghouse became a center not only for religious worship but also for social and political activities such as the anti-slavery movement and resistance to British authority.

(See Continuation Sheet #1)

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

(See Continuation Sheet #2)

# 10. Geographical Data

ITEM NOT VERIFIED

Acreeage of nominated property Less than One

Quadrangle name Dover East

Quadrangle scale 7.5

UMT References

A 

1	9	3	4	7	7	4	0	4	7	8	3	0	2	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

Tax Map Reference Number: Map #19, Plot #51; An irregularly shaped lot, dimensions approximately 145.6' x 190.7' x 99.6' x 191', bounded on the west by Central Avenue, on the south & east by the city-owned Pine Hill Cemetery, north by the Corneiller property.

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

state	code	county	code

state	code	county	code

# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Bernard Hiatt, Preservation Adviser

organization Strafford-Rockingham Regional Council date August 1, 1979

street & number One Water Street telephone (603) 778-0885

city or town Exeter state New Hampshire 03833

# 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 Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature Theodore Tuttle, Acting

Commissioner, NH Dept. Resources & Economic Development

title NH State Historic Preservation Officer date October 9, 1979

For HCRS use only

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

for Sally G. Oldham date 2/29/80

Keeper of the National Register

Attest: Bill Wovrich date February 22, 1980

Chief of Registration

FHR-8-300A  
(11/78)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

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

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RECEIVED	NOV 15 1978
DATE ENTERED	9

RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS MEETINGHOUSE

CONTINUATION SHEET 1

ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 2

### SIGNIFICANCE (Continued)

Local anti-slavery activities began as early as 1730 and continued through 1784, by which time the freeing of slaves owned by Quakers throughout the colonies was complete. The importance of the Dover meetinghouse as a secular meeting place in the pre-Revolutionary period is indicated by the fact that at least one large public meeting, on January 10, 1774, was held there for the purpose of protesting British policies and upholding the principle of representative government.

As towns developed in the interior of the state, meetings emanating from the Dover Monthly Meeting were established and meetinghouses were built in about a dozen New Hampshire towns. With the dismantling of the Weare, New Hampshire, meetinghouse (c. 1795) about fifteen years ago, the nominated building became the only surviving eighteenth century Quaker meetinghouse in the state.

Worship services and secular activities continued to take place in the building through 1912, by which time membership had dwindled to the point where weekly meetings were discontinued. The building was maintained and meetings were held on an irregular basis until 1955, when the house was re-opened for weekly worship.

A continuing historical association between the nominated building and poet John Greenleaf Whittier derives from the fact that both his maternal grandparents and his parents were married in the meetinghouse. The poet himself, although a member of the Amesbury Meeting in Massachusetts, frequently attended meetings in Dover.

The meetinghouse is situated in one of the few remaining areas of Dover whose historic identities have not been sacrificed to twentieth century development. It conveys a sense of simple dignity and makes a strong historical statement about Dover's past on one of the major approaches to the city's downtown district.

FHR-8-300A  
(11/78)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

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

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RECEIVED NOV 15 1979

DATE ENTERED

9

RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS MEETINGHOUSE

CONTINUATION SHEET 2 ITEM NUMBER 9 PAGE 2

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BIBLIOGRAPHY

Pinkham, Annie E., "A Brief History of Dover Friends Meeting." Unpublished Manuscript, Society of Friends Meetinghouse, Dover, New Hampshire, date unknown.

Place, Rev. Charles A., "From Meetinghouse to Church in New England." "Old Time New England," Vol. XIII, No. 2, October 1922. Boston: Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities, 1922.

Sinnott, Edmund W., Meetinghouse and Church in Early New England. New York: Bonanza Books, 1963.

Speare, Eva A., Colonial Meetinghouses of New Hampshire. Littleton, New Hampshire: Courier Printing Company, 1938.