

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

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

received **MAY 7 1985**  
date entered **JUN 6 1985**

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

**1. Name**

historic Brookfield Town Hall

and/or common BROOKFIELD TOWN HALL

**2. Location**

street & number Route 109 (1/4 mile from the intersection of Robinson Road & Rte. 109) n/a not for publication

city, town Brookfield \_\_\_\_\_ vicinity of \_\_\_\_\_

state New Hampshire code 33 county Carroll code 003

**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 checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> other:

**4. Owner of Property**

name Town of Brookfield

street & number RFD #1

city, town Brookfield N/A vicinity of \_\_\_\_\_ state New Hampshire 03872

**5. Location of Legal Description**

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

street & number County Farm Road

city, town Dover, state New Hampshire 03820

**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 state \_\_\_\_\_

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## 7. Description

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**Condition** excellent good fair deteriorated ruins unexposed**Check one** unaltered altered**Check one** original site moveddate N/A

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

The Brookfield Town Hall is a wooden frame town hall, which stands on its lot on the southwest side of Route 109 in the small village of Brookfield. The tall, one story, gable-roofed main block, set with its northeast gable end facing the road, has a three story tower in the center of its road facade, and a lower, one story, gable roofed rear wing (the former Churchill schoolhouse) attached to its rear facade (the southwest gable end).

The main block is set on a cut granite block foundation, which is broken only by a board door serving the unfinished crawlspace. The box cornice with mouldings and frieze is pedimented on the main (northeast) gable, although the pediment's cornices, including the horizontal cornice which continues around the tower, are of slightly different design than the lateral cornices. (The rear gable, by contrast, has only close verges with simple returns.) The main block is clapboarded (with cornerboards), save for the pedimented main gable, which, like the second story of the tower, is sheathed with cut wooden shingles, including courses of hexagonally cut shingles. The shingles of both the gable and the tower are flared out over the horizontal cornice, with the lowest course being a sawtooth course. The main block's asphalt shingled gable roof is interrupted by a tall brick chimney with corbeled cap on the southeast slope and by a small modern metal vent hood on the northwest slope.

The centerpiece of the three bay wide main (northeast) facade is the three-story tower. Half of the square tower projects forward from the gable end of the main block. Set on a concrete foundation, the first story of the tower is clapboarded with simple corner pilasters, and is topped by the continuation of the pediment's horizontal cornice around the tower. In the front facade is the main entry, a seven panel door with chamfered frame. The door is reached by four granite steps with wrought metal hand rails. To each side of the door is a wooden framed, glass fronted bulletin board. A painted wooden sign with the words "TOWN HALL" appears on the lintel. Above the door is a large decorative pediment, marked out by boards. The rake boards, ornamented by an upper moulding, extend out beyond the sides of the tower and are distinguished by decoratively sawn ends. The apex of the gable is marked by a short vertical board with knobbed top and semicircular lower end. Suspended from the lower corners of the pediment are similar boards with semicircular lower ends, applied over the corner pilasters. The pediment is divided into four triangles by three boards with moulded edges. Each triangle is filled with beaded boarding. An electric light is now found at the apex of the pediment. Each side facade of the first story has a seventeen over seventeen sash window with moulded trim. (The large clear central pane of each sash is bordered by small colored panes.) The tower's second story, like the corresponding gable of the main block, is sheathed with decoratively cut wooden shingles, which flare out over the horizontal box cornice that marks the top of the first story. In the front facade of the second story is a pair of semicircular arched windows, which share the same plain frame and have arched four pane upper sash, and single pane lower sash. The second story, which projects above the main block roof, is topped by a shallow moulded cornice, which also serves as the apron for the openings of the third story, an open belfry. The belfry story is clapboarded with corner pilasters and a wide box cornice with mouldings and deep frieze. Save for the rear (southwest) side, which is completely clapboarded, each facade has a pair of openings, whose segmental arched heads project into the frieze of the cornice. The

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service****National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet 1

Item number 7

Page 2

arched openings are framed by pilasters of the same design as the corner pilasters, and whose capitals serve as impostes for the segmental arches. Through the arched openings can be seen the large bell and the belfry's board ceiling and inner walls. The tower's asphalt shingled pyramidal roof has flared eaves and is crowned by a knob and an elaborate metal weathervane (with the letter "B" cut into the vane.)

Returning to the main block, we find a twelve over twelve sash window with moulded trim in each side bay of the main facade. (The north window was blocked off, when the kitchen was renovated, but the exterior appearance of the building was retained by placing a painted plasterboard wall behind the otherwise undisturbed window.) The long southeast and northwest sides each have five similar twelve over twelve sash windows with moulded trim. And yet another window of the same design appears on the rear gable end to the east of the rear wing. In the rear gable itself is a large rectangular attic louver with a simple moulded frame.

The rear wing (the former Churchill schoolhouse) is now set on a concrete block foundation, which is interrupted on the rear (southwest) end by a pair of board doors, which serve the unfinished crawlspace. The rear wing is clapboarded with cornerboards, moulded close eaves and simpler close verges. The southeast slope of the asphalt shingled gable roof is twice broken by chimneys, a large, round metal chimney with a conical metal cap, and a metal-asbestos chimney, disguised as a brick chimney, by a rectangular outer sheathing painted with red "brick", a gray "stone" cap, and a projecting flue. Plain frames surround the rear wing's windows and door. The southeast long facade and the southwest gable end each have three six over six sash windows. (A rectangular louver with simple moulded frame also appears in the gable.) The long northwest facade has, from north to south, a six pane window (which lights a restroom), a single six over six sash window, a bank of four six over six sash windows, and modern metal exit door. The door opens onto a wooden stairway, with simple wooden posts, a lower concrete step, board landing and steps, and plain wooden railings.

The main entry opens into a small vestibule in the first story of the tower. The vestibule has a carpeted floor, vertical beaded board wainscoating with base moulding and moulded coping. Above the wainscoating, the walls are sheathed with ornate pressed metal. Ornate pressed metal tiles with a pressed metal egg and dart ceiling moulding also decorate the ceiling. The bell rope hangs down into the vestibule. And plain frames surround the outer door, the seventeen over seventeen sash windows in each side wall and the four panel door into the main block.

A wide offcenter corridor leads from the vestibule directly into the hall (the town hall, itself) that occupies most of the main block. (There is little distinction between the corridor and the hall, both having the same wall treatment and sharing the same ceiling.) Flanking the corridor are two smaller spaces, the kitchen (the former library) in the north corner and the former selectmen's office in the east corner. (The selectmen's office now contains a fireproof room and a small anteroom.)

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

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

For NPS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet 2

Item number 7

Page 3

The corridor, set off the axis of the building to the northwest, has, like the vestibule, a carpeted floor, and vertical beaded board wainscoating with base moulding and moulded coping. The painted plaster walls above are ornamented by a broad stenciled border just above the wainscoating. The corridor's section of the high plaster ceiling it shares with the hall is also ornamented by a stenciled border around a painted rectangular panel. (A plain framed trapdoor in the ceiling serves the unfinished attic above.) Moulded trim surrounds the entry door in the northeast wall, the opening to the selectmen's office in the southeast wall, and the six panel dutch door to the kitchen in the northwest wall. Each of the side doors is topped by a plain framed transom opening, filled with a decoratively pierced wooden screen. (High moulded coat hook rails are found in the front corners of the corridor between the doors.)

The modern kitchen in the north corner has a linoleum floor and board wainscoating with a simple coping beneath plaster walls. Most of the wainscoating and much of the walls are actually hidden behind the modern builtin kitchen counters and cabinets, the large stove and the refrigerator. The kitchen is lit by a twelve over twelve sash window and by two builtin light panels in the modern suspended tile ceiling. Plain frames surround the window, the door and the countertop opening in the southwest wall that serves the hall.

The former selectmen's office in the east corner now contains a fireproof room to the east. Although as wide as the former space, the fireproof room is not as tall. So the original high plaster ceiling still continues above the small western anteroom and the unused space over the fireproof room. (This ceiling has the same pronounced cove as the hall ceiling.) Both the fireproof room and the anteroom have carpeted floors. The small anteroom has three plaster walls featuring horizontal board wainscoating with base moulding and simple coping. The new wall separating the anteroom and the fireproof room is built of fire resistant wallboard and is trimmed with a moulded baseboard and a top moulding. A plastered chimney fills the anteroom's west corner. Plain frames surround the corridor opening and the modern metal door into the fireproof room. The fireproof room has plasterboard walls with simple baseboard and a plasterboard ceiling. It is lit by two fluorescent light fixtures and by two twelve over twelve sash windows in deep recesses in the two outer (northeast and southeast) walls. The storage function of the room is served by builtin shelving.

The hall itself has a hardwood floor and the same vertical beaded board wainscoating with base moulding and moulded coping as the corridor. And again the painted plaster walls have the same wide stenciled border above the wainscoating. The side (northwest and southeast) walls have a very pronounced cove, beginning just above the windows and arching well into the room. In fact, the coves might almost be described as half barrel vaults. Each cove is decorated with a stenciled boarder. The flat central section of the plaster ceiling also has an elaborate stenciled boarder, as well as an ornate central hanging chandelier and another plain framed attic trap door. The only opening in the front (northeast) wall, besides the wide opening of the corridor itself, is the countertop opening into the kitchen. This opening has a formica clad shelf supported by brackets, two paneled doors, and a plain frame.

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

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

For NPS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet 3

Item number 7

Page 4

Moulded trim surrounds the four twelve over twelve sash windows in each side wall, the single twelve over twelve sash window and the six panel door in the rear (south-west) wall. Ornate electric light brackets are mounted on the walls. And the eastern three-quarters of the rear end of the hall is occupied by a low platform, with two steps at its northwest end. The platform has vertical beaded board sides with top and base mouldings, and a hardwood floor.

The rear wing is reached by the door in the hall's southwest wall. Most of the rear wing is occupied by a classroom. But between the classroom and the hall are found four small spaces, a short corridor to the hall with two flanking restrooms in the north corner of the rear wing and the new furnace room in the east corner of the wing.

The short corridor has a carpeted floor, three plastered walls, a horizontal board rear (southwest) wall, and a plaster ceiling. Plain frames surround the modern wooden doors to the flanking restrooms and the opening to the schoolroom. Both small restrooms have carpeted floors, the usual fixtures, plain window and door frames, and a horizontal board southwest wall. The ladies' room to the east of the corridor has three plasterboard walls. The men's room to the west of the corridor has three plaster walls, two also having board wainscoating. The men's room can also boast a six-pane window.

The old classroom has a painted hardwood floor and composition board walls with vertical beaded board wainscoating. The wainscoating's moulded coping also serves as the apron for the windows. The only exceptions are the plasterboard walls of the new furnace room that project slightly into the classroom from the northeast wall. The ceiling, trimmed with a ceiling moulding, is sheathed with composition board panels, with strapping covering the joints. The inner northeast wall has two plain framed openings, the modern wooden door to the furnace room and the opening to the corridor, the last being flanked by blackboards above the wainscoating. The long southeast wall contains three windows with six over six sash and moulded trim. Blackboards are found between the southeast windows, as well as between the single six over six sash window and the bank of four six over six sash windows in the northwest wall. The single window and one of the four bank windows have moulded trim. The other three windows in the bank have plain frames, as does the modern metal exit door next to the bank. The rear southwest wall has three six over six sash windows, two with moulded trim, one with plain trim. A woodstove near the center of the room has two stove pipes, one to the metal-asbestos chimney above it, the other a long pipe to a free standing brick chimney near the rear wall, which is encased by vertical beaded boarding with moulded coping, like that found on the walls. Attached to the ceiling above the long stovepipe is a shallow vented metal protector. To the west of the chimney on the rear wall is a wide builtin wooden cabinet. (The furnace room has a plywood floor, plaster-board walls and ceiling.)

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

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

For NPS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet 4

Item number 7

Page 5

The grounds of the nominated property are grassed with gravel driveways around the front lawn and around the building. East of the building, the driveway widens into an unpaved parking lot. A dense growth of trees and shrubs is found on the three public facades of the main block. Particularly notable are the tall cedars at the front corners. A few lesser foundation shrubs are found around the rear wing. A row of trees and some shrubs grow along the stone wall that marks the southeast boundary of the lot. (The stone wall is broken by a twelve foot wide gap.) On the front lawn stands a tall metal flagpole and a wooden post with wrought metal bracket from which hangs a painted wooden sign labeled with the town name and "1794", the date of the town's incorporation.

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

**Specific dates** 1822-1823      **Builder/Architect** various building committees (see text)

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Brookfield Town Hall is significant architecturally as an attractive late Victorian adaption of an early 19th century town hall, particularly notable for its elaborate tower and its fine public hall. The Town Hall is also significant in the area of government as Brookfield's most important public building, a town hall that has been in continuous use for over a century and a half.

### Architecture

At the 1822 annual town meeting, the voters of Brookfield decided to build a town house and chose a three man committee (Thomas Burley, Thomas Chamberlin, and Samuel Lang) to suggest a site and to obtain public subscriptions for the building. The committee reported back to the voters at a special meeting on June 8, recommending that the town house be erected on a town-owned lot near the Corner, an important intersection near the center of the township, around which the small hamlet of Brookfield has grown up. The committee members also reported that they had "been to almost every voter in town with subscription papers to see how much they could obtain by subscription"<sup>1</sup>, and had received pledges, including work and materials, totaling \$167.61. Although that sum, with the \$45 the Town had previously set aside for the Town House, was not sufficient to finish the building, the committee proposed "to begin the work soon after haying"<sup>2</sup>. The voters accepted the report and then appointed the same three men as a building committee to erect the Town House, with the authority to use the credit of the Town, if necessary.

The Town House must have been erected in late 1822 or early 1823, as the next March town meeting was held in the new Town House. At that meeting, the citizens of Brookfield "voted to finish the outside of the building, to glaze it, and to lay the floor double"<sup>3</sup>, choosing Thomas Burley as the superintendent for the work. Once closed in and completed on the exterior, the Town Hall was left in an unfinished state for over a decade. Almost annually, articles appeared in the town meeting warrant asking the Town to finish the interior or to allow others to do so, but these articles were defeated or postponed. Finally, at a special town meeting on July 11, 1835, it was voted to finish the interior, specifically "to pew the whole of the town house", the pews to have doors, "to build a decent pulpit and singing seats" and "to lath and plaster said house".<sup>4</sup> A three man committee (Thomas Burley, Joseph T. Churchill and Dudley Pike) was chosen and instructed to complete the interior by the second Tuesday in March of 1836, that is to say, by the next annual town meeting. The work must have been completed on schedule, as, at the 1836 town meeting, the voters agreed "to accept

<sup>1</sup>"Brookfield Town Records" (manuscript, Brookfield Town Hall, Brookfield, N.H.), Vol. II, p. 237.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid. Vol. II, p. 269.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid. Vol. III, p. 217.

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

(see continuation sheet)

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property .46 acre

Quadrangle name Wolfeboro, NH

Quadrangle scale 1:625 00

UTM References

A 

1	9	3	3	3	0	0	0	4	8	2	4	9	0	0
Zone			Easting				Northing							

B 

Zone			Easting				Northing							

C 

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D 

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E 

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G 

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H 

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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 Ruell

organization Lakes Region Planning Commission date October 8, 1984

street & number Main Street telephone (603) 279-8171

city or town Meredith, state New Hampshire 03253

# 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national  state  local

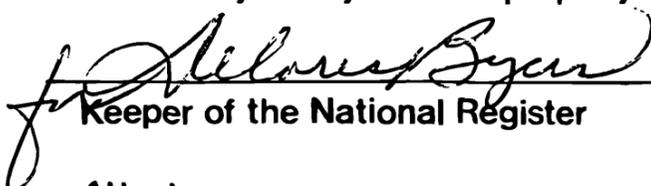
As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National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

State Historic Preservation Officer signature 

title New Hampshire State Historic Preservation Officer date APR 26 1985

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

  
Keeper of the National Register

Entered in the  
National Register

date 6-6-85

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_ date \_\_\_\_\_

Chief of Registration

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

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

For NPS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet 5

Item number 8

Page 2

the pews in the town house without doors".<sup>5</sup> The appearance of the Town Hall in its early years is still unclear, as no early descriptions or views seem to survive. What we know of later changes to the building suggests that it was much like other town halls of the period, a rectangular, gable-roofed building with two doors in the gable end facing the road. It is unclear which, if any, of the building's early features now survive.

Save for some unspecified repairs in 1856 and shingling in 1872, the Town House was apparently left untouched for the next four decades. But, in the last quarter of the 19th century and the first decade of the 20th century, the Town Hall was substantially remodeled into a late Victorian building. At the 1875 annual town meeting, a five man committee was appointed to study the building and make recommendations for changes. The committee report suggested that the building be clapboarded and painted white, that the two front doors be replaced by one central door, and that the singing seats be removed so that an office could be built in the east corner of the building. The study committee report was accepted by the voters and another committee (Charles A. Hackett, William A. Lang and Henry M. Libby) was appointed to carry out the recommendations. The following year (1876), the Town voted to build a room in the north corner of the Town Hall, like the recently completed selectmen's office. Charles A. Hackett agreed to take charge of the work and to complete the new room by June 1 of that year. (The new room later housed the town library, and, subsequently, a kitchen.)

Private initiatives led to further changes in the interior. In 1883, the town meeting agreed to have the pews removed and replaced by settees, if it could be done at no expense to the town. Another request, to remove the old pulpit and replace it with a new platform, was accepted by the voters in 1894. New floors were laid, at the Town's expense, in the hall in 1906 and the selectmen's office in 1907. (Other interior changes unfortunately cannot be dated. The pronounced coves in the hall ceiling must predate 1875, as the same cove can be seen in the selectmen's office built that year. They may, in fact, be original features of the interior. The moulded trim and beaded board wainscoating now found in the hall and corridor are also probably the result of private initiatives in this period, as there is no mention of them in the records of town meetings.)

But the major exterior change was still to come. In 1907, Frank Hutchins, a Wolfeboro resident, but a native of Brookfield, offered to give a bell for the Town Hall. At a special town meeting held September 14, 1907, the voters appointed a five-man committee to figure the costs of erecting a belfry or a tower to house the bell, and then adjourned to September 21. At the adjourned meeting, the Town heard the committee report and then voted \$300 to build the tower, entrusting the task to the five men who had formed the study committee (Charles Willey, James L. Cook, Walter L. Robinson, Sylvester L. Shortridge, and Charles Cate). The work was completed the following June and the bell dedicated June 29, 1908.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid. Vol. III, p. 237.

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

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

For NPS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet 6

Item number 8

Page 3

The belfry tower and the corresponding remodeling of the main gable completely altered the appearance of the exterior, as the earlier changes had transformed the interior. The result was a building that is predominantly late Victorian in design. The tower dominates the exterior. Embellished by a decorative pediment above the door, by corner pilasters and a box cornice on the clapboarded first story, by decorative shingles and a pair of arched windows in the second story, by the segmental arches, pilasters and heavy cornice of the belfry, and by the pyramidal roof with its flared eaves and elaborate weathervane, the tower is quite ornate in comparison to the clapboarded side and rear facades, although the integration of its second story and the main block's pediment by the sharing of shingling and cornices does help to tie the tower into the rest of the building. This one addition turned what was probably a rather ordinary town hall into an attractive and commanding Victorian public building. The changes to the interior took place over a number of years. But today, the major public spaces, the vestibule, the corridor and the hall, have a unified Victorian appearance. The vertical beaded board wainscoating found in all three spaces, the pressed metal walls and ceiling in the vestibule, the moulded trim, and the stenciled borders and panels in the corridor and the hall, and the hardwood floor and the great coves in the hall, all contribute to make impressive Victorian interiors that are in keeping with the exterior.

The Victorian transformation of the Brookfield Town Hall gives it an almost unique position among the town halls in the Lakes Region. There are a number of distinguished Victorian town halls in the Region. But, virtually all of them, notably those in Alton, Ashland, Franklin, Tilton, Wakefield and Wolfeboro, were constructed of brick, masonry being preferred for public buildings in the late 19th century. The only other notable wooden town hall of Victorian design in the Region is the Effingham Town Hall, which, however, was actually constructed as a Masonic Hall and a school, and was not used as a town hall for some thirty years after its construction. Among the wooden buildings built to serve as town halls, the Brookfield Town Hall stands alone as the only Victorian or Victorianized building of any architectural importance.

Since its transformation in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the Brookfield Town Hall has seen some changes, but they have not seriously altered the appearance of the exterior of the main block and the tower, or of the major public spaces. In 1967, the Churchill School, a one room, early 19th century schoolhouse, was moved from a nearby site to become the rear wing of the Town Hall. The privy that had been attached to the rear of the Town Hall was then removed. Its function was taken over by two restrooms in the new rear wing. At the same time, a furnace was also installed in the former schoolhouse to heat the entire building. In 1976, as part of the Bicentennial celebration, restoration of the Town Hall was begun, the work including some repairs, repainting, and renewal of the stenciling. An Economic Development Administration grant the following year allowed further renovations in 1977-78, including the repair of the sills, new roof shingles, and insulation. More conspicuous were the renovations of the kitchen and the selectmen's office. A new fireproof room was built within the selectmen's room. And the kitchen was completely remodeled as a modern facility. The kitchen renovation included the blocking of an exterior window, but this change was minimized by retaining the window, and building a painted plasterboard wall behind it,

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

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

For NPS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet 7

Item number 8

Page 4

so that the casual observer is hardly aware that the window is no longer functional. The kitchen renovation also included the only significant change to the Victorian public spaces, the construction of the countertop opening connecting the kitchen and the hall. Otherwise, the major public spaces and the exterior appear virtually as they did in the first decade of the century.

Government

Since 1823, the Town Hall has been the major public building in Brookfield. It has been used continuously for town meetings, and for local, state, and federal elections. The selectmen and other town boards and committees meet in the building regularly. Here the town records, past and present, are stored. The Town Hall has been the center of the town government, and the town's political life for over sixteen decades.

The Town Hall has also served other functions, some of which have faded away. Regular religious services were held in the hall into the 20th century, although none have been held there in recent years. The small room in the north corner housed the Brookfield Public Library from its establishment in 1893, until the library was discontinued, when the Town contracted for library services with the Gafney Library in nearby Sanbornville. For a brief period, in 1919 and 1920, the Town Hall served as the village schoolhouse.

As the only public hall in Brookfield, the Town Hall has also been a focus of the community's social life, the obvious site for major social gatherings. Dances in Brookfield, as elsewhere, are a thing of the past. But community suppers are still held regularly in the hall. And the building is available to the townspeople for any appropriate social event.

The changes in the building have reflected changes in its functions. The interior, as finished in 1835 and 1836, was essentially that of a church, dominated by pews, pulpit and singing seats. In the late 19th century, the removal of this builtin church furniture, and the construction of a platform, the selectmen's office and the north corner room reflected a shift from religious to secular uses. The most recent changes, the addition of the rear wing, the restrooms, the furnace room and the fireproof room, and the renovation of the kitchen, all indicate that the Town Hall still pays a vital and central role in community affairs.

In summary, the Brookfield Town Hall is Brookfield's most important public building, and probably, given its central role in town affairs, the most historic building in the town. The Town Hall is also important architecturally as one of the best Victorian or Victorianized town halls in the area, and arguably, the best wooden Victorian town hall in the Lakes Region.

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Continuation sheet 8

Item number 9

Page 1

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

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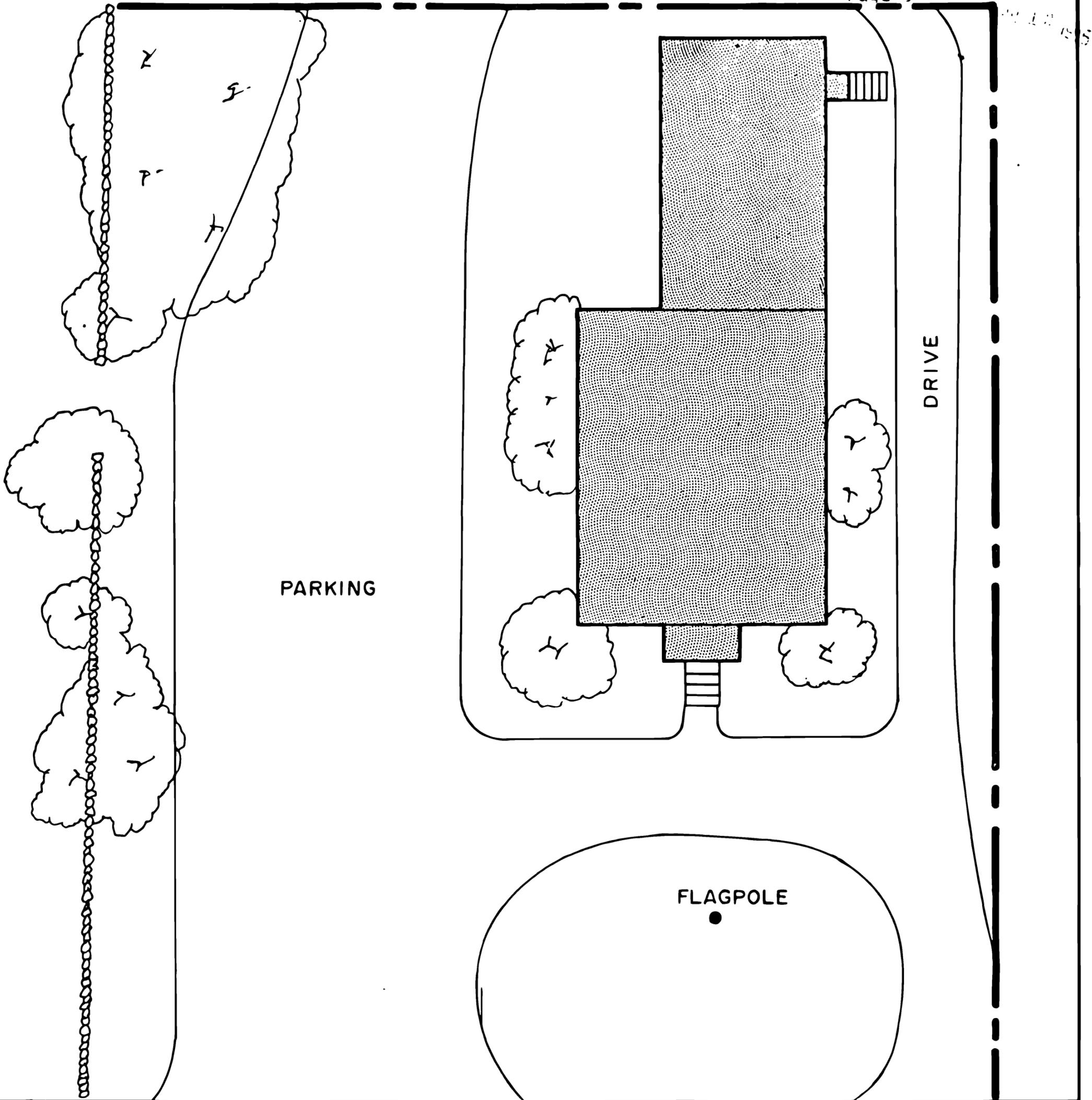
Item number 10

Page 2

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

The nominated property is a rectangular parcel of land, bounded on the northeast by Route 109, on the southeast by a stone wall that marks the southeast boundary of the Town Hall lot, on the southwest by an arbitrary line parallel to the southwest facade of the Town Hall's rear wing at a distance of four feet, and on the northwest by an arbitrary line parallel to the northwest facade of the Town Hall at a distance of twenty-five feet. The boundary was drawn to include the Brookfield Town Hall and its immediate surroundings, and to exclude other town-owned buildings, including two sheds, a privy, and a highway garage, all of little architectural or historical significance. (Brookfield Tax Map 16, Parcel 12)

Boundaries of the nominated property have been highlighted in yellow on the enclosed sketch map.



ROUTE 109

# Brookfield Town Hall

BROOKFIELD, N.H.

