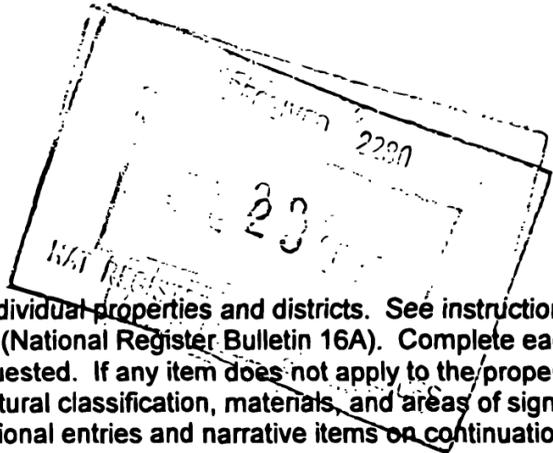


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM**

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.



1. Name of Property

historic name Stevens Memorial Hall

other names/site number Chester Town Hall

2. Location

street & number Junction, NH Routes 121 & 102 (1 Chester Street)

N/A not for publication

city or town Chester

N/A vicinity

state New Hampshire

code NH

county Rockingham

code 015

zip code 03036

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Wanda Ray Wilson

7/27/2004

Signature of certifying official

Date

NEW HAMPSHIRE

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register

See continuation sheet.

determined eligible for the National Register

See continuation sheet.

determined not eligible for the National Register

removed from the National Register

other (explain): _____

Signature of Keeper

Date of Action

[Signature] 9-10-04

Section Break (Continuous)

5. Classification

Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)	Category of Property (Check only one box)	Number of Resources within Property (Do not include previously listed resources in the count)	
<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	_____ 1 _____	_____ buildings _____
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	_____ 1 _____	_____ sites _____
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	_____ 1 _____	_____ structures _____
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	_____ 3 _____	_____ 5 _____
			_____ 5 _____
			_____ Total _____

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

Name of related multiple property listing (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)
N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)		Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)	
Cat: <u>Government</u>	Sub: <u>city hall</u>	Cat: <u>Historical Society</u>	Sub: <u>museum/archives</u>
_____	_____	<u>community function rooms</u>	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)	Materials (Enter categories from instructions)
<u>Late 19th and 20th century revivals</u>	foundation <u>granite</u>
Other: <u>Queen Anne</u>	roof <u>slate</u>
_____	walls <u>weatherboard</u>

	other <u>copper</u>

	<u>brick</u>

Narrative Description (Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

(See Continuation Sheets 7-1 - 7-16)

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria (Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.

B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.

C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.

D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory history.

Criteria Considerations
(Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.

B removed from its original location.

C a birthplace or a grave.

D a cemetery.

E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.

F a commemorative property.

G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance
(Enter categories from instructions)

Politics/Government

Architecture

Period of Significance

(A) 1910-1954

(C) 1908-1910

Significant Dates

1908

1910

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

architect Adams, George Gilman

Narrative Statement of Significance (Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

(See Continuation Sheets 8-1 - 8-13)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS)

preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67)has been requested.

previously listed in the National Register

previously determined eligible by the National Register

designated a National Historic Landmark

recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey

recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary Location of Additional Data

State Historic Preservation Office

Other State agency

Federal agency

Local government

University

Other

Name of repository: Chester Historical Society;

City of Lawrence, MA Public Library; NH Historical

Society; NH State Library

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 1.03 acres

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

	Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
1	<u>19</u>	<u>315810</u>	<u>4758280</u>	3	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
2	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	4	<u> </u>	<u> </u>

See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Stevens Memorial Hall is situated upon an irregular, seven-sided polygon which is bounded by the following dimensions: Beginning at the northeastern corner which is bounded by the rights of way of Chester Street (NH Route 121) on the north, and NH Route 102 on the east, proceed 270' south along a broken line to the southeastern corner, thence 149.5' westerly to the southwestern corner; then proceeding northeasterly 250' to an interior corner; then following the property line north-northwesterly for a distance of 115+/-,' to a triangular corner; thence turning northeasterly for a distance of 70;' then following the right of way of Chester Street (NH Route 121) easterly for a distance of 190,' to the point of origin.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

(See Continuation Sheet)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Christopher W. Closs (C. W. Closs and Company); with Hilary Hall

organization Christopher W. Closs and Company for the Chester Historical Society date April 11, 2004

street & number P.O. Box 530 telephone 603 746-4789

city or town Hopkinton state NH zip code 03229

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name Town of Chester

street & number 84 Chester Street telephone 603 887-4979

city or town Chester state NH zip code 03036

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 7 Page 7-1 Narrative Description
Name of property Stevens Memorial Hall

County and State Rockingham, New Hampshire

Name of multiple property listing N/A

Narrative (Summary) Description:

Stevens Memorial Hall is a nearly unaltered, two and one-half story, wood-frame, Queen Anne Style civic building, with a modified rectangular plan, raised granite foundation, and a bracketed, slate-clad hipped roof with dormers and chimneys, dedicated in 1910. (See Photograph #1) Designed by George G. Adams, Architect, of Lawrence, MA¹ this transitional, Colonial Revival-influenced property originally consisted of two, detached buildings and was situated amidst an enclave of the Town of Chester's most important historic public buildings, private residences and sites, which spanned the 18th - 20th centuries. Stevens Memorial Hall, placed adjacent (south) of the site of the former Chester Academy, (one floor of which had served for decades as the hall for town meetings), and as the last entrant to this ensemble of distinguished structures, exerts its architectural presence as the Town's principal governmental/civic structure in a restrained, yet dignified manner. Stevens Memorial Hall retains integrity of its original location at the crossroads known as Chester Center, the traditional civic, governmental, religious and commercial center of this early 18th century community; through its intact exterior and interior design, which typifies the town hall and opera house building form popularized during the late 19th century; prominent public setting; use of original early 20th century materials; and expression of quality workmanship. The building continues to convey the feeling and association of neo-classical formality - albeit vernacular - as the community's principal civic and governmental edifice.

The original appearance of the building is manifested through the asymmetrical design of the principal facade (N ELV), and features a shallow, two-story pavilion at the northeast corner, with a three-sided bay; a Colonial Revival Style main entry porch at center, and at the northwest corner, a monumental square bell tower surmounted with a bellcast copper roof, which rises a full three stories. Virtually all of the original windows survive, along with the exterior paneled doors. The exterior siding and details - original clapboards, engaged pilasters and Georgian Style window moldings, all painted white - reflect the strong influence of Colonial Revival design in this eclectic, transitional composition. The latter design vocabulary was carried forward in the only exterior alteration to Stevens Memorial Hall - a concrete and steel portico erected along the east elevation in 1984 which incorporated an elevator, access ramp for the handicapped, and a police sally port. (See Photograph #2)

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 7 Page 7-2 Narrative Description
Name of property Stevens Memorial Hall

County and State Rockingham, New Hampshire

Name of multiple property listing N/A

Inside, the building retains integrity of its original plan, materials, features and finishes, including memorial entry hall, auditorium with performance stage and balcony, function rooms, offices, stairways, and kitchen; which are all adorned with pressed metal ceilings; and in the basement, the municipal vault and original forged iron jail cells. The interior is trimmed with varnished, southern long-leaf yellow (or hard) pine window and door casings with operable transom lights, while the floors are of polished spruce. In 1978, the Chester Police Department modified and updated the plan and finishes of the northern portion of the (previously unfinished) basement interior, and the heating system, installing insulation, additional ductwork, new doors, gypsum wallboard and dropped acoustical tile ceilings with fluorescent lighting. The mechanical and furnace rooms in the utilitarian, southern portion of the basement have changed little, including retention of the 1922 coal-fired, cylindrical "octopus-style" furnace, the brick masonry fire cistern, and the fire pump and steel pressure tank (1911), original stairs to the kitchen above, and all of the basement window sash.

While the original architectural drawings for Stevens Memorial Hall have not been found, the building is well-documented in the Annual Reports of the Town of Chester (1908 - 2000), and particularly the 1910 "Report of the Stevens Memorial Hall Committee,"² from whence the more detailed information contained herein was derived.

Narrative Description: Building Site

Stevens Memorial Hall is situated at the east end of Chester Street on a promontory overlooking the confluence of four principal highways which, along with other historic public, ecclesiastical and commercial buildings, the Chester Village Cemetery (NR, 1979); and the Civil War Memorial (1904; together form the loci of the village area designated as Chester Center. (See Photograph #3) The subject building, whose prominent, centrally located site compliments its historical role, served as Chester's first town hall between 1910-2000, and the only building erected exclusively for this purpose.

Erected on a 1.03 acre flat plain, Stevens Memorial Hall faces north-northeast, and stands at an elevation of 467' above sea level on a seven-sided, polygonal parcel of land, whose south and east perimeters drop off sharply with steep slopes.³ With the exception of the paved

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 7 Page 7-3 Narrative Description
Name of property Stevens Memorial Hall
County and State Rockingham, New Hampshire
Name of multiple property listing N/A

drive which circumscribes the building, the site is covered with maintained lawns and mature trees, predominantly hardwood species. Construction was begun in the spring of 1909. Road frontage of the corner site is 260' on the north, and was enlarged, on the east, to 270' in 1945. ⁴

Since 1909, with the dedication of the Liberty Pole and United States Flag, "placed in front of Stevens Hall," ⁵ (then still under construction) both the site and its public use - as the focus of civic, governmental and community activity - have evolved, in response to changing technology and transportation needs, consolidation in patterns of worship, and the increasing use of the grounds for monument placement and commemorative purposes, as well as a location for outdoor gatherings and, more recently, community announcement boards. Nearly too numerous to mention, a schedule of the existing monuments and features present upon the site has been created, including contributing and non-contributing elements, and is presented in Exhibit I, in order to spare the reviewer from an unnecessarily detailed and lengthy principal text. Of the non-contributing elements, #'s 1, 2 and 3 are not original to the site and were moved to the grounds from elsewhere, while #'s 4 and 5 are contemporaneous features and have been erected on the site since 1954.

The existing features of the site reflect the entire 92-year span of evolutionary change and include both ornamental trees, the aforementioned memorial flagpole, commemorative and historical objects, and contemporary signs. These are arrayed in an informal park-like setting both in front (north) of Stevens Memorial Hall and along the eastern property line, as well as adjacent to the principal entrance. The changing configuration of both the front (northern) and rear (southern) portions of the site have been driven by external factors, which remarkably, have not diminished but enhanced the design of the site, by fortuitously providing greater setbacks along two of the principal building elevations (north and east).

The evolution of the landscaping treatment about Stevens Memorial Hall appears to have begun shortly after construction was completed. By 1913 the front portion of the site had been graded and seeded, likely in conjunction with continued improvements to the roadway surface and drainage of Chester Street first initiated by the State of New

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 7 Page 7-4 Narrative Description
Name of property Stevens Memorial Hall

County and State Rockingham, New Hampshire

Name of multiple property listing N/A

Hampshire in 1908. In 1920, the Liberty Pole was dedicated to local benefactor, Amos Tuck French. French (1863-1941), nephew of Amos Tuck, retired to Chester from a successful banking career in New York, and had given the pole to the Town in 1908.⁶ This stepped mast, complete with small top and climbing rungs, remained nearly centered in front of the facade of Stevens Memorial Hall until its temporary removal, refurbishment and re-dedication along the eastern side of the property on May 30, 1989. The presence of the French Flagpole at its former northern location apparently established, from the onset, the original intent to create a park space in front of the building, adjacent to the public way (Chester Street). In 1923 the original acetylene interior lighting system and outside toilet was abandoned entirely and the building converted to electricity, thus rendering the second building (Light Plant) obsolete. (See Exhibit II: Historic View # 1)

In 1930, the Chester Free Public Library was moved to the first floor of Stevens Memorial Hall from its previous location across Derry Road, where it had been located in the Dearborn Shop, a small building adjacent to Spollett's Store, which the Town acquired in 1896. Previously, the U.S. Post Office had utilized the same building (1856). Isabelle Fitz, Librarian from 1895-1930, resided in the home next door.⁷ This period, with town offices and library combined, marked the beginning of the era which placed new demands upon the site for automobile circulation and parking.

Prior to the 1950s and the emerging complexities of managing crowded, high-speed, intersecting automobile and freight traffic, the design of the four-corners at Chester Center, where Chester Street - Haverhill Roads (now NH Route 121), and Derry - Raymond Roads (now NH Route 102) meet, there were included several short, radiussed cut-offs or by-passes at the northeast, southeast and southwest corners of the intersection. (See Exhibit III - Sketch of Chester Center Intersection Prior to c. 1950) The main entry drive to Stevens Memorial Hall off of Chester Street was of horseshoe-arched design, and its exit at the eastern end intersected with the cut-off to the Derry Road, which bisected the northeastern corner of the present site. This created, together with the other two "short-cuts," a complex intersection, particularly for through-traffic movement.

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CONTINUATION SHEET**

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Name of property Stevens Memorial Hall
County and State Rockingham, New Hampshire
Name of multiple property listing N/A

cut-offs except that in front of Spollett's Store, to the southeast., which survives to the present. (See Exhibit IV - Historic View #2) Just one decade later, the eastern leg of the original horseshoe-arched entry drive, which passed in front of Stevens Memorial Hall in a symmetrical arc, was eliminated and this half re-graded for parking and additional lawn, leaving only a single, combined point of entry from Chester Street. This shared drive served both the town hall, post office, and the new Chester Library, which had been relocated in 1981 to the adjacent barn, bequested to the Town by the late Ruth Ray (1890-1977).⁸ In this found space, the refurbished Amos Tuck French Flagpole was relocated (although shortened and top altered) - and re-dedicated on Memorial Day, May 30, 1989. This site alteration retained the historic view corridor of Stevens Memorial Hall along the north - south axis which had extended across the Haverhill Road (NH Route 121 South) since 1910 - and the visual connection between the seat of local government and the Chester Village Cemetery. (See Photograph #3)

Between c. 1922 - 1945 several changes occurred with the site design. To the north, the area originally containing the French Flagpole, a lawn area approximately 75' x 100' in dimension, gradually became delineated with a grouping of young sugar maples. First created in 1908 with the removal/relocation of the Chester Academy (Old Town Hall) to its new site on the Raymond Road, this area, filled and re-graded by 1913, was intended as part of the grounds created as the setting of Stevens Memorial Hall, authorized by the Town Meeting of that year. While the French Flagpole appears to have been removed from here by c. 1976, the now-shaded and canopied north lawn assumed the character and, albeit understated atmosphere, of a small park. This "foreground," (See Photograph #3) with frontage along Chester Street, lies roughly at grade in elevation, is furnished with granite benches, commemorative boulder and plaques, and is situated along a northwest-southeast axis nearly equidistant between Stevens Memorial Hall and the historic 1773 Chester Congregational Church (NR 1986), once the site of Town Meeting in the late 18th-early 19th centuries (and since 1942 combined/renamed as the United Church of Christ - American Baptist Church). This intimate park space allows the citizen or visitor to experience the vernacular monumental presence of these two edifices, while simultaneously being moved to contemplate the long-held relationship - and democratic tenet of division - between church and state.

The Light Plant, the small, wood-framed, hip-roofed utility structure

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 7 Page 7-6 Narrative Description
Name of property Stevens Memorial Hall

County and State Rockingham, New Hampshire

Name of multiple property listing N/A

which was erected along with Stevens Memorial Hall in 1909 just a few feet southwest of the principal structure, and which housed both the acetylene gas generator and related equipment installed by Dr. Edmund R. Angell of Derry, and the men's toilet, was removed or dismantled at an unknown date following full electrification of the building in 1923 and the installation of indoor plumbing in the basement.

On April 20, 1945, the congregation of the Baptist Church, which had closed its doors in 1935 on account of dwindling membership, sold its church building and land to the Town of Chester for \$175.⁹ The Baptist Church, which had erected its new church at the Center in 1860, southeast of the future site of Stevens Memorial Hall, and which was rebuilt in 1877, following a fire (See Exhibit V - Historic View #3), had peaked in membership by 1901 but found it necessary, on March 7, 1942 to consolidate with the Congregational Church.¹⁰ When constructed in 1908-1910, the Stevens Memorial Hall was built just a few feet from the façade of the Baptist Church, which stirred a spirited controversy at the 1909 town meeting.¹¹ (See Exhibit VI - Historic Views #4-A,B) With acquisition of this property and razing of the both the former Light Plant and the church edifice by 1946, the town hall site was substantially enlarged, forming a parcel more rectangular in plan - the current configuration of the property. (See Exhibit VII - Property Map - Chester, New Hampshire, Sheet 14, Lot 16-7) These changes enabled the entry drive from Chester Street to be extended, circumscribing Stevens Memorial Hall with the present paved surface and additional parking capacity.

During the period 1978 - 1984, three additional events occurred which influenced both the building and site design. In 1978, the Chester Police Department moved its headquarters into the northern portion of the basement of Stevens Memorial Hall, creating offices in what had been unfinished space. A new covered sally port, combined with access for the handicapped, in the form of a ramp and elevator was added to the east elevation in 1984, in a compatible Neo-Colonial styled structure which resembles a side porch. (Photograph #2) In 1981, the Chester Free Public Library relocated its facilities to the former livery barn (former Webster Brothers Store) on the west side of Stevens Memorial Hall, which, along with the adjacent former home of Ruth Ray, were adaptively re-used for a new library and U.S. Post Office, respectively. (See Photograph #3) At that time and through the present, this complex of three buildings began to share a combined access drive off of Chester Street, and circulation usage of the

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 7 Page 7-7 Narrative Description
Name of property Stevens Memorial Hall
County and State Rockingham, New Hampshire
Name of multiple property listing N/A

remaining original entry to Stevens Memorial Hall was restricted to one-way (exiting) traffic.

Narrative Description (Building Exterior):

Stevens Memorial Hall is approximately 40'0" x 75'0" in dimension, including the one-story front entry bay and porch. There are three principal facades - north, east and west elevations - which face the public way, or adjacent public buildings. (See Photographs #4, #3, #2, and #5) The elongated rectangular plan is oriented along a northwest - southeast axis; the facade with the main entrance bears a northwest aspect. (See Photograph #4)

The structure is founded upon a partially raised foundation of random granite ashlar, with mortared joints of Portland cement struck with a grapevine profile. The native stone foundation walls above grade are punctuated with three-light, transom-style windows, without window wells. On the façade, there are two such windows; on the east, three; on the south, three (the one nearest the southwest corner being a double unit); and along the west, four, although a fifth (center) opening has been converted to facilitate installation of a hose bib for the fire suppression system. On the east elevation, half of the raised foundation wall has been obscured by the 1984 addition of elevator and handicapped access ramp to the first floor. (See Photograph #2) The original wooden stair, railing and platform landing which serviced the exit door at the southeastern corner was removed during the 1984 improvement.

Fenestration of the upper level is four bays (north elevation) by five bays, which is repeated on the east and west elevations; while the rear (south elevation) is more simplified, with only two bays. These openings are tall and rectangular, with transoms above, are painted black on the exterior, and vary in dimension. Exterior casings have molded trim and simple sills with stools, in the Colonial Revival manner. Window sash design is complex and skillfully used as a device to enliven the simple, unadorned clapboarded wall planes. (See Photographs #1, #2, #4, #5) All of the window sashes are original, and are typically double-hung, wooden units designed in a variety of configurations, including pairs and triple-windows, and/or singles containing two-light over two; four-light over two; and four-light over four; and Queen Anne style sash, which appear only on the first floor of the north and east sides. Additionally, all of the transoms, and upper window sash in the roof dormers, have diamond-pattern lights. The dominant window features appear on the second story of the east and west elevations, where the interior of the upstairs auditorium is illuminated with massive, semi-circular Gibbs-style

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 7 Page 7-8 Narrative Description
Name of property Stevens Memorial Hall

County and State Rockingham, New Hampshire

Name of multiple property listing N/A

windows on the two opposing walls, each of which consist of a central four-light over two sash, crowned with a transom with radiating muntins and swags; all set with a continuous band of sidelights which circumscribe the entire central composition. On the (north) facade of the tower, second floor, there is a single Palladian window which contains diamond-pattern lights in the (three) upper window sash. All window openings have been covered with contemporary aluminum, combination storm/screen units, painted white.

The (north) facade is strongly articulated with a three story bell tower of monumental scale, which rises from the northwest corner and is surmounted with a copper-clad, standing-seam bellcast roof. (See Photograph #4) A decorative copper finial originally crowned the roof peak, but was replaced in 1957 with a large cylindrical tube of painted sheet metal, covered with a cone-shaped flange and rain cap.¹² Installed by the local fire department, this hydraulically-driven siren served as Chester's chief fire warning signal and civil defense siren, until replaced with more modern equipment in the 1990s. (The original finial survives and is in the possession of the Trustee, the Chester Historical Society, and mounted on display in the organization's museum room on the first floor of Stevens Memorial Hall.) The tower, a signature feature of the work of the architect, George G. Adams, and expressed particularly in other municipal building and school commissions,¹³ rises through the roof plane from the walls below, and is designed as a belfry, with a large, clapboard-covered platform at the base, a decorative railing with delicate turned balusters above this which circumscribes the entire construction, and a large opening in the center of each elevation which contains a wooden louver. Enframing each of the louvered openings are paneled corner pilasters and caps, with paneled bases; and inside of the pilasters are Tuscan half-columns with caps. This ensemble supports, typically, a classical entablature, above which is a deeply-projecting roof cornice adorned beneath with modillions. Due to a chronic roof leak, which was repaired in the early 1990s with additional internal structural support, the tower leans about 3 degrees out of plumb, to the east.

The exterior elevations of Stevens Memorial Hall are clad in original clear, red cedar clapboards painted white, with simple, slender corner boards. Corner boards appear to have been painted a darker, contrasting color during the 1920s. Wall planes are relieved along the three principal elevations with shallow, projecting center pavilions delineated with engaged, paneled pilasters with bases and caps (east and west elevations) which are carried through to the wall dormers

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 7 Page 7-9 Narrative Description
Name of property Stevens Memorial Hall

County and State Rockingham, New Hampshire

Name of multiple property listing N/A

above. The asymmetrically-designed (north) façade includes a deeper, two story pavilion on the northeast corner, which serves to partially balance the compositional weight of the bell tower at the opposing corner. Adding further interest to this deliberate design is the application of canted corners to the projecting first story bay of the pavilion combined with the bracketed, extended entry porch roof which is carried from beyond the center of the elevation, to the northeast corner, where there is a turned dropped pendant. This has the effect of creating additional space in the first floor formal room, while unifying the mass of the latter elements in a reassuring way, thus visually stabilizing the apparent looming height of the bell tower.

The Colonial Revival style front porch, covering the main entrance, today appears understated in its appearance which is attributable to the loss of the original roof balustrade, components of which are in the possession of the Trustee. Additionally, the open porch floor and balustrade on the entrance level, which once extended to the northwest corner, in front of the corner tower, is also missing. (Exhibit VI: Historic View #4-B) The surviving porch element consists of a single short, wide flight of wooden stairs from grade level to the porch floor platform, which are flanked with newel posts at the base, and balustered railings, the latter detail carried around the porch deck. The porch roof is supported with three Tuscan columns, with plinths, capitals, and paneled bases, which flank the stairway, and two engaged columns at the corner extremities. Illuminating the porch space is the original wrought iron cylinder lamp with milk glass lenses (converted to electric) which is suspended from the center of the ceiling.

There are three entrances to the building, two of which are original portals. These consist of the front (north) or main entry; and two entrances on the east elevation, one at the southeast corner (kitchen) and the second, a contemporary opening (c. 1978) at the center of the same elevation, providing access/egress to the basement. The original paneled doors for the main and rear entrances remain extant. The front door consists of a wooden, double-leaved design, with two-light transom, with each leaf having a single large light with a single panel below, and articulated with bolection moldings of the period. Painted black, the left (east) leaf contains a bronze-framed slot entitled "Letters" in relief. The rear door is of similar one-light/two panel design in fir and has been refitted with modern panic-bar style, code-compliant hardware.

The building envelope of Stevens Memorial Hall is covered with a hipped roof and dormers of medium pitch. (See Photographs #1 - #5) The gray, Monson slate-clad surface, whose ridges and valleys are

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 7 Page 7-10 Narrative Description
Name of property Stevens Memorial Hall
County and State Rockingham, New Hampshire
Name of multiple property listing N/A

flashed in copper, support four wall dormers, those on the east and west elevations being identical. These hipped roofed structures, whose purpose was to provide interior illumination to the attic, each contain a single pair of small, rectangular windows which are configured with diamond-light upper sashes, and two-light lower sashes. Walls are covered in clapboards, typically, with broad, paneled pilasters at the corners corresponding to the designs on the pavilions in the story below. The broad, projecting boxed cornices have cyma recta moldings at the top, but lack the modillions found below, on the main roof. The front (north) dormer is of barrel-vault design, with a copper roof and arched bolection molding resting upon caps, and enclosing a single, semi-circular arched window. This double-hung window consists of an upper, four-light sash with radiating muntins, with a two-light sash below. The rear (south) dormer is smaller than its counterparts, and contains a single, two-light over two window, and simple trim of flat cornerboards and is otherwise unadorned.

Other roof details include a three-rail galvanized pipe snow-guard, which was installed above the rear entry door to protect visitors and employees in winter, and metal gutters. Three lightning arrestor "spikes" are mounted on the rolled copper ridge caps of the main roof. There are two brick chimneys which rise through the roof planes at the southwestern and northeastern corners of the building. The former, rectangular in plan with a corbelled cap, served the original coal-fired heating system, which remains extant but is no longer used. The latter, square in plan and lacking any adornment, originally served the fireplace in the formal room, and now accommodates the second flue venting the new oil-fired FHA system below.

Narrative Description (Building Interior):

The interior plan and finishes of Stevens Memorial Hall are largely unaltered from the original 1910 design. Exceptions include the 1978 remodeling of the basement for Police Department usage; and the conversion of the original Selectmen's Office at the southwest corner of the first floor for indoor men's and women's lavatories. There are ten rooms on the first floor, including stair hall, Memorial Hall/corridor and lavatories which historically served as the town offices and library; and a stair hall, small meeting room, auditorium, dressing room, and balcony on the second floor, where Town Meeting was held annually in March, between 1921-2000 as well as generations of school graduations, plays, balls and lectures.

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CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 7 Page 7-11 Narrative Description
Name of property Stevens Memorial Hall

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Basement

The basement level consists of finished and unfinished spaces, approximately divided into a mechanical room, and offices. The basement level is accessed from three entrances; the main stair descending from Memorial Hall at the north end of the building; the rear or secondary stair at the southeast corner, which connects with the kitchen and auditorium above; and the sally port along the east elevation, which is at grade. The most prominent feature at this level is the vault at the foot of the front stairs, which is marked "Sold by Geo. L. Damon Boston" on the steel frame and door. This masonry enclosure, built in 1913¹⁴ occupies the entire northwest corner of the basement. The center portion of the basement is finished for three offices and a mechanical room. The latter contains a modern, oil-fired FHA heating system and is situated along the east wall, adjacent to the sally port entrance. Offices are of conventional design with dropped acoustical tile ceilings and recessed fluorescent lighting, and walls of gypsum board, painted. Floors are carpeted. Two doors lead from this suite of rooms into the original mechanical room, which occupies the southern half of the floor plan. This space, with unfinished exposed granite foundation walls, contains the original central heating and fire suppression systems, which are of technological significance and contribute to the integrity of the property. Included are the fire cistern, a parged brick masonry tank located in the southeast corner, open at the top, which holds approximately 2500 gallons of water, which can be replenished from rainwater roof-runoff via piping; and the 2000 gallon pressure tank and fire pump, all dating from 1911¹⁵ A new, high-pressure fire pump is now situated in the middle of the mechanical room. The original central heating system, marked "Vaporaire" on the intake duct, was provided by the still-extant, coal-fired "octopus style" circular furnace built by the Holland Furnace Company, and installed in 1923.¹⁶ The heating system was converted from coal to oil in 1974. Other artifacts situated in this space include sections of the original modular, forged iron jail cells from 1910, now disassembled and stacked against the wall of the storage room, a narrow space located at the extreme southern end of the basement, which contains a new, auxiliary oil-fired furnace. The rear stair to the kitchen above, stands opposite this space in the southeast corner, between the cistern and the outside wall. Partial electrification of the building

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Name of property Stevens Memorial Hall
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appears to have been authorized in 1918 but was not completed until 1923.

First Floor and Memorial Hall

Memorial Hall, so-called, is the receiving space on the first floor, located just inside the front entrance, which one enters when visiting the building. (See Photograph #6) The plan of this space includes a large square vestibule, which, by means of the main stairwell on the west, (See Photograph #7) provides access to either the auditorium above, or the basement level below. Located on the south side of Memorial Hall is the formal Ladies Room, used most recently as the Selectmen's Office and, from 1930-1981, the Chester Free Public Library. This suite of two rooms currently serves as the museum and exhibit area for the Chester Historical Society, the designated Trustee of the property. Proceeding into the building, to the south, is the central corridor which leads to the dining hall. (See Photograph #8) Midway along this hallway is the Town Clerk's Office, on the west side. Beyond, is the dining hall, a broad gathering place articulated with two, turned wooden columns standing along the east-west centerline of the room. Behind (south) of the rear wall of the dining room is the kitchen; the men's and women's lavatories are in the southwest corner; and at the southeast corner, the secondary stairwell to the auditorium above, and cistern and furnace rooms below.

The finishes, doors, moldings and details of these first floor spaces are original and well-maintained with few exceptions. Walls are of hard plaster, painted, with North Carolina hard pine matched board wainscoting below, with chair rail; floors are of edge-grain spruce, varnished; and ceilings are of a variety of decorative pressed steel designs, painted, with egg and dart cornice moldings. All doors and wainscoting have been given a natural standing finish. In Memorial Hall, mounted on the north wall, is mounted a beige marble tablet with chamfered edges inscribed:

"Stevens Memorial Hall

Gift of George Washington Stevens

To The Town of Chester

Erected 1909

Dedicated March 29, 1910"

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Name of property Stevens Memorial Hall

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The main stair, whose railing, risers and treads are also constructed of hard pine, commences with a massive square, paneled newel post, topped with a turned sphere on a base, while the molded railing climbs upward upon turned balusters to a landing, turns 180 degrees and continues to the second floor foyer. (See Photograph #7) At the west end of this hall, the door to the basement stairwell, which includes a storage area, is designed with a small counter and iron grill, which served as a ticket booth, on needed occasions. (See Photograph #7) The interior door hardware on the double-leaved front entry doors has been changed to "panic bar style" design in order to comply with life-safety codes.

In the formal Ladies Room, these finishes are repeated and also include, in the north room, a formal fireplace of pressed brick, with a carved surround of pilasters and caps, raised field panels, bracketed mantel, and a chimney breast with beveled mirror. A large bay, without doors, enjoins this space with the ante-room to the south, which is now used for exhibits and storage.

The central hall, and the entrances to the Town Clerk's Office (west) and the dining hall (south), typically, retain their original, double-leaved five-paneled varnished doors and hardware, and operable two, or three-light transoms above. (Town Clerk's doors have been altered, each with a single glass light.) A pair of highly decorative, cast iron heating grates dating from 1923 remain part of the floor design in both Memorial Hall and the corridor. (See Photograph #8) In the dining hall, the plastered walls have been covered with contemporary plywood paneling, above the wainscoting. Lighting fixtures throughout the building appear to be original/converted acetylene fixtures, and suspended globes introduced after 1923.

In the kitchen, this often-used rectangular utility space retains its original v-matched ceiling and beaded, matched-board cabinets, linoleum floor, and five-panel door and transom light to the back stairwell. A ten-burner Garland gas range, installed in 1947¹⁷ remains in service. Only the refrigerator, double stainless steel sink and formica counters qualify as contemporary features.

The rear stair hall, a small unadorned utility space, and stairs, are unaltered, with all of their original standing finish intact on the hard pine surfaces.

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Second Floor / Auditorium

The auditorium on the second floor, following the "town hall," or "opera house" form, dominates, without question, the overall design of the interior of Stevens Memorial Hall. This soaring, two story, clear-span space with balcony, designed for approximately 380 persons, retains both its integrity of design and purpose, which is manifested through its architectural features, original materials and finishes, and historical function within the Chester community during most of the 20th century. (See Photographs #9 and #10)

One approaches this space from the broad main stairway, which leads and bends around from the intermediate landing, to the second floor stair hall and foyer outside of the auditorium. In the amply lit foyer, which has windows on the north and west, the ornate metal ceiling is canted to the south, reflecting the slope of the balcony floor above. This ceiling, with its reticulated, coffered pattern, is circumscribed with two perimeter moldings of egg and dart design, which are painted in contrasting color. There are three doors leading from the foyer. To the left, is the wide, two-paneled door to the balcony which contains a large, single glass light, which is accessed via two external steps, with radiussed corners, projecting into the foyer. In the southeast corner, a narrow, five-panel door leads to the ante-room in the northeast corner. Ahead, (south) one observes the double-leaved entry doors to the auditorium, each with two panels below, and a large glass light above. All three of these openings lack transom lights but are fitted with complete classical entablatures. Plated door hardware and glass lights are original, and the room is finished with v-matched wainscoting typical of that found throughout this level. The stairway balustrade, which encloses this space on the west, is finished with a molded railing, turned balusters and square, paneled newel posts with ball, all in hard pine.

The main auditorium floor, approximately 40'0" L by 38'0" W, is distinguished by an exposed, trussed ceiling which rises into the attic space where the hipped ceiling surface is finished with ornate, decorative pressed metal in floral patterns, and edged with egg and dart moldings. (See Photograph #9) The centers of the three ceiling divisions, between the trusses, are each further adorned with a square, polychromatic field containing an ornate cartouche, divided by radii, in deep relief. Gasoliers, for illuminating the auditorium, appear to have been suspended from the centers of these ornaments originally but have been removed and replaced with suspended globes.

The pair of exposed queenpost trusses, also fabricated in hard pine, reveal the patina of age with the strong wood grain expressed through

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Name of property Stevens Memorial Hall

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the original varnished finish, now darkened to a golden hue. The four queenposts are turned members, while the upper chord sections appear to be of heavy timber, machine planed and decorated only with chamfered corners. The lower chords consists of two distinct segments - steel rods with turnbuckles in the center sections between the queenposts; and heavy timber end members, which are square in section. The decorative, inboard ends of the latter members are hand carved, each with the head of a muse, oriented to gaze downward upon the assembly below.

The main floor is illuminated naturally by semi-circular arched windows on the east and west sides, and the dormer windows above, within the roof planes between the principal trusses. The former openings are flanked by tall, rectangular, double hung windows; natural lighting is augmented by globes suspended on chains from the decorative metal ceiling - the original light fixtures from the conversion to electricity in 1923. A single, original gas lighting fixture of brass - a folding sconce - is found mounted on the wall above the wainscoting in the southeast corner of the room, near the exit door. The entire room is circumscribed with v-matched wainscoting and a chair rail, above which all walls are covered with painted, hard plaster.

In the northeast corner, a seven-paneled door leads from the auditorium into a small anteroom, used most recently by the Chester Planning Board. Features and finishes within this space, which contains two closets, and windows on the north and east, are typical of those found in the rest of the building. There is also an entry door which leads to the second floor foyer.

At the north end of the space, projecting above the double-leaved entry doors, is a cantilevered balcony with an inclined floor which contains several examples of the original laminated bentback seating found in greater quantity on the main floor below. (See Photograph #10) The full-width balcony structure, with its curvilinear, v-matched paneled facade and pipe railing, is actually suspended by a third truss, cleverly concealed by the use of a pair of Tuscan columns which serve as queenposts for the chord verticals, and contain steel suspender rods. The balcony walls are finished with typical wainscoting and chair rail throughout, and the space is illuminated by the single, semi-circular arched dormer in the center of the north roof plane. Balcony ceilings have been replaced with gypsum wallboard, due to roof and valley leaks associated with the tower in the 1980's. A scuttle into the base of the tower is accessible through the ceiling beneath this structure. Access to the balcony is via a narrow flight of stairs which allow one to descend to the second

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floor foyer and main stair below. This stair is finished with molded railings, turned balusters and square, paneled newel posts with ball, typical to those found elsewhere on this level.

Facing the proscenium, at the south end of the auditorium, one observes the raised stage enframed within a monumental flat arch, which is defined by flanking pilasters, Scamozzi capitals and a classical entablature. (See Photograph #9) There is a trap door at center stage, with a finished underfloor, and a full two-part curtain, replacing the original, dating from 1969. The dressing room is at stage right (southwest corner), where there is a separate entrance to the auditorium floor, via a short flight of stairs and landing with typical balustrade details, and a five-paneled door. At stage left (southeast corner), a single, two-paneled door with large light and transom above, provides emergency egress to the back stair and exit below, as well as a second stage exit. All door frames and windows in the auditorium are appointed with classical entablatures. Other details within the space include two large, ornate cast-iron heating grates in the main floor, and two additional, non-decorative grilles mounted vertically in the wainscoting beneath the stage front.

Attic

The attic area, above the auditorium, and the space within the tower are unfinished and unheated and not designed to be publicly accessible. Catwalks, in the form of planking, are available to inspect the ceiling and roof structures, and a ladder is extant for inspection and servicing of the siren in the tower. The tower was structurally reinforced with plate steel and angle, bolted to the original timber structure, and defective timbers replaced where needed, in c. 1987. ¹⁸

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Section 7 Page 7-17 Narrative Description (Footnotes)
name of property Stevens Memorial Hall

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Footnotes

1. File: Valuable Papers, *Warranty on building of Stevens Memorial Hall & other papers pertaining to the Hall, "Agreement for Work and Materials - George G. Adams, Architect. Lawrence, Mass."* March 6, 1909, Town Clerk's Records, Town of Chester, NH, Copies of original documents conveyed to the Chester Board of Selectmen, August 9, 1999 by Evelyn Noyes; transferred to the Chester Town Clerk August 10, 1999.

2. *Annual Reports of the Selectmen, Treasurer, Overseer & Poor and Superintending School Committee of the Town of Chester for the year ending March 1st, 1885. (Derry, NH, Charles Bartlett, Printer, Bank Building, Main Street, 1885).

*Note: The "Annual Reports..." for the all of the years between 1885 - 1924 were consulted in the preparation of this document. Beginning in 1904 the selection of the printing house was subject to change but the Annual Reports continued to be printed in Derry or West Derry, NH until 1923 when the printer used was the John B. Clarke Co., Manchester, NH

3. Hub, United States Geological Survey, 461' Above Sea Level, 1951.

4. Richard Holmes, (Chester Revisited: A History in Honor of the Town's 275th Anniversary, Portsmouth, New Hampshire, Published for the Chester Historical Society by Peter E. Randall Publisher 1998), p.121.

5. Bi-Centennial Calendar of Chester, New Hampshire, Manchester, NH, (Published by the Committee on Program. Printed by John B. Clarke Co. 1922) unpagd,. and
Profile of Historical Calendar with Important Events and Pictures of Chester, NH 1722-1972. p. 17. (Unattributed/undated).

6. Biographical Information: Amos Tuck French, "The Tuck-French Family Letter Books in the Dartmouth College Library," Rauner Special Collections Library, Dartmouth College, 6065 Webster Hall, Hanover, NH, June, 1997. and
Bi-Centennial Calendar of Chester, New Hampshire. (Manchester, NH, Printed by John B. Clarke Co. 1922).

7: Richard Holmes, Chester Revisited, pp. 418-420.

8. Ibid. pp. 420-421.

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Section 7 Page 7-18 Narrative Description Footnotes
name of property Stevens Memorial Hall

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9. Ibid. p. 127.

10. Ibid. pp. 117-120.

11. Ibid. pp. 449.

12. Profile of Historical Calendar with Important Events and Pictures
of Chester, NH 1722-1972, p. 26.

13. Christine E. Pfaff. "George G. Adams: A Noted Lawrence Architect
Rediscovered," Essex institute Historical Collections. Volume 116. No.
3, (Salem, MA 1980), pp. 183, 187-88.

14. Profile of Historical Calendar with Important Events and Pictures
of Chester, NH 1722-1972, p. 16.

15. Richard Holmes, Chester Revisited, pp. 454.

16. Ibid. p. 454.

17. Profile of Historical Calendar with Important Events and Pictures
of Chester, NH 1722-1972, p. 26.

18. Interview with Colin Costine, Selectman, Town of Chester, NH,
April 22, 2002.

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name of property	<u>Stevens Memorial Hall</u>
county and State	<u>Rockingham Co., New Hampshire</u>
name of multiple property listing	N/A

EXHIBIT I - Site: Schedule of Monuments and Features

(Contributing Elements)

1. Stevens Memorial Hall (1910)
2. 1.03 acre site of Stevens Memorial Hall (1853, 1946); North portion of the site acquired in 1853; consolidated with rear (south) parcel of former Baptist Church acquired by the Town in 1946.
3. Amos Tuck French Flagpole (1909); relocated from its original location north (in front of) SMH and shortened; rehabilitated/re-dedicated May 30, 1989. Bears a bronze plaque noting "The Amos Tuck French Flagpole - 1920 Refurbished by Patriotic Residents Rededicated on Memorial Day May 30, 1989." Approx. 60' in height, wooden, two-part stepped mast; with climbing rungs and small top (platform); brass ball at top.

(Non-Contributing Elements)

1. Granite benches (2) located in park area in front of SMH (1988); south bench is marked "Dedicated to Barbara L. Dolloff Whose Vision has Woven a Loving Thread Through the Tapestry of Childhood 1988." Second bench is unmarked.
2. One granite boulder (1752); located in park area 75' in front of SMH; inscribed "Jacob Chase's Horse Block 1752."
3. Granite Millstones (1), (c. 1830); There are actually two identical stones - one is located to the right of the entrance to SMH within the grass apron (the second is off-site, on the adjacent Chester Public Library property). The one in front of SMH bears a recessed bronze tablet marked: "These Millstones are a gift to the Town of Chester by Austin G. Hunt in Memory of the Chester P. Hunt Family."
4. Sign; "Warren Cleary Memorial." (c. 1985); Steel, U-channel frame and wood; rectangular in shape; painting of UCC-BE Church in rectangular frame; topped with a swan's neck pediment. Marked "Chester, NH Incorporated 1722."
5. Sign/Announcement Board; Town of Chester (c. 1985); located on lawn northeast of SMH facing the intersection. Two, 4" x 4" posts 78" in height; plastic slide-in insert on face for changing announcements/messages; 3/4" exterior plywood or MDO construction.

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N/A

EXHIBIT II - Historic View #1: Stevens Memorial Hall 1922

Source: Chester Historical Society Photograph Archives
Photograph entitled "Chester, N.H. 1722 - 1922"

Note: Structure at left, rear of SMH is the former Baptist Church (1877), removed in 1946. Structure at right, rear is the Light Plant and Men's Toilet, removed after 1923, when SMH was converted to electricity and indoor plumbing was installed. Structure at far right is the former Webster Bros. store, now the Chester Public Library.



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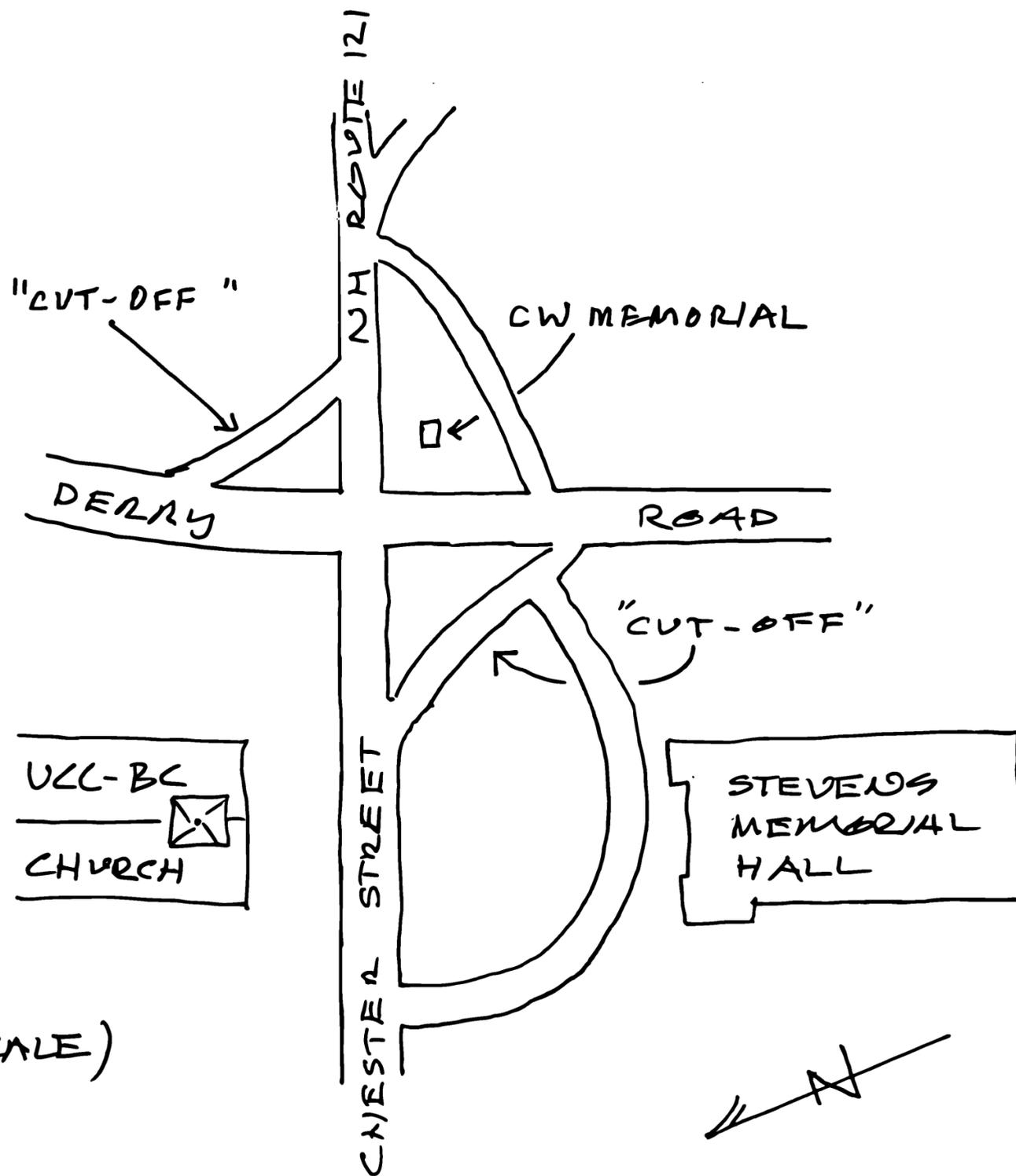
name of multiple property listing

N/A

EXHIBIT III - Sketch of Chester Center Intersection Prior to c. 1950

Prepared by: Christopher W. Closs

Source: Telephone interview with Ralph Lewis, Candia, NH July 29,
2003



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N/A

EXHIBIT IV - Historic View #2: Aerial View of Chester Square c.1976

Source: (William P. Brander, Photo, p.2.)
Holmes, Richard. Chester Revisited. A History in Honor of
the Town's 275th Anniversary. Portsmouth, New Hampshire:
Published for the Chester Historical Society by Peter E.
Randall Publisher. 1998.

Note: All "cut-offs" at Chester Square intersection eliminated
except in front of Spollett's Store; semi-circular entry drive in
front of SMH still extant, connecting with both NH Route 121 (Chester
Street) and NH Route 102 (Derry Road). The Derry Road curb cut was
later eliminated and a traffic light blinker installed.



Chester Center, circa 1976. (William P. Brander photo)

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EXHIBIT V - Historic View #3: Baptist Church (1877) Shown in Two Views
c. 1903

Source: (pp.117, 397.)

Holmes, Richard. Chester Revisited. A History in Honor of the Town's 275th Anniversary. Portsmouth, New Hampshire: Published for the Chester Historical Society by Peter E. Randall Publisher. 1998.

Note: The lower view illustrates the relationship between the Baptist Church, erected in 1877, and Chester Academy, built in 1853 upon land later used for SMH. Chester Academy was moved from this site in 1908 and relocated to Raymond Road, where it later burned on December 23, 1943.



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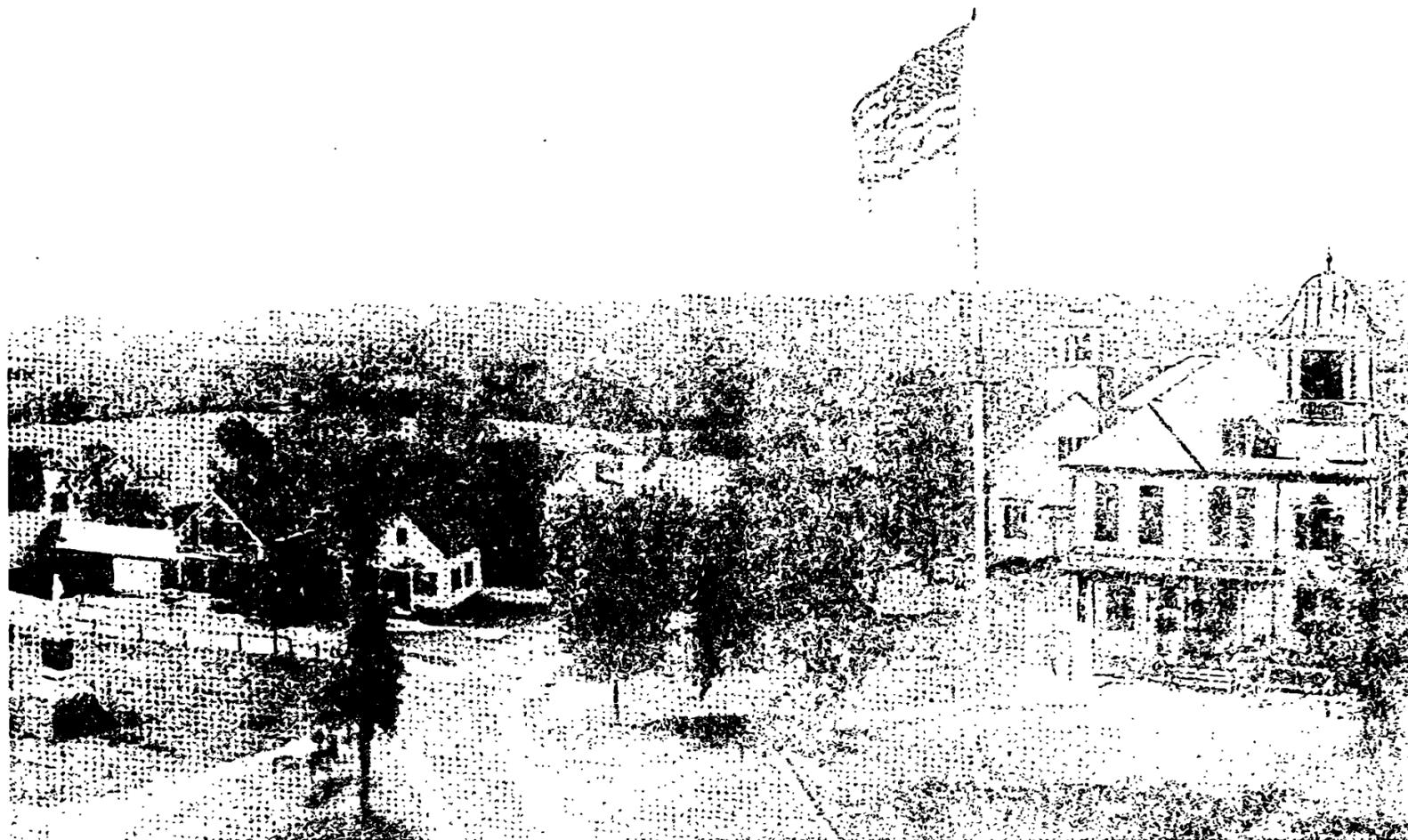
name of multiple property listing

N/A

EXHIBIT VI - Historic View#4-A: Stevens Memorial Hall c. 1920 - 1922

Source: Chester Historical Society Photograph Archives
Photograph entitled, "Chester Center, c. 1920."

Note: Baptist Church is directly behind the Amos Tuck French Flagpole and just feet from the southeast corner of SMH. Chester Free Public Library was housed in the small gable-roofed building (left of center) until 1930, when it was moved into SMH.



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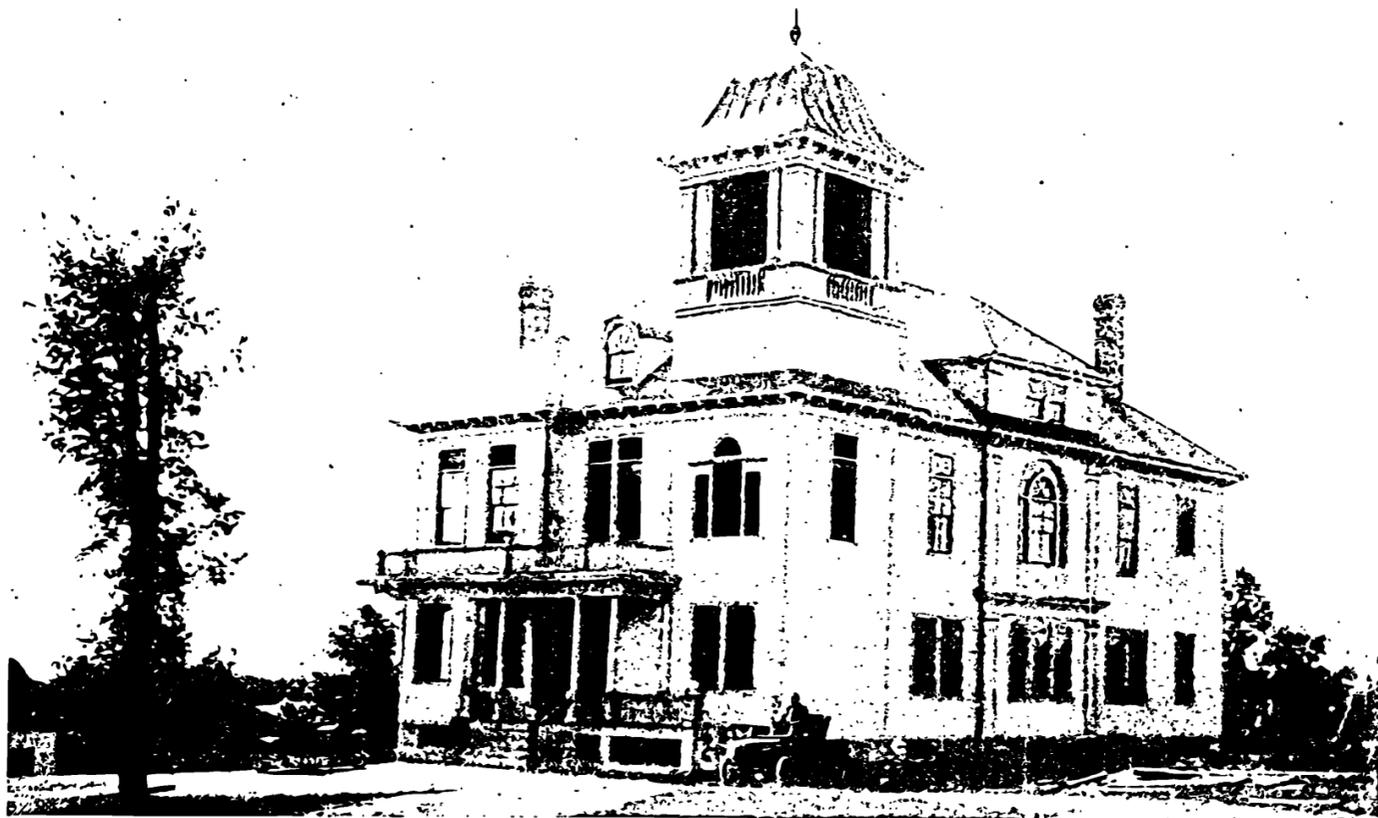
name of multiple property listing

N/A

EXHIBIT VI - Historic View#4-B: Stevens Memorial Hall c. 1920 - 1922

Source: Bi-Centennial Calendar of Chester, New Hampshire.
Manchester, NH: Published by the Committee on Program.
Printed by John B. Clarke Co. 1922. unpagued.

Note: Stevens Memorial Hall in 1922, showing original upper porch balustrade, and short section of porch and balustrade to right of entrance (both now removed).



STEVENS MEMORIAL HALL, CHESTER, N. H.

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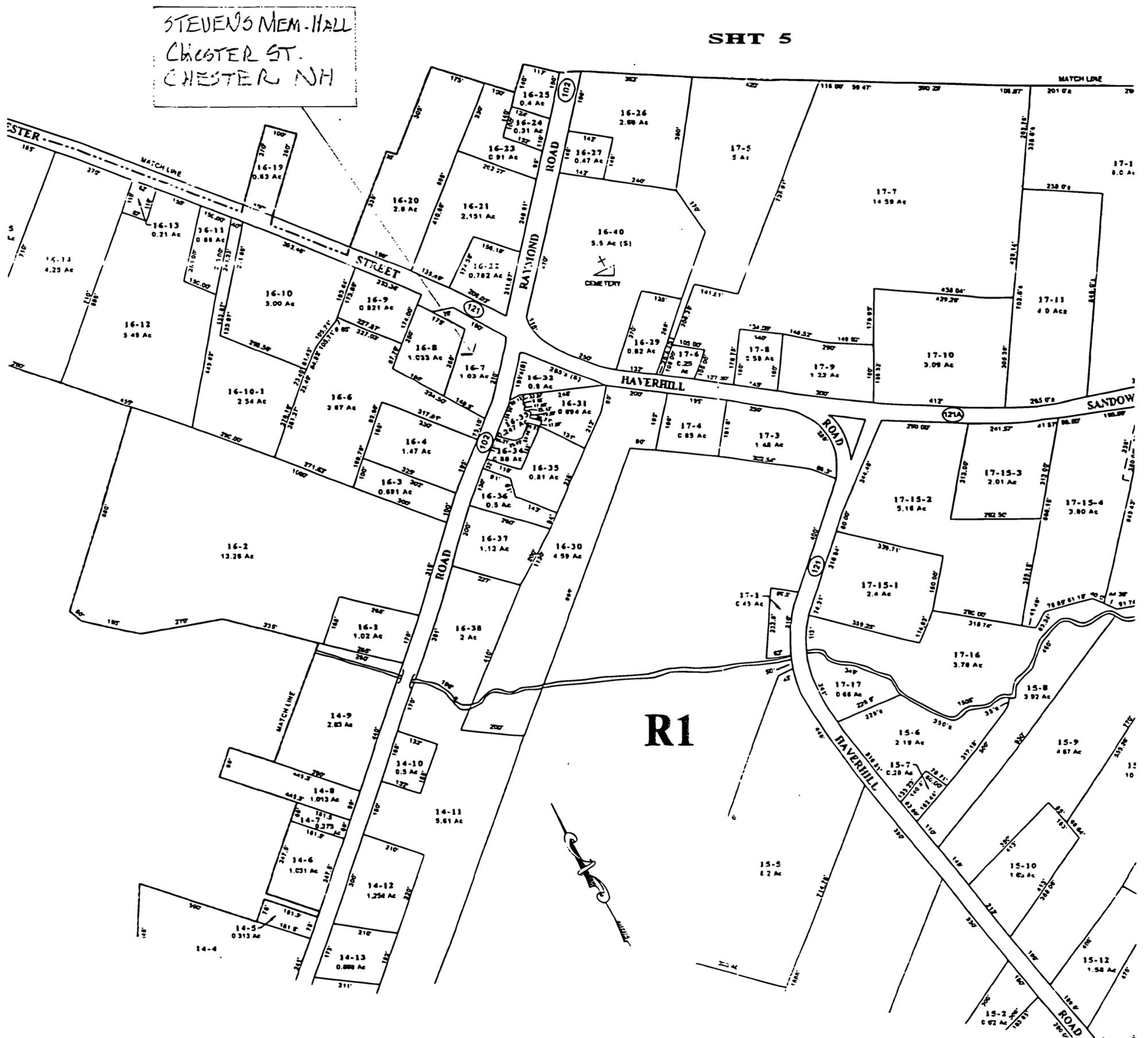
Rockingham Co., New Hampshire

name of multiple property listing

N/A

EXHIBIT VII - Property Map - Chester, N.H., Sheet 14, Lot 16-7

Source: Property Map Chester, New Hampshire. (Sheet 14). Scale 1"=200.' Auburn, NH: Dollard Associates. 73 Dollard Road. February 11, 2003.



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Section 8 Page 8-1 Narrative Statement of Significance
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Summary Statement of Significance:

Stevens Memorial Hall, erected in 1908-1910¹ and utilized as the seat of local government continuously until retired from service in 2000, is the only public building in Chester, New Hampshire constructed as a town hall for the express purpose of consolidating the functions, records, offices, meeting rooms and detention facilities of town government in this rural community. This property is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A, in the Area of Significance, Politics/Government. The Period of Significance for Criterion A spans the years 1910-1954. The building was dedicated in 1910 in memory of the benefactor, George Washington Stevens, a Chester native whose legacy from a successful career in the furniture industry in Boston funded the construction.² The building, which hosted the annual Chester Town Meeting between 1921 - 2000, also contained the Chester Free Public Library (1930 - 1981); the offices of the Board of Selectmen and the Town Clerk, the Water District's cistern and pump, and, in the latter half of the 20th century, the Planning Board and Zoning Board of Adjustment, as well the Town Jail, and the Police Department.

In addition, Stevens Memorial Hall is eligible under Criterion C, in the Area of Significance, Architecture, as Chester's only example of a public building rendered in the Queen Anne Style of architecture, and evidenced by such eclectic features as the corner tower, assymetrical façade and hipped roofs. This style is uncommon in the predominant, Colonial Style architectural vocabulary of the 18th and early 19th century buildings comprising Chester Center. Stevens Memorial Hall also represents the work of a noted architect, George Gilman Adams (1850-1932) of Lawrence, MA a prolific designer of town halls, courthouses, schools, public libraries, commercial buildings, and private homes throughout northern New England between 1875-1932, including numerous examples in New Hampshire.³ The Period of Significance under Criterion C is 1908-1910, the time frame in which the building was designed, constructed and dedicated.

Centrally located at Chester Center, Stevens Memorial Hall's design embodied the "opera house" plan which had proven popular with progressive communities across the nation during the latter half of the 19th century. A large hall, frequently including a stage and balcony, and built on the second or third floor above offices, meeting rooms and often, merchant shops at the ground level, would accommodate

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diverse public gatherings for entertainment, fraternal purposes, and programs contributing to higher education and moral improvement. The use of Stevens Memorial Hall, as evidenced by the schedule for its first year (1910) of service,⁴ typified the multi-purpose building type, with numerous Grange and Grand Army of the Republic meetings, community suppers, musicales and dramas, dances, traveling performances and lectures associated with local civic, business, and fraternal organizations. An untold number of elementary school performances were held in the auditorium until the construction of the new Chester Elementary School in 1957.

Stevens Memorial Hall retains integrity of its original location at the crossroads known as Chester Center, the traditional civic, governmental, religious and commercial center of this early 18th century community; through its intact, Queen Anne Style exterior and interior design, plan, features and finishes; and by virtue of its prominent, park-like, corner setting at the intersection of two historic highways; through continued use of original early 20th century materials; and expression of quality workmanship. This well-maintained building and site, which has embodied the center of Chester's civic and governmental activity for nearly a century, continues to convey the feeling and association of progressive community design espoused through the City Beautiful Movement (1893 - c. 1910), which is expressed through both its neo-classical, albeit eclectic formality, multiple facades, deep setbacks from the public way, and typical white color scheme.

Stevens Memorial Hall was retired in 2000 after 90 years of continuous service; the town offices were moved approximately 2000' west along Chester Street to larger quarters in the former Chester Elementary School, which was surplused in 1978. Thus, the evolving, 272-year tradition, beginning with the location of the first "meeting house" and its successors at Chester Center, has been maintained.

Historical Background and Settlement of the Chestnut Country

Several historical determinants may be seen to have coalesced in the decision to erect Stevens Memorial Hall at Chester Center in 1908-1910. First, it is necessary to understand the historical context of previous meeting houses in Chester, NH and the development of the town center from the period from its earliest settlement in the 1720s.

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Prior to partitioning in 1739, the Province of New Hampshire remained a part of Massachusetts, and was governed by the Royal Governor, Samuel Shute, Esq. The signing of the Treaty of New Utrecht in 1713 ended Queen Anne's War and, for a time, forestalled continued unrest and violence along the frontier between the English and the French, and their Native American allies. The allure of the vast, undeveloped lands of northern New England, controlled nominally, by appointees of the English throne, invited land speculation by wealthy, politically-influential groups of men who would be entitled "Proprietors." In the summer of 1719, a Society was formed by inhabitants of Hampton, Haverhill, Newbury and Portsmouth for the purpose of "settling the Chestnut Country,"⁵ and a petition submitted to Governor Shute for an unsurveyed tract of land thought to be 120 square miles in area, and roughly extending from the existing Exeter and Kingston grants on the east, to the Merrimack River on the west. Disputes ensued between rival Portsmouth and Haverhill interests, and the first petition was soon withdrawn. Later, in 1720, each group blazed a new road to what is now Chester, NH from the two respective towns,⁶ pressing their claims. The intersection of these two rude cart paths - Kingston Road and Haverhill Road, formed the basis of contemporary NH State Route 102 (Londonderry-Raymond Road) and Route 121 (Chester Street - Haverhill Road) - which together form today's roadway plan at Chester Center. The Haverhill Road was extended to Pennicook (Concord) and was to become a major thoroughfare for settlement of the Upper Merrimack River Valley and the uncharted wilderness west of the river.

A survey was conducted later in 1719 and determined the tract to be far larger than anticipated - nearly 158 square miles, or roughly 100,000 acres. These lands were subsequently divided to form the townships of Auburn, Candia, Chester, Derryfield (Manchester), Hooksett, and Raymond, and augmented the existing Town of Sandown along the southeast border.

Following a period of political negotiation, compromise, restructuring of its membership, and thinly-veiled bribery, including tithing of lands to both the Royal Governor and his Provincial subordinate, Lt. Gov. John Wentworth of Portsmouth, a second petition was prepared and submitted on behalf of the 127 Proprietors of the Cheshire Township.⁷ On August 26, 1720 Governor Shute decreed that these lands were granted to the newly-realigned Portsmouth interests and settlement shortly commenced, with 24 individuals from Haverhill and Hampton journeying into the interior and erecting cabins,

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initially. It is believed that the first settler, Captain Samuel Ingalls, blacksmith, erected the first frame house in Chester in 1732, on Walnut Hill.⁸

Chester Center Plan

On May 8, 1722, Governor Shute, in his last act, issued Chester's town charter; the first town meeting was held on March 28, 1723. Some controversy followed during the first year, regarding where the center of town should be located, initial settlements having already begun at Walnut Hill and in Hall's Village (cemetery), while the parsonage lot was laid out at the principal road junction (Chester Center). Vitally situated on a defensible hill, and with improved transportation access, the Proprietors declared that the four-corners area was most suitable, and accordingly laid out Chester Street on a grand boulevard scale - 10 rods (165') in width, reflecting European city planning ideas from the Enlightenment.⁹

First Meeting Houses

It was not until the town meeting of March 28, 1728 however, that the inhabitants voted *where* to build the first meeting house. At this pivotal meeting, the franchisees, comprised chiefly of adherents of the Congregational Church determined, "That the place called the center where the four principal roads meet being near the minister's lot be the place for setting up the meetinghouse."¹⁰ By this decision, it was "ordained that the Chester hill would be the future social, educational, political, and religious center of the town and not Hall's Village or Walnut Hill,"¹¹ thus providing a central location, replacing private homes used theretofore, which would accommodate both religious services as well as town meeting. The vote to erect the first meeting house occurred on October 7, 1729, and the 50' by 38' two story building was completed in 1732, situated on the triangular parcel within the broad right of way of Chester Street, where the Civil War Memorial stands today.¹² (This location is approximately 200' north-northeast of Stevens Memorial Hall.) Moses Hale was appointed as the first minister and the first town meeting was held March 25, 1732.

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In spite of its vast area and the continued threat of Indian incursions, the agricultural development and growth of Chester proceeded rapidly; by 1735 the population was estimated to be 300 - 350 persons.¹³ The first school was established in 1737; nine schools were in operation by 1758.¹⁴ Discontent however, began to foment almost from the onset between the "two Societies" (the Presbyterians and the Orthodox or Congregationalists) which led to both organizations incorporating separately by 1740 and the appointment of Ebenezer Flagg as the second Congregational minister.¹⁵ For many years thereafter, the annual town meeting was held alternately in the East and West Parishes, to satisfy this division. Additionally, the gradual partitioning of the more distant lands within the original royal grant began in the 1750s with the incorporation of the new townships of Derryfield (Fourth Division, 1751; later renamed Manchester); Candia (Third Division, 1763); and Raymond (Old Hundred Acre Lots, 1765).

Second Meeting Houses

The Presbyterian Society, composed mainly of Scots-Irish, forged ahead independently and erected their own meeting house on Ministerial Road in 1738, and subsequently replacing that structure with a new building in 1793 which was utilized until its closure in 1842.¹⁶ The schism alluded to above, along with Chester's burgeoning population (1189 souls in 1772) foreshadowed the movement several decades later, to construct a new, larger Congregational Meeting House. Under the leadership of Rev. Ebenezer Flagg, who agreed to donate the land from his two "minister's" lots, the Parish voted, on March 28, 1772 to build, within two years, a new meeting house "sixty feet long, and forty five feet wide, and a suitable height."¹⁷ The first Chester Town Meeting held in the still extant building, which stands about 130' north of the original building and directly across Chester Street from Stevens Memorial Hall, took place on March 28, 1775 and was continued on alternate years until the construction of Chester Academy in 1853. The original meeting house was taken down in 1774. The Proprietorship (originally entitled The Society for the Settling of the Chestnut Country) ended on November 14, 1794 with the public

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auction of all remaining lands, which were acquired by Steven Chase. John Emerson, the Proprietor's secretary, settled all accounts and officially closed the organization's business on March 16, 1795. ¹⁸

Agriculture and Trade: Prosperity and Development at Chester Center

Chester Center continued to develop as a center of commerce and trade in the latter half of the 18th century, primarily as a result of its vantage point along a primary transportation artery (Haverhill Road) which extended into New Hampshire's western interior, and, following the close of the American Revolution, the territory in Vermont. The town lacked a major source of waterpower and sites for manufacturing on a large scale; nonetheless Chester Street became a popular stopover destination for farmers, cattle drovers, tradesmen, ware merchants and peddlers plying the scattered markets between the Connecticut River Valley and Haverhill and Newburyport on the seacoast. Numerous inns, taverns, artisan shops and fine Georgian and Federal Style homes, which remain extant today, proliferated at Chester Center. Several stagecoach lines intersected at Chester as well, carrying both mail and passengers between Concord and Boston, and Londonderry, Exeter and Portsmouth. Although construction of the Chester Turnpike in 1805 shortened the trip to Concord by 2 miles, the opening of the Middlesex Canal in 1793, and subsequent completion, in 1815, of the Amoskeag Canal for through-traffic between Concord and Boston along the Merrimack River, heralded the beginning of the decline of Chester's economic fortunes as a center of agricultural commerce.

Religious Pluralism and Evolution of Town Meeting

The widespread practice in early New England communities of utilizing the (Congregational) Meeting House for conducting the annual business affairs of town government (town meeting), as well as for weekly religious worship, evolved over time in the 18th century. While religious tolerance was - in principle - an accepted tenet of community organization and governance in the colonial settlements of North America, strains developed as religious pluralism began to flourish, evident with the rift which developed in Chester between the Presbyterians and the Congregationalists, which was resolved in 1740. Principally, members of the minority faith(s) objected to being taxed for the operation and maintenance of church property used for town government purposes. The Toleration Act of 1819, enacted by the New

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Hampshire Legislature, finally ended this practice by prohibiting towns, as corporate bodies, from raising public funds for the support of the gospel. One source ¹⁹ reveals that for a period of time, at least between 1846 - 1854, "Town meetings were held in the Meeting House, until after the town stopped having meetings in the West and East Parish, and the people were of several denominations. The Proprietorship ceased, and the meetings were held in Quiggs Hall. That was the hall built over the carriage sheds of the hotel (identified as the Chester Inn)..."

Other churches formed in Chester during the early 19th century but the town meeting continued to be held in the Congregational Meeting House, which was rented for a fee by the Selectmen. The Methodist Society was organized c. 1809 and built their church in the northwestern part of Chester in 1851; this building collapsed from the winter snow load in 1963, years after the Society had ceased to exist.

In 1819 the First Regular Baptist Society was formed, erecting their first church edifice on Haverhill Road in 1823. Desiring to reinforce their fluctuating membership following reorganization in 1846 and seeking a more prominent location, the Baptist Society purchased in 1860, a small lot at Chester Center - while razing the first church - and erected a new, simplified Greek Revival Style house of worship on land directly behind the present location of Stevens Memorial Hall. The pulpit within this building was carved by George Washington Stevens. On January 30, 1876 the Baptist Church burned - but was replaced with a nearly identical structure at the same location, the following year. The pulpit carved by Stevens was saved from the fire and re-installed in the new church in 1877. ²⁰ In 1942, as a symbol of continuity and consistent with the merger with the Congregationalists, Steven's pulpit was removed from the Baptist Church prior to its razing in 1946, and reinstalled in the Congregational Meeting House, where it stands to this day.

Emigration, Economic Decline and Transition

By 1850, Chester's population had peaked at 1351 persons, and would not recover to pre-Civil War levels until 1960. Partitioning of the remaining additional towns had occurred with incorporation of Hooksett (1822) and finally, Auburn (1845). The railroad arrived in New Hampshire with the Concord & Nashua RR reaching the state capitol in

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1842, which effectively terminated New Hampshire's canal era and created new competition among communities seeking to sustain and expand their local agricultural and manufacturing economies. While steadily loosing population through abandonment to the promise of fertile lands in the opening of the American West, Chester struggled to maintain its former prosperity. Bypassed first in 1860 and later by the railroad planned between Nashua and Rochester in 1872, Chester suffered the isolation as the only town in Rockingham County lacking railhead access. The opening of the Chester & Derry Street Railroad in 1896 however, which connected with the Boston and Maine Railroad 7.75 miles to the southwest and carried both freight and passengers, helped counter the deleterious effects of farm abandonment and the difficulty of getting local produce to markets. The car barn at the Chester terminal was erected several hundred yards west of Stevens Memorial Hall along Chester Street, while the tracks skirted the south side of the town hall property before aligning with the right of way of the Derry Road.

Chester's relative remoteness and solitude, yet favorable proximity to nearby communities having excellent passenger rail service, led to the community's growing popularity in the late 19th century for a colony of summer residents comprised of city dwellers from Boston, New York and other eastern seaboard centers. Indeed, by 1899 Chester could enumerate 250 full season visitors and 150 short term guests, residing in 16 separate establishments. The last of these, Homedale Farm, closed in 1942. ²¹

Chester Academy and a Hall for Town Meeting

As early as 1840, reflecting a growing secularism, and shortly after a sustained and successful campaign to "modernize" the Congregational Meeting House (which had been turned ninety degrees upon its axis and remodeled in the Greek Revival architectural style), civic-minded leaders submitted the first of many proposals before the town meeting, to construct a town house, or town hall. This initiative failed and was not approved until the third petition for this purpose was considered in 1853, in conjunction with a proposal to establish a private academy in the community. Under this plan, approved at a special town meeting on August 9th, and a subsequent vote the following month, the land of Rogers would be acquired for \$200 by the Trustees of Chester Academy and the Town would expend \$1000 for construction, the balance of \$500 to be raised by popular subscription. Following

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further convolutions at the 1854 town meeting and an attempt at rescission, the Academy Trustees moved decisively and acquired the property, erecting a two-story, 50' by 32' Greek Revival Style building for the sum of \$2500. The following year, the Academy sold the building to the Town of Chester for \$1250, with the stipulation that the upper floor would be controlled by the Trustees for academic purposes, while the lower floor could be used as a town hall.²²

Chester Academy occupied the land immediately in front (north) of where Stevens Memorial Hall stands today - now the memorial park - and served as the town hall until 1910. Its forty years of operation as a private academy represented the most successful of several efforts to introduce higher education to the Chester community (which had no high school), and which acquired more urgency after the town was bypassed by the railroads in 1860, leaving students to walk the nearly 16-mile round trip to Pinkerton Academy in Derry until 1896, if they wished to pursue a secondary education. The range of subjects taught at the co-educational institution during the 11-week semester included art, music, botany, economics, writing, spelling, grammar, ancient and modern history, public speaking, arithmetic, geometry, algebra, as well as classical languages.

Chester Academy graduated over 2000 alumni/ae but closed in 1893 on account of declining student enrollment and financial concerns. The last alumni/ae reunion was held in 1936. Dr. Edmund R. Angell, former state chemist and principal of Pinkerton Academy, presided as the last headmaster of Chester Academy. Angell was later hired to install the acetylene gas interior lighting system - which he had developed - in Stevens Memorial Hall in 1909. In 1912 a one-year high school program was established in Chester and expanded to two years; the first graduation was held in Stevens Memorial Hall in 1915. During the Spanish Influenza outbreak of 1919 the school closed and was never reopened.²³

Origins of Construction of Stevens Memorial Hall

The town hall at Chester Academy, like its successor, soon became the center of community civic and cultural life. In an affirmative resolution of tolerance, the town voted in 1859 to allow all religious groups, and the local agricultural society, use of the hall at no charge. Weekly church services, lectures covering abolition,

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temperance, women's rights and wide-ranging political philosophies were a constant venue, along with local theater groups, medicine shows, dances and dinners. Demand soon exceeded space capacity and, by 1879, seating had to be increased, followed by construction of a stage in 1882. In 1885 the first petition to enlarge the building was considered at town meeting but construction was delayed. By 1890, residents were recognizing the need for a new, larger structure. Subsequent efforts in this vein, in 1896, 1897, 1898, 1905 and 1907 failed before the town meeting.²⁴

In 1907, George Washington Stevens (1817 - 1907), a native of Chester, passed away in Everett, MA leaving to the Town of Chester a principal legacy later determined to be \$11,396.35. It was Stevens' wish that this sum be used to construct a new town hall. This unexpected largesse catalyzed the community and at the 1908 Town Meeting three articles (Nos. 7., 11. and 13.) were passed which set in motion the design and construction of the new town hall. These included provision for the construction of a water works; the vote to accept the legacies of the late George W. Stevens; and a decision to sell or move the old town hall.²⁵ A Town Hall Building Committee was formed which included, initially, Albert M. Hardy, George D. Rand, Addison A. Bean, John M. Webster, and George S. West. Later, Edwin P. Jones, John H. Robie, and G.E. Gillingham replaced Messrs. Bean and West, and Col. George A. Hosley joined the Committee.

One of the Committee's first acts was to evaluate the new town halls erected at Enfield (1901; designed by architect C. W. Flanders)) and New Durham, NH (1908; the latter having been designed by prominent NH architect Alvah Thurston Ramsdell of Dover.) Architect Ramsdell was subsequently paid \$200 later in 1908 for plans.²⁶ The design of Stevens Memorial Hall is quite similar to the New Durham and Enfield structures, both of which exhibit dominant corner towers, asymmetrical design and Queen Anne stylistic influences. The Committee also recommended that the best site for the new building would be upon land already owned by the town - the small Chester Academy plat. It is unclear why Ramsdell's design (plans have not been found) was not ultimately selected by the budget-conscious Committee.

At the next special town meeting, November 3, 1908, residents voted to appropriate \$280 and accept the plans of architect George G. Adams of Lawrence, MA who had recently completed the Adams Memorial Building (1904) in Derry, NH; and to expend \$750 for the purchase of one acre

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of land owned by Mrs. Annie Morse Sprague as a site for which to relocate the old town hall (formerly Chester Academy). The old building was moved that year to a new site on the east side of the Raymond Road (NH Route 102), just north of the cemetery, where a full basement was excavated for storage of town road equipment. The building continued in service as a district schoolhouse until it was consumed by a chimney fire on December 23, 1943.²⁷

The contract for construction was awarded to Cyrus A. Martin of Londonderry, NH the low bidder, following submission of seven bids.²⁸ The construction contract was signed March 9, 1909²⁹ and actual construction appears to have commenced in early April, 1909 with final disbursements being made on February 15, 1910 on budget, and conforming precisely to the amount of the Stevens legacy (\$11,396.35).³⁰

Stevens Memorial Hall was dedicated March 29, 1910 in a ceremony which included a large crowd, male quartet from Boston and an orchestra from Nashua. The Rev. E.C.E. Dorian was the orator, who paid tribute to George Washington Stevens, members of whose family were in attendance. The hall began its long service two days later with a presentation of the theatrical production, *Down in Maine*, produced by the Chester Dramatic Club. It remains unclear why the first March town meeting was not held in the new building until 1921, the assembly continuing to hold the meeting in the old, relocated town hall on Raymond Road.³¹

The Architect: George Gilman Adams (1850 - 1932)³²

George G. Adams was a native of Rochester, New Hampshire, having been born there August 26, 1850. His parents, Benjamin G. and Sophie Adams relocated to Lawrence, Massachusetts in 1854, where he remained for the remainder of his life.

The first phase of Adams' career began at about age twenty. Adams, skilled in drawing, initially trained with a local engineer, Baldwin Coolidge, for about two years, and then decided to pursue the profession of architecture. In 1872 Adams became the apprentice of Lawrence architect Charles T. Emerson, in whose service he labored

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until March, 1878 when Emerson relocated to Boston and Adams opened his own practice.

Adams' long and successful practice in Lawrence included commissions for more than 70 buildings, including commercial blocks, city and town halls, libraries, and private homes erected throughout northern New England and New York. The early phase of the architect's career was largely consumed designing private residences, commercial and civic buildings in the burgeoning textile city of Lawrence between 1879 and 1890. Many of these buildings consisted of elaborate brick and stone masonry structures, and redesign of existing commercial block facades. The first known government building designed by Adams in this period was the new town hall (1887) for Bellows Falls, Vermont a structure which typified the "town hall building type," embodying municipal offices with an opera house, or large auditorium for meetings and performances.³³ In 1889, Adams embarked upon plans for two, Dover, New Hampshire buildings - the Strafford County Courthouse and the City Hall. The resulting buildings expressed recurring themes of Adams' designs - a strongly expressed corner tower and use of Romanesque Revival Style and detail, particularly the use of round arched windows.

Between 1890 - 1899, Adams is known to have executed plans for at least 20 structures, representing a wide range of building types, beginning with construction of his own office on Essex Street. During this period, Adams' most successful commission was undoubtedly the Lawrence Free Public Library (1892), erected in the Richardsonian Romanesque Style utilizing brownstone, sandstone and light granite, which established precedent for the similar Stow, MA library of 1894. The designs Adams produced during this period reveal that the architect employed the Queen Anne Style as early as 1892, combining it with the emerging Colonial Revival Style influences (Redford House, Lawrence, MA), and later in the Gaebler House (Lawrence, MA 1897) as the popularity of the eclectic styles of the late 19th century waned. Adams designed his last Romanesque Revival commission in 1896 - the Lawrence High Water Tower - a still-extant and prominent city landmark.

The later phase of Adams' career (1890 - 1917) was equally prolific, with commissions from Maine, Vermont, New Hampshire and New York extending the scope of his work.³⁴ An incomplete listing of Adams' work in New Hampshire during this period includes the following:

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- Nashua Police Station (1890)
- Rockingham County Courthouse (1893-94)
- Keene YMCA (1894)
- IOOF Temple, Derry (1898)
- Adams Memorial Building, Derry (1904)
- Furber Memorial Chapel, Forest Glade Cemetery, Somersworth ?
- Rochester City Hall (1907)
- Stevens Memorial Hall, Chester (1909-10)

Other town halls designed by Adams during this period include those in Waterville, ME (1897); and Montpelier, VT (1909-11).

In 1917, Adams submitted final designs for the Lawrence Masonic Temple, which due to the high cost during wartime, was deferred until 1921. In the interim Adams had retired but returned to his profession for the final phase of his career when construction began on what most consider his most masterful work, one of the largest temples in New England.

In 1923, Adams, under his design, supervised the reconstruction of the Lawrence City Hall; he continued to work until shortly before his death on November 28, 1932 and is buried in Union Cemetery in Amesbury, MA. A respected designer, Adams was, at the time of his death, recognized as an architect "with a statewide reputation,...regarded as the oldest practicing member of his profession in the state." ³⁵

Stevens Memorial Hall is representative of the work of architect George Gilman Adams' long and distinguished career in both urban and small town settings, and expresses competence and mastery in the design of a specific building type (town hall) during a period of distinct stylistic transition at the dawn of the 20th century, while exhibiting fine craftsmanship of the period 1910.

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1. Adams, George G. Selections from an Architects Portfolio. Chicago: Joseph D. Clement. 520 Reaper Block. Undated, c. 1898. Located in the local history archive of the Lawrence (MA) Public Library, under the supervision of Louise Sanders, archivist.
2. *Annual Reports of the Selectmen, Treasurer, Overseer & Poor and Superintending School Committee of the Town of Chester for the year ending March 1st, 1885. Derry, NH: Charles Bartlett, Printer, Bank Building, Main Street.
*Note: The "Annual Reports..." for the all of the years between 1885 - 1924 were consulted in the preparation of this document. Beginning in 1904 the selection of the printing house was subject to change but the Annual Reports continued to be printed in Derry or West Derry, NH until 1923 when the printer used was the John B. Clarke Co., Manchester, NH
3. Annual Reports of the Selectmen, Treasurer, Overseer & Poor and Superintending School Committee of the Town of Chester for the years ending March 1st, 1890, 1896, 1897, 1898. Derry, NH: Charles Bartlett, Printer, Bank Building, Main Street. and Annual Reports... of the Town of Chester for the years ending March 1, 1905. West Derry, NH: The Derry News Press. 1905; and for 1907. West Derry, NH: "News"Print. Birch Street. 1907
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5. Annual Report... of the Town of Chester for the year ending March 1, 1909. "Expense of the Town Hall Committee." Derry, NH: "News-Enterprise Print." Birch Street. 1909.
6. Annual Report... of the Town of Chester for the year ending March 1, 1908. Warrant Articles 7, 11, 13. Derry, NH: "News-Enterprise Print." Birch Street. 1908.
7. Annual Report... of the Town of Chester for the year ending March 1, 1910. "Report of the Stevens Memorial Hall Committee." Derry, NH: "News-Enterprise Print." Birch Street. 1910.

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Section 9 Page 9-2 Major Bibliographical References
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county and State Rockingham County, New Hampshire

name of multiple property listing N/A

8. Bell, Charles. "Facts Relating to the Early History of Chester, collected by Charles Bell, 1851." Manuscript. Located in the collection of the Chester Historical Society, Stevens Memorial Hall, Chester Street, Chester, NH.

9. Bi-Centennial Calendar of Chester, New Hampshire. Manchester, NH: Published by the Committee on Program. Printed by John B. Clarke Co. 1922. unpagged.

10. Biographical Information: Amos Tuck French. "The Tuck-French Family Letter Books in the Dartmouth College Library." Rauner Special Collections Library. Dartmouth College, 6065 Webster Hall, Hanover, NH. June, 1997.

11. File: Valuable Papers. *Warranty on building of Stevens Memorial Hall & other papers pertaining to the Hall*. March 6, 1909. "Agreement for Work and Materials - George G. Adams, Architect. Lawrence, Mass." Town Clerk's Records, Town of Chester, NH. Copies of original documents conveyed to the Chester Board of Selectmen, August 9, 1999 by Evelyn Noyes; transferred to the Chester Town Clerk August 10, 1999.

12. Holmes, Richard. Chester Revisited. A History in Honor of the Town's 275th Anniversary. Portsmouth, New Hampshire: Published for the Chester Historical Society by Peter E. Randall Publisher. 1998.

13. Hub. United States Geological Survey. 461' Above Sea Level. 1951.

14. "Summary of Stevens Memorial Hall Account." Annual Report of the Selectmen, Treasurer, Overseer & Poor and Superintending School Committee of the Town of Chester for the year ending February 15, 1910. Derry, NH: News-Enterprise Print. Birch Street. 1910.

15. Obituary. "George G. Adams, Well Known Architect, Dead." Lawrence Eagle-Tribune. November 29, 1932. and

16. Obituary. "George G. Adams, Noted Architect Taken by Death." Lawrence Telegram. November 29, 1932.

17. Pfaff, Christine E. George G. Adams: A Noted Lawrence Architect Rediscovered. Essex institute Historical Collections. Volume 116. No.3. pp. 176-195. Salem, MA. 1980.

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
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Section 9 Page 9-3 Major Bibliographical References
name of property Stevens Memorial Hall

county and State Rockingham County, New Hampshire

name of multiple property listing N/A

Secondary Sources:

1. Profile of Historical Calendar with Important Events and Pictures of Chester, NH 1722-1972. p. 17. Unattributed/undated.
2. Interview with Colin Costine, Chester Board of Selectmen, April 22, 2002 regarding method and date of reinforcement of the corner tower of Stevens Memorial Hall.
3. No author. "Chester's Bicentennial." The Granite Monthly. Volume LIV. No. 10. 1922. Concord, NH: Publishers Harlan C. Pearson. The Granite Monthly Company. 1922.
4. Property Map Chester, New Hampshire. (Sheet 14). Scale 1"=200.' Auburn, NH: Dollard Associates. 73 Dollard Road. February 11, 2003.
5. Property Assessment Record, Town of Chester. "Town Hall." Map 16 - Lot 7. 1978, 1979, 1986, 1989, 1997.
6. Property Assessment Record, Town of Chester. "Town Hall - Stevens Memorial Hall." Parcel #016-007. VISION: 2205 Chester, NH. 1999.
7. Telephone interview with Ralph Lewis, Candia, NH July 29, 2003 regarding the configuration of the Chester Square intersection and roadway improvements 1945 - 1976.

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CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section **10** Geographical Data Page 1
name of property

Boundary Justification
Stevens Memorial Hall

county and State

Rockingham Co., New Hampshire

name of multiple property listing

N/A

Boundary Justification

Stevens Memorial Hall is situated on the lot of record, Map 16, Lot 7 recorded in the Property Map of the Town of Chester, NH. (See Section 7., Exhibit VII).

The boundary includes Stevens Memorial Hall, the park area and open space bordering the building, and the shared portion of the entry drive (shared with the Chester Public Library). The configuration of the current site has existed since 1945, when the Town of Chester acquired the land formerly owned by the Baptist Church, whose land holding and church edifice occupied the southeastern corner of the present site beginning in 1860. The church building was removed by 1946.

Prior to 1945, the Town of Chester owned the (north) portion of the site formerly occupied by Chester Academy (1853), which housed the previous town hall on the first floor. (See Section 7., Exhibit V) The Town acquired this parcel in 1854 and relocated the old Chester Academy building to another site in 1908, to enable the construction of Stevens Memorial Hall at its current location.

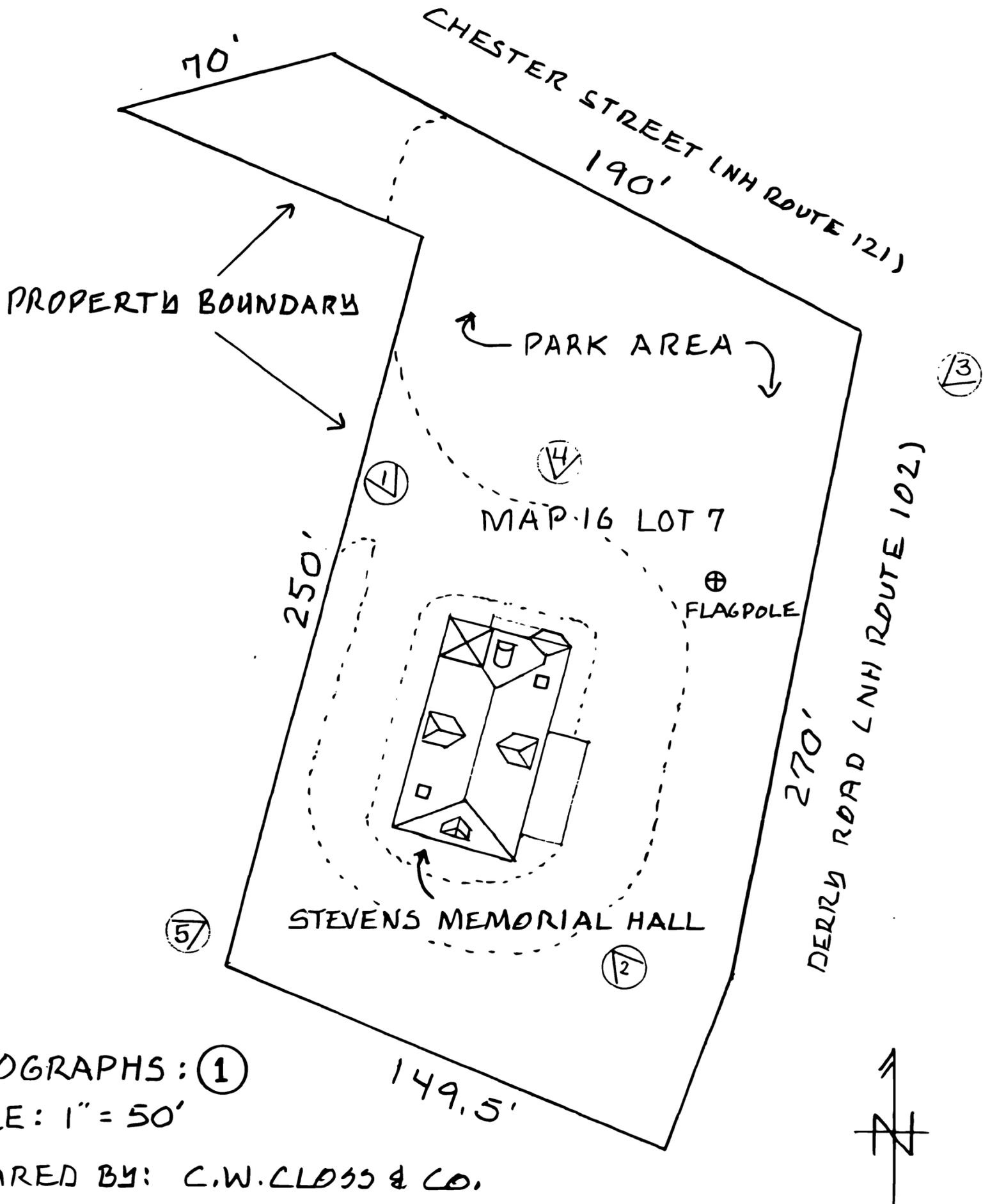
The irregular 110+/-' x 70' peninsula of land of Lot 7, which extends toward the northwest is driveway road access to Chester Street, provides the vehicular entry to the property now shared with the library and the US Post Office adjacent.

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
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Section Additional Documentation Page 1 Sketch Map
name of property Stevens Memorial Hall

county and State Rockingham Co., New Hampshire

name of multiple property listing N/A



PHOTOGRAPHS: ①

SCALE: 1" = 50'

PREPARED BY: C.W. CLOSS & CO.

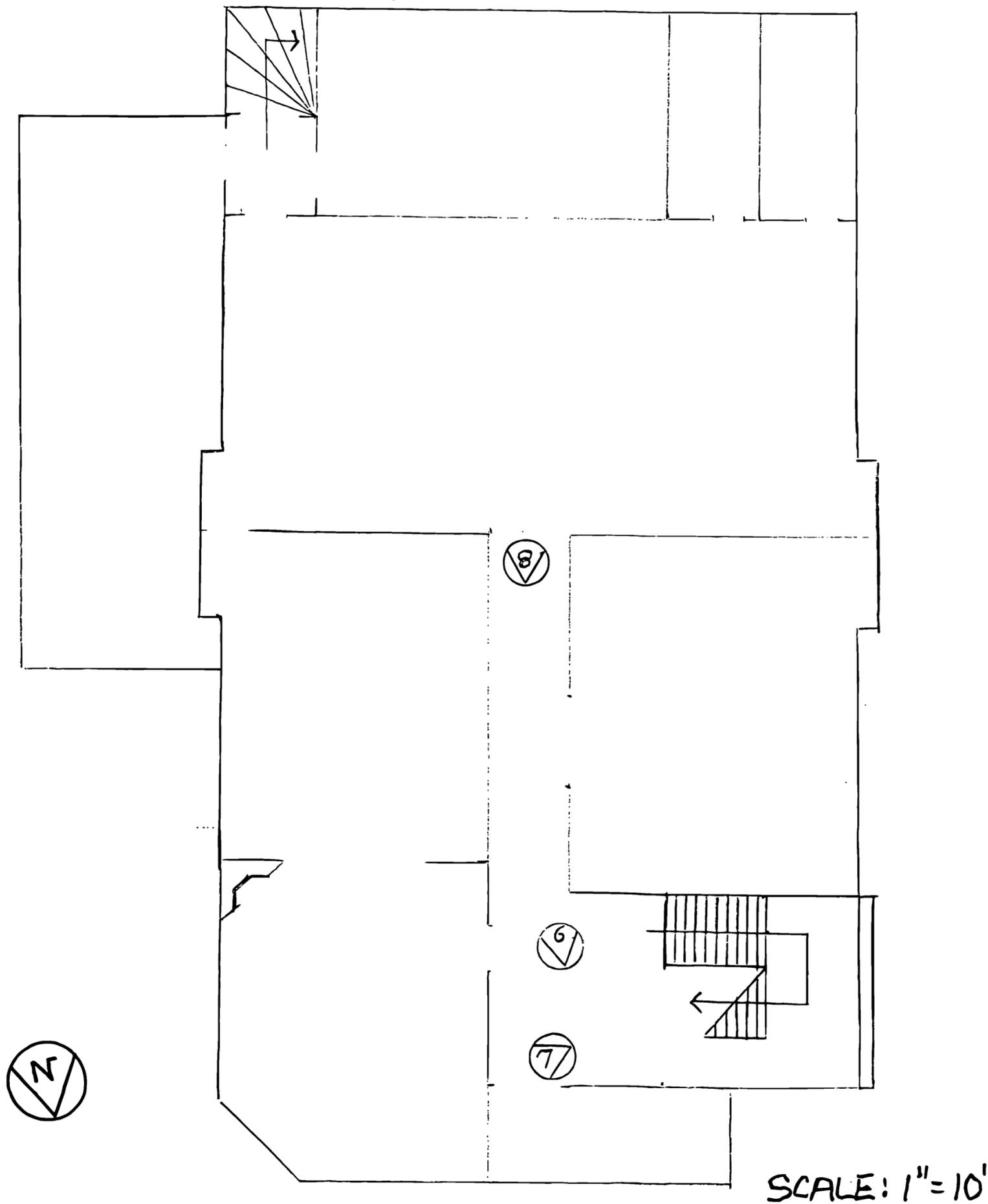
APRIL 16, 2004

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section Additional Documentation Page 2 1st Floor Plan / Photo Key
name of property Stevens Memorial Hall

county and State Rockingham Co., New Hampshire

name of multiple property listing N/A

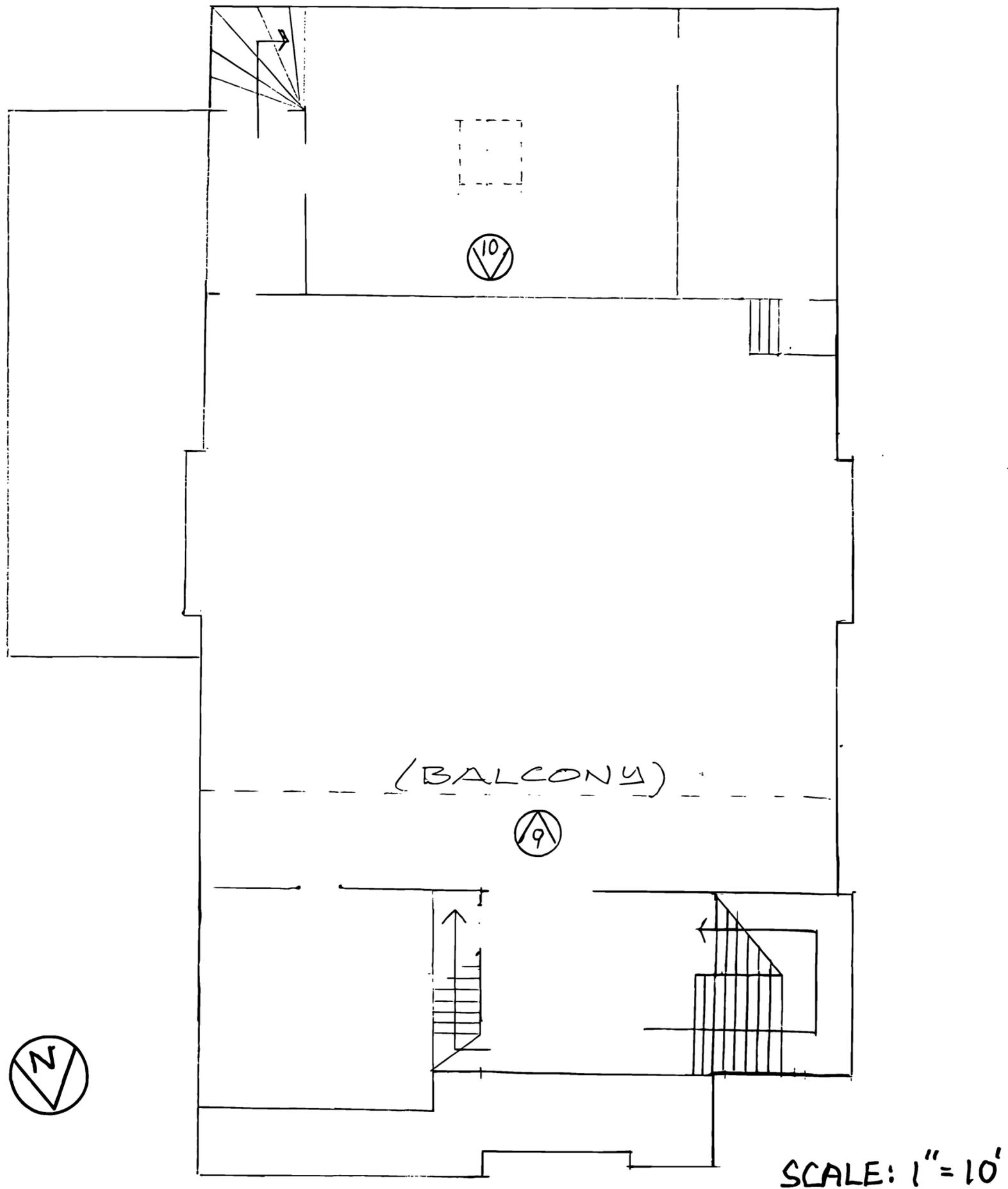


NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section Additional Documentation Page **3** 2nd Floor Plan / Photo Key
name of property Stevens Memorial Hall

county and State Rockingham Co., New Hampshire

name of multiple property listing N/A



**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section Additional Documentation Page 1 Photographs (Label Sheet)
name of property Stevens Memorial Hall

county and State Rockingham Co., New Hampshire

name of multiple property listing N/A

Photograph Labels

Photograph #1

Name of Property: Stevens Memorial Hall
County and State: Rockingham Co., New Hampshire
Name of Photographer: Christopher W. Closs
Date of Photograph: June 16, 2003
Loc.of Original Negative: C. W. Closs and Company. Hopkinton, NH
Description of View: View SE - Three-quarter view of N and W Elvs.

Photograph #2

Name of Property: Stevens Memorial Hall
County and State: Rockingham Co., New Hampshire
Name of Photographer: Christopher W. Closs
Date of Photograph: June 16, 2003
Loc.of Original Negative: C. W. Closs and Company. Hopkinton, NH
Description of View: View NW - Three-quarter view of S and E Elvs, depicting handicapped access portico and sally port additions built in 1984; nearby Chester Public Library behind SMH at left.

Photograph #3

Name of Property: Stevens Memorial Hall
County and State: Rockingham Co., New Hampshire
Name of Photographer: Christopher W. Closs
Date of Photograph: June 16, 2003
Loc.of Original Negative: C. W. Closs and Company. Hopkinton, NH
Description of View: View SW from cemetery looking across intersection of NH Routes 102 (Derry Road) and 121 (Chester Street); E and N Elvs of SMH, showing park space in front (north) of the building and the Amos Tuck French flagpole.

Photograph #4

Name of Property: Stevens Memorial Hall
County and State: Rockingham Co., New Hampshire
Name of Photographer: Christopher W. Closs
Date of Photograph: June 16, 2003
Loc.of Original Negative: C. W. Closs and Company. Hopkinton, NH
Description of View: View SSW - N Elv and front entrance.

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section Additional Documentation Page 2 Photographs (Label Sheet)
name of property Stevens Memorial Hall

county and State Rockingham Co., New Hampshire

name of multiple property listing N/A

Photograph #5

Name of Property: Stevens Memorial Hall
County and State: Rockingham Co., New Hampshire
Name of Photographer: Christopher W. Closs
Date of Photograph: June 16, 2003
Loc.of Original Negative: C. W. Closs and Company. Hopkinton, NH
Description of View: View NE - W and S Elvs; circumferential driveway; foundation and roof details.

Photograph #6

Name of Property: Stevens Memorial Hall
County and State: Rockingham Co., New Hampshire
Name of Photographer: Christopher W. Closs
Date of Photograph: June 16, 2003
Loc.of Original Negative: C. W. Closs and Company. Hopkinton, NH
Description of View: Interior / View N; entry foyer/Memorial Hall showing front door and memorial tablet to G. W. Stevens.

Photograph #7

Name of Property: Stevens Memorial Hall
County and State: Rockingham Co., New Hampshire
Name of Photographer: Christopher W. Closs
Date of Photograph: June 16, 2003
Loc.of Original Negative: C. W. Closs and Company. Hopkinton, NH
Description of View: View WSW - Stair to auditorium above, and door (ticket counter and cloak room) to basement stairway.

Photograph #8

Name of Property: Stevens Memorial Hall
County and State: Rockingham Co., New Hampshire
Name of Photographer: Christopher W. Closs
Date of Photograph: June 16, 2003
Loc.of Original Negative: C. W. Closs and Company. Hopkinton, NH
Description of View: View NNE - Central corridor/first floor; former Town Clerk's Office at left, entry foyer/Memorial Hall beyond.

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section Additional Documentation Page 3 Photographs (Label Sheet)
name of property Stevens Memorial Hall

county and State Rockingham Co., New Hampshire

name of multiple property listing N/A

Photograph #9

Name of Property: Stevens Memorial Hall
County and State: Rockingham Co., New Hampshire
Name of Photographer: Christopher W. Closs
Date of Photograph: June 16, 2003
Loc.of Original Negative: C. W. Closs and Company. Hopkinton, NH
Description of View: View SSW - south end of "Town Hall"
auditorium on second floor showing stage, typical carved truss, metal
ceiling and finishes.

Photograph #10

Name of Property: Stevens Memorial Hall
County and State: Rockingham Co., New Hampshire
Name of Photographer: Christopher W. Closs
Date of Photograph: June 16, 2003
Loc.of Original Negative: C. W. Closs and Company. Hopkinton, NH
Description of View: View NNE - North end of auditorium showing
cantilevered balcony suspended on third truss, 2nd floor entry foyer
beyond double-leaved doors below, and small door (at right) to ante
room. Decorative grates from 1923 central heating system punctuate
floor plane.