

## Introduction

For nearly 200 years, the Hancock Meetinghouse has been at the heart and soul of its community. For that entire time, it has been jointly owned by the town and the First Congregational Church, making it one of only two New Hampshire communities to maintain such an arrangement. Their shared respect and stewardship for the building is reflected in the various renovation projects undertaken over the years, resulting in its overall excellent state of preservation.

The Hancock Meetinghouse is generally considered one of New Hampshire's finest Federal-style churches and makes regular appearances in publications about New England churches and meetinghouses. It has also been the subject of numerous unpublished papers penned by local historians. The structure is the focal point of a striking group of late 18<sup>th</sup> and early-mid 19<sup>th</sup> century buildings arranged around a common that itself is the terminus of a remarkably intact and stately village street of the same era. Other buildings around the common include a schoolhouse, grange and vestry that originated as an academy.

The town proactively designated Hancock Village a local historic district in 1975, thus managing future change to its buildings and setting. In 1988, Hancock Village was listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Within each of those districts, the Meetinghouse is a primary contributing property.

In 2010, the Town of Hancock received a grant from the Land and Community Heritage Investment Program (LCHIP) to complete this report. Its purpose is to provide an overview of the Hancock Meetinghouse—its history, its physical evolution, its significant architectural features, its existing condition and preservation guidelines for recommended work items—in order to guide future decisions for the building. The chapter on its history and evolution clarifies how and why the building has physically changed. The chapter on its architecture, which is accompanied by photographs and measured drawings, describes its existing appearance and identifies the specific extant character-defining features from each construction era. The survey of existing conditions specifies what work items need to be addressed, while the section on preservation guidelines outlines the recommended treatment approach to achieve them.

It would be unrealistic to think that all of the needed work could be accomplished immediately, or that uses for the building will never change. But if this report is used similarly to a road map, it will ensure that all future decisions are informed decisions—ultimately the best decisions for the Meetinghouse.

## History and Evolution of the Meetinghouse

### Early Settlement of Hancock

The Town of Hancock was established somewhat differently from most New Hampshire townships. Along with the neighboring towns of Antrim, Bennington, Deering and parts of Francestown and Greenfield, Hancock was initially part of a tract known as the Society Land. On this land, fifteen of the Masonian Proprietors each granted himself a ‘great lot’ and an ‘intervale lot’ by the Contoocook River. Each proprietor then subdivided his lots as he chose. Hancock comprised the southwest section of the Society Land and was first settled in 1764. Settlement proceeded slowly: fourteen years later, only eight families are believed to have occupied the area. However, in the final two years of the 1770s, the number of families increased to thirty or forty—enough people to organize as a town. In late 1779, the state legislature incorporated the town, which was named after Massachusetts governor John Hancock, who was also one of the largest landowners in the town.

This odd manner of lot subdivision left the new town with no reserved land for a town common on which to site a burial ground, meetinghouse and schoolhouse. Yet, this was not an unusual situation. Many towns relied on gifts or purchases for a common, most desirably located near the geographic center of town.

At its second town meeting, in April, 1780, Hancock citizens elected to create the town center near the township’s center, a spot that was also suitably level. Despite later dissension, Norway Plain remained the popular choice, and at a town meeting in 1783, voters agreed to clear land there for a burial ground. The decision, however, did not stop continued argument over an appropriate location for the common and meetinghouse. Not until the town brought a petition before the legislature, whose committee recommended in 1785 that the location be Norway Plain, was the decision final.

Deacon James Hosley, then still a resident of New Ipswich, owned the section of Norway Plain eyed by the town and had already offered it for a common. In late 1785, the town accepted his gift of an irregular, four-sided tract of land at the east end of the plain, where it could site buildings and structures for public use.<sup>1</sup>

The town pound was the first structure placed on the new Common; it stood near the site of the former Grange Hall (now post office). Within a few years, there were also a schoolhouse, Pine Ridge Cemetery, the meetinghouse and privately owned horse sheds. In 1836, the town allowed an academy building to join the group—the last structure erected on the Common.

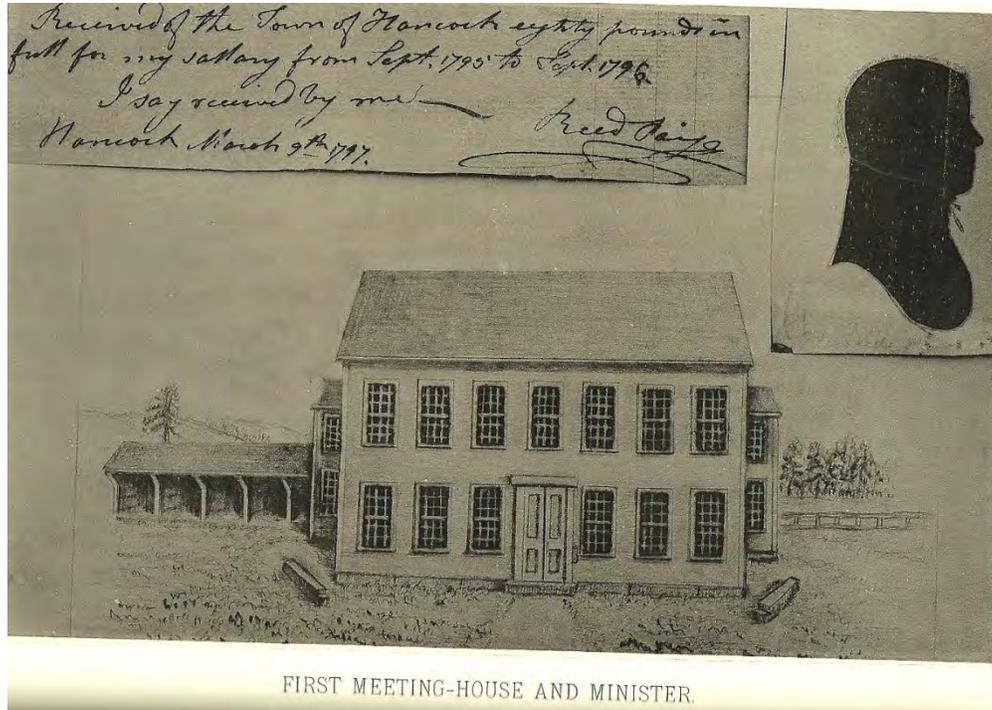
### Hancock’s First Meetinghouse (built 1789-1792)

Work on the meetinghouse started in December, 1785, when a committee was chosen to prepare a plan. In late 1787, men gathered stone for the foundation, and bids were requested for building materials. The new structure would measure 54’ long by 42’ wide

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<sup>1</sup> Hosley limited use of the Common to public uses.

and stand 25 ½' high. The frame would be a mix of woods: oak for posts; oak or white pine for outside sills; and white pine for plates, beams and gallery sills. Thomas Spaulding received the contract to get the frame ready for raising, which occurred on September 16, 1789. It was not until October, 1792, that the building was fully finished.<sup>2</sup>



The First Meetinghouse, built in 1789-92, followed the typical form for late 18<sup>th</sup> century meetinghouses in southern New Hampshire, resembling an over-sized house with the principal entrance centered on the long side. At either gable end there were two-story porches that enclosed stairways to reach the gallery. The horse sheds that accompanied the meetinghouse were in private ownership.

## The Second Meetinghouse (built 1820)

### Construction

On October 28, 1819, Hancock's First Meetinghouse burned to the ground. Wasting no time, the town and the Congregational Society established committees to explore how to build a new meetinghouse and townhouse.<sup>3</sup> Within three weeks of the fire, the committees reported back. The town's committee stated that it would be in its best interest to give the Society \$1,000, plus the land, if the Society would build and fit up a "house nearly of the size, construction and form of the congregational meetinghouse in Dublin." Half of the money would be paid in June, 1820, and the balance in October, when the building was expected to be completed. The recommendation went on to specify that the new building should be constructed of wood and underpinned with hewed or hammered stone. The committee imposed yet other conditions: (1) that the town shall have a right for as long as the building stood, to use it as a town house and for town

<sup>2</sup> Hayward, 1889: 110-112.

<sup>3</sup> At the time Hancock was planning to rebuild the Meetinghouse, the state legislature had recently passed the Toleration Act, which removed the requirement that townspeople support a minister. The Act allowed town taxes to be used to repair a meetinghouse only if the town owned it, and the monies were limited to repairs that made the building useful for town purposes.

purposes; and (2) the church would sell pews at public auction to the highest bidder, thus affording every citizen an equal chance to purchase them. Voters accepted the committee's report with the exception of the recommended location. Rather than place the meetinghouse "directly back of where the old one stood," they argued that the "south sill of the projection" [entry pavilion] should align with where the south sill of the burned meetinghouse was located, effectively placing it in the same location. Finally, the town agreed to sell the remains of the burned structure with the exception of the stone, which would be disposed of as that committee saw fit.<sup>4</sup>

The Congregational Society's committee voted to accept the town committee's report and specifically referred to the clause that the Town House would be part of the Meetinghouse. It suggested that the Society immediately appoint committees, one to purchase the underpinning [foundation stones] and door steps, and one to acquire building and finish materials. It further asked the Society to the committees the ability to enter into contracts and make expenditures.<sup>5</sup>

On November 29, 1819, Society members voted to build a new meetinghouse 85' long by 58' wide and authorized its treasurer to spend up to \$3,000 on the building. Additional funds would come from selling pews, which were ultimately sold in the space of a single day, raising another \$7,000.<sup>6</sup>

Neither town nor church records describe any of the construction activity; perhaps the lack of entries reflected smooth proceedings. Local builder Jacob Ames, together with Samuel Kilburn of Fitzwilliam, constructed the building.<sup>7</sup>

By late August, 1820, construction was far enough along that the Society anticipated it may have surplus monies from the sale of pews; it voted to put any such surplus toward purchasing a bell.<sup>8</sup> The bell was acquired from the workshop of Revere & Son and hung in the belfry by mid-October.<sup>9</sup> In early October, a committee of five representing the town examined the Meetinghouse, reporting that they were satisfied with the work so far completed and that the town should accept the portions of the new building that concerned them. Later that month, the town voted to hire a person to take care of the building and ring the bell.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Hancock Town Records, 1806-1853, pp. 111-112.

<sup>5</sup> First Congregational Society Records, 1819-1852, pp. 18-19.

<sup>6</sup> First Congregational Society Records, 1819-1852, p. 20; Hayward, 1889: 20.

<sup>7</sup> Though some accounts state that Kilburn was from Dublin, NH, records show that he was actually from Fitzwilliam.

<sup>8</sup> First Congregational Society Records, 1819-1852, p. 27.

<sup>9</sup> Revere bells were made between 1792 and 1828, during which period more than 950 were cast; some 134 survive. When the workshop opened, it was one of the first in the United States, bells having previously come from England. The bell in the Hancock Meetinghouse was produced by Paul Revere's grandsons, who carried on the business after Revere retired in 1811. It first tolled on October 15, 1820 for Joseph Symonds, by coincidence the father-in-law of builder Jacob Ames and in whose house both religious and town meetings were held prior to the completion of the meetinghouse. (Hayward, 1889: 887)

<sup>10</sup> Hancock Town Records, 1806-1853, pp. 119-120. In 1834 the meetinghouse received a coat of paint, perhaps its first.

On October 25, 1820, just under a year since the fire, the new meetinghouse was dedicated at an event underwritten by the Society. The final cost of the meetinghouse was approximately \$5,440, of which \$3,537.31 went for materials.<sup>11</sup>

### ***Jacob Ames (1776-1825)***

Builder Jacob Ames was born in Peterborough and came to Hancock with his family as a young child. Well known around town, Ames worked as both an auctioneer and carpenter. He is credited with building some of the “best houses” in Hancock, among them the John and Henry Whitcomb House (1813) and the Charles Symonds House (1809, now home to Hancock Historical Society) and providing employment for a number of men. He was often assisted by his brother-in-law, Asahel Cummings, although whether Cummings was involved with the meetinghouse is not known.<sup>12</sup>

Ames married Melia Symonds in 1799; the couple had ten children, all born in Hancock. In 1823, three years after completing the Meetinghouse, he moved to New Ipswich where he died in 1825 due to injuries suffered in a fall from a building he was constructing.<sup>13</sup>

### ***The Templeton Run***

The Templeton Run refers to a group of at least six meetinghouses erected in southwestern New Hampshire and were patterned after the meetinghouse in Templeton, Massachusetts, built in 1811. Elias Carter of Worcester, MA, and Jonathan Cutting of Templeton designed and erected that edifice. Carter (1781-1864) was a highly accomplished carpenter and builder thought to have inherited a number of drawings and specifications from his father, who was an English builder. He was also greatly influenced by Asher Benjamin’s design books and a highly skilled carver in his own right. His Templeton Meetinghouse was his most-copied work. Interestingly, as that design spread through southwestern New Hampshire, it did so on a near-steady northward course, starting in Troy (1812) and ending in Newport (1823).<sup>14</sup>

As Troy readied to build its meetinghouse, it instructed two men to examine the Templeton structure. The committee planning Dublin’s meetinghouse (1818) studied the recently completed Fitzwilliam meetinghouse (1816), itself an almost exact copy of the Templeton structure. Dublin even hired the same Jonathan Cutting who helped build the Templeton meetinghouse, as well as Samuel Kilburn of Fitzwilliam who was presumably involved in building that town’s church. (The Dublin meetinghouse was replaced in 1853; it is the only one of the six cited Templeton Run meetinghouses that no longer stands.) Two years later, Hancock directed its building committee to imitate the Dublin building, but later modified the design, substituting the open portico for a “projection

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<sup>11</sup> First Congregational Society Records, 1819-1852, pp. 32-33. Of that figure, \$1,000 came from the town. By way of comparison, the similar Fitzwilliam meetinghouse cost about \$6,000, most of it raised from pew sales. (Norton, 1888: 196)

<sup>12</sup> Tolles, 1979: 114. Other local houses erected by Cummings include the brick “M.A. Anthony” house and the M. Parker House in the village. (Hayward, 1889: 475)

<sup>13</sup> Hayward, 1889: 301.

<sup>14</sup> It was common practice to imitate an existing meetinghouse, no doubt to save time and ease the work of the building committee and builder.

with close work,” meaning a closed-in entry pavilion.<sup>15</sup> It too hired Samuel Kilburn to bring his Fitzwilliam and Dublin experience to the aid of local builder Jacob Ames. Yet another meetinghouse of similar design was built in Acworth in 1821, followed by Newport in 1823.<sup>16</sup>



This view of the Dublin Meetinghouse, built in 1818, shows the monumental entry portico that also appeared on the Templeton and Fitzwilliam meetinghouses, but which Hancock—and later Acworth and Newport—elected not to imitate. The drawing is also valuable in that it provides a rare glimpse of how the Hancock Meetinghouse likely looked before the 1851 alterations. Note that both the lower and upper story window openings are of equal size—as they would have been on the Hancock building prior to 1851.

*From The History of Dublin (Rev. L.W. Leonard, 1855)*

<sup>15</sup> First Congregational Society Records, 1819-1852, p. 20. The vote occurred on November 29, 1819.

<sup>16</sup> Benes, 1978: 7-8. Some earlier meetinghouses, such as Jaffrey’s, later received Templeton-like towers.



Three examples of the four-stage tower capped with a spire derived from the Templeton meetinghouse design, from left: Fitzwilliam, Dublin and Hancock. *From "The Templeton Run" (Peter Benes, 1978)*



The Acworth Meetinghouse, built a year after the Hancock Meetinghouse, followed its choice of a closed-in entry pavilion. *From New Hampshire Architecture (Bryant Tolles, 1979)*

### *Using the Meetinghouse*

During its early planning for the new meetinghouse, the Society had voted that it would not claim exclusive rights to use the building, but that all Christian denominations who “owned an interest in said house for religious purposes” would have equal rights with the Society to have their ministers preach.<sup>17</sup>

Though there are no interior views of the meetinghouse prior to 1851, descriptions reveal it had a gallery around three sides. The town had instructed the Society to reserve four pews on the main floor for elderly people who might not be in a position to purchase their own. Two pews on the wall nearest to the pulpit and another two on both the right and left of the center aisle in the far back became public pews.<sup>18</sup> Some of the gallery pews were set aside for the choir; they were called “singing seats.” Shortly after the meetinghouse was built, the Society voted to install doors on the stairs to the gallery to cut back drafts and “render the singing seats more comfortable in the winter months.”<sup>19</sup>

In the early years, the town apparently assumed care for cleaning the entire building. Care translated to selecting annually the lowest bidder to sweep it four times a year (quickly increased to six, then eight times) and ring the bell on the following schedule: daily at noon and 9pm; on Sundays and preparatory to the communion; and for funerals, lectures, public days and monthly concerts. (Mention of lectures and concerts occurred by 1834, indicating varied uses of the building.) Captain John Washburn was the first to assume this duty; he was paid \$4. It was not long before the town added dusting the tops of the pews and seats, and clearing the front steps of snow. As the years go by, the list grows yet longer and more specific: in 1834, the caretaker was instructed also to wash the aisles and desk each May, and warm the building by a fire in the stoves whenever the building was occupied.<sup>20</sup>

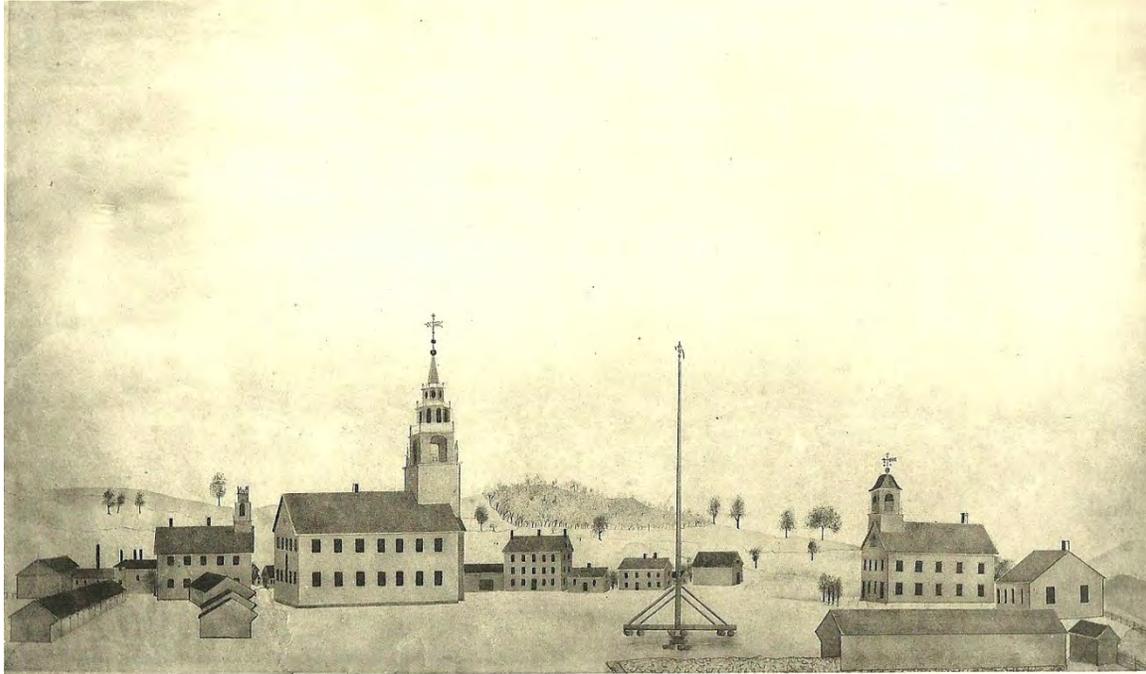
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<sup>17</sup> First Congregational Society Records, 1819-1852, p. 25. This decision was actually the result of the town’s request.

<sup>18</sup> Hayward, 1889: 144.

<sup>19</sup> First Congregational Society Records, 1819-1852, p. 42-3.

<sup>20</sup> Hancock Town Records, 1806-1853, pp. 120, 136-37, 204, 243; Hayward, 1889: 145-46. Washburn’s pay only covered the period from November until March town meeting the following year. His successor’s low bid was \$11.75 for the full year. The following year the low bid was double that.



HANCOCK COMMON IN 1840, FROM PINE RIDGE CEMETERY.

This view of the Common, looking east, is the only known view of the Meetinghouse before it was moved and divided in 1851. Note that there were originally two rows of seven equally sized windows on each side elevation, matching the fenestration of the Dublin Meetinghouse. These original windows remain on the lower level of the Hancock Meetinghouse. The rear of the building shows an arched window that would have been placed over the pulpit. It and the windows on the upper level were sealed off when the building was divided, but their outlines are still visible on the exterior. *From History of Hancock (William Hayward, 1889).*

As soon as the meetinghouse was fit for occupancy, the town appointed yet another committee to study the advisability of allowing stables to be built behind it. (They were ultimately built: the view above shows a couple of detached sheds behind and to the side of the meetinghouse, as well as a row of attached horse sheds behind them.)

After eight years of an unheated building, the town agreed to allow “a stove or stoves” to be installed in the meetinghouse. It appears that the town and Society purchased separate stoves, in place by early 1830. The town offered its leftover stove funnel to the Society for its own use. Procuring wood for the stoves was added to the list of caretaker duties.

The Congregational Society erected a second building in 1836, a two-story, brick structure that housed the vestry on the first story and an academy on the second. When it was first constructed, it stood behind and slightly east of the Meetinghouse. After the Meetinghouse was moved (see below), the two façades lined up to form a neat streetscape.

Shortly after Asahel Bigelow, the Society’s third minister, assumed the pulpit in 1850, the town and church elected to move the meetinghouse.

### ***Division & Relocation***

As early as 1842 there was discussion about dividing the building between the town and church, but the report of the appointed committee to study the matter is not recorded. Despite votes in 1844 and 1846 to undertake repairs, the town either did not act or only performed part of the work. Yet another committee was established in 1847 to consider the matter of needed repairs, and the town again voted to repair the bell, part of the steeple and the windows, all paid by the town. Whether any of the work was carried out is uncertain, given what followed.<sup>21</sup>

In late 1850, the town and Society reached a major decision. With a two-thirds majority, on December 17<sup>th</sup> the town voted to move and repair the meetinghouse and appointed two committees to investigate how to carry that out—one to examine the building and one to consult with the pew holders. On January 16, 1851, the first committee recommended it would actually be better to alter and repair it on its current site, but added that if the second committee was inclined to move it, it would be agreeable, so long as (1) the building would be placed adjacent to, and would line up with the front of, the Vestry; (2) it would be left in as good repair as it currently was; and (3) all could be accomplished at no cost to the town. It further stipulated that the meetinghouse should be divided so that the town and church would have separate parts and described how to accomplish this:

...by carrying the south partition to the north side of the second window casings on the sides of the meeting house. The space to be occupied by the town to be from said partition when moved as aforesaid, northward to the north end of the meeting house and upwards to the plastering under the galleries, and also the town to occupy and use the porch or entry and the bell for all purposes for which the town may wish to use the same, in common with the pew holders. Also (the town) reserving for a wood room the space under the stairs running eastward and upward on the east side of the house. The pew holders having the right to remove the Pews, Seats and Pulpit and to erect all necessary supports for the floor above. And also to erect chimneys from the foundation for the purpose of conducting the smoke from the town hall and the Meeting house and insert the funnel into said chimneys in said hall.<sup>22</sup>

The First Congregational Society voted on February 6<sup>th</sup> to give its consent to have the meetinghouse moved as the town outlined, but only if it was at no expense to the Society. It also agreed to the proposed division, excepting how the town planned to vent smoke and its desired use of the porch and access to the bell. Clearly, this was later worked out. Ultimately, the Society voted to sell shares at \$20 each, to raise \$4,000. It also voted to borrow up to \$2,000, hoping to offset the cost with the sale of pews. Meanwhile, the town

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<sup>21</sup> Hancock Town Records, 1806-1853, pp. 352, 385, 448, 478, 492. In 1847, the building was referred to as the “Town House,” the first time so called. However, references the following year return to “Meetinghouse.” While the terms could indicate the town and church assumed responsibility for different parts of the envelope, the discrepancy as easily could be attributed to the scribe.

<sup>22</sup> Hancock Town Records, 1806-1853, pp. 572-74. Despite these recommendations and votes, the town clearly had not entirely made up its mind as to which course to pursue as late as the end of April.

agreed to pay one-third of all necessary exterior repairs, excepting the windows; it would repair those on the lower level, but no others.<sup>23</sup>

Both the written record and a view of the Common drawn in 1840 reveal that the meetinghouse was not rotated, but just moved back (to the north) some unknown distance.<sup>24</sup> The “south partition” mentioned above would have been the wall between the entry vestibule and the meeting hall/sanctuary. By moving it into the hall, it would increase the depth of the vestibule area. Two rooms, each outfitted with a chimney, were created on either side of the vestibule: a room for the selectmen and town committees on the east side (now the church office) and a room opposite for a stove room (now the pastor’s study).<sup>25</sup> New stairs leading up to the church sanctuary were built, possibly the existing stairs. A small room was created beneath them; that on the east (left) was to be reserved for the town for wood storage. (The chewed up woodwork in that space suggests it was indeed used for such purpose.) It was not until later that the vestibule was further subdivided.

The town specified exactly what would constitute its space: the new hall created after the partition was moved, back (north) to the rear of the building. The new ceiling would be placed at the underside of the galleries. Thus, the new sanctuary’s floor would approximate the level of the galleries in the original meetinghouse. Physical evidence strongly suggests that the gallery floors were removed and a new floor for the entire sanctuary installed, rather than just infilling the center sanctuary. To support the new floor of the sanctuary, the church added posts in the town hall, which remain today. Because the ceiling level of the new town hall on the lower level was dictated by the existing gallery floor level, the floor level of the hall needed to be lowered some 18” to provide sufficient headroom.

Both the town and the church altered the fenestration on the side and rear walls of the Meetinghouse. Since the floor level of the town hall had been lowered, the windows lighting that space also needed to be lowered. This was accomplished by dropping each window approximately 18”. (Cuts in the clapboards on the rear of the building indicate the original heights.) The church undertook a more drastic move. It lengthened its windows on the upper level and also eliminated every other one. If the windows had not been lengthened, it would not have been possible to see out of them.

Outside the building, the privately owned horse sheds needed to be moved out of the way. The town allowed owners to relocate them onto a suitable spot on town land.

By October of 1851 the move was complete. The town finished off its new hall, installing seats (likely the existing perimeter benches) and blinds on the windows. The church

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<sup>23</sup> First Congregational Society Records, 1819-1852, p. 151, 157, 160-61; Hancock Town Records, 1806-1853, p. 574.

<sup>24</sup> The 1840 view shows the rear wall of the meetinghouse slightly forward of the front wall of the Vestry. Whether that was its true position is not known, as there may be some artistic license to ensure both buildings were in full view.

<sup>25</sup> A later (1866) entry in town records refers to two furnace rooms; they would have been the two rooms on the first floor with a chimney (now church office and pastor’s study).

finished its work altering the fenestration. In November of that year, the Society voted to borrow up to another \$1,000 to repair and finish their interior space.<sup>26</sup> On December 17, 1851, the two entities signed articles of agreement outlining their use and responsibilities for the building—a straightforward document that remains in effect today. (See Appendix C)



Photographed sometime between 1872 and 1895, this view of the Meetinghouse shows the enlarged windows for the church and earlier horse sheds ranged around the building. Blinds, installed in 1851, shutter the windows. *Collection of New Hampshire Historical Society.*

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<sup>26</sup> First Congregational Society Records, 1819-1852, p. 163; Hayward, 1889: 159-60.



This view, photographed between 1878 and 1895, offers a rare look at the rear of the Meetinghouse, showing the blocked-in second story windows and scattered array of horse sheds.

*Collection of Hancock Historical Society*

In 1866 the town granted permission to the Society to run hot-air pipes from the furnace rooms (see above) through the north walls and into the town hall, thence up into the church. (How this was accomplished is unclear.) Simultaneously, the town cut a door in each of those walls.<sup>27</sup>

With privately raised funds, the town purchased an E. Howard & Company clock in 1872 for installation on the first stage of the tower. It cost \$650, of which \$175 went toward preparing the space and crafting the dials. The five largest donors were natives of Hancock, but then residents of Boston, Beverly and New York City. One was Darwin Fogg, uncle of William D. who later built the horse sheds. Later that decade, new chimneys were built on the north wall of the meetinghouse, for the joint use of the town and church.<sup>28</sup>

### ***Church Centennial Renovations***

With its impending centennial anniversary in 1888, the church decided to undertake a series of renovations of the sanctuary, coincident with installing new furnaces into the

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<sup>27</sup> Hayward, 1889: 165.

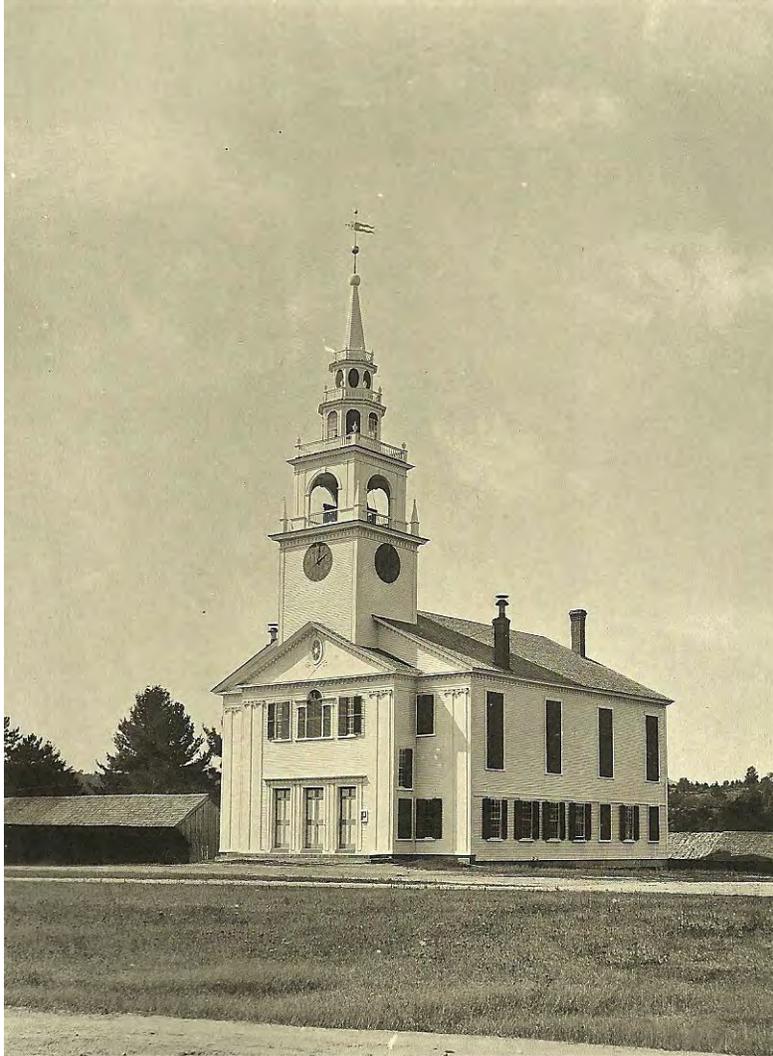
<sup>28</sup> Hayward, 1889: 173. Since the town was on the lower level, it bore only one-third of the expense of the new chimneys.

building. Sanctuary walls were re-lathed, plastered, painted and decorated with “frescoes.” The finished paint scheme employed shades of red, terra cotta and olive with gilt accent lines. The ceiling, which was divided into panels, used a similar scheme, adding warm yellow and “ashes or roses.” Pews were painted olive green with red cushions. Shades of olive and red were used for the carpet.

Even the windows became part of the finish treatment: new sash with red and amber glass in the perimeter panes and figured glass (glass impressed with a decorative design) in the center were installed along the side elevations of the upper story. The windows came from William Emery & Company of Boston. The church received memorial gifts of new mahogany pulpit furniture, including a pulpit, three chairs, bible stand and communion table made by a Boston company; the upholstery was olive. Finally, a new Esty organ was placed in the church. The church covered the \$2,000 expense primarily through subscriptions. All of the work was completed in time for the August 28, 1888 celebration.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Hayward, 1889: 1061-65. A contemporary description of the renovations and color schemes appeared in an article in the Peterborough Transcript on September, 20, 1888, reproduced in Appendix D.



Hancock Meetinghouse, photographed ca. 1888 just before the renovations.  
The pair of chimneys in the front was likely removed during that work.  
*From History of Hancock (Hayward, 1889)*

### ***Town Common Improvements & New Horse Sheds***

After the Meetinghouse was moved, the appearance of the Common slowly declined. A few trees had been planted in the early 1850s, but otherwise, little happened. Horse sheds, the academy building and the old brick schoolhouse still occupied the Common, but they were little used, if at all, and maintenance was minimal. The pound had long outlived its usefulness. Furthermore, problematic drainage created mud on the Common each spring making crossing it difficult. A bequest of \$20,000 from Adolphus C. Whitcomb, half of it directed to beautify the Common, brought the issue to the fore—and nicely coincided with the era of village and common improvement projects throughout New England.

In the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century, many commons underwent beautification programs undertaken either by the town or citizen improvement groups. Originally laid out as purely functional, public space with little or no landscaping, commons were now seen as potential public parks that called for beautification. Statues and tablets went erected, and

cannon and cannon balls installed to commemorate the Civil War. Commons sported new bandstands. Ground that had become nothing but dirt was planted with grass and deciduous trees for shade and beauty. Fences of various types were erected around the perimeter of the common, reserving the space within for people and not vehicles or animals. Some communities constructed new town halls or schools on the common.

Hancock appointed a committee to explore improving its Common. In the mid-1890s, it engaged noted Boston landscape architect, Ernest W. Bowditch, to advise them. Bowditch made a number of recommendations, but that most relevant to the Meetinghouse—and the first to be carried out—was to replace the old horse sheds with new ones. If arranged along a curve directly behind the building, they would serve to frame and provide an attractive backdrop. In 1895, the town hired local builder William D. Fogg to erect the structure. The new building was 180' long and included nineteen units that the town leased to private parties.<sup>30</sup>

### ***Twentieth Century***

Early 20<sup>th</sup> century improvements include the metal ceiling in the sanctuary, installed in 1905 and a stage in the Town Hall. In 1923, the town purchased a painted curtain for the stage from Aladdin Scenic Company of Boston. The curtain features elegant, painted drapery that is pulled aside to reveal a scene within a decorative frame. The depiction of a local scene—looking across Norway Pond toward the Meetinghouse—was somewhat unusual, as more typically the scene was a romanticized painting of mountains, a castle or some other dramatic view. Town halls or opera houses could choose scenes from catalogues of images that would be adapted for size and local preference. It was only when a local scene was sufficiently dramatic in its own right that the artist painted it.<sup>31</sup>

The 1938 hurricane damaged three of the stained-glass windows in the upper level and tore many slates from the roof. With financial assistance from summer residents Dr. and Mrs. L. Vernon Briggs, the windows were repaired with clear glass panes, slates replaced, weathervane regilded, and the building painted.<sup>32</sup>

The Congregational Church undertook substantial renovations to its interior spaces in 1966 under the direction of a Church Restoration Committee and spurred by the offer of

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<sup>30</sup> Other recommendations included defining and re-routing the network of wagon paths that cross the common; purchasing the land behind the Meetinghouse, down to Norway Pond; removing a hearse house behind the Meetinghouse and all of the buildings on the common, save the Meetinghouse and Academy building, recently renovated into the village schoolhouse; and landscaping the Common with walkways and shade trees to create a park-like spot. Many of these suggestions were carried out, but some took decades, such as the decision to engage W. D. Fogg to build a bandstand, completed in 1922. (*Hancock Annual Report*, 1923)

<sup>31</sup> There are no other documented curtains in New Hampshire painted by the Aladdin Scenic Company. The curtain was delivered on September 17, 1923, according to writing on the verso that was discovered during its restoration in 2006 by Curtain Without Borders, Inc., of Vermont. The restoration was jointly undertaken by the Hancock Historical Society and Hancock Women's Club.

<sup>32</sup> Hancock History Committee, 1979: 81; Unattributed mss with notes from Church Records in collection of Hancock Historical Society. The Briggs' gift stipulated that the colored glass be replaced with clear glass. Since the profile of the existing muntins on those windows is of the 1888 era, it appears the sash was reused and only the panes replaced.

new carpeting from the Hancock Women's Guild. The sanctuary, including walls, ceiling and pews, were painted white, removing most traces of the terra-cotta stenciling applied in 1888. The organ pipes, previously gray, were gilded with gold leaf. The two chimney stacks in the front of the church were concealed behind red velvet drops, and red carpet laid on the floor. Colonial-type pewter wall sconces replaced plastic ceiling fixtures and were installed on the stair walls. On the first floor, the west office, most recently used for storage, was refurbished for the pastor's study. Building on the momentum, the town and church shared the cost for exterior painting and regilding the tower clock. Reproduction lamps were installed at the front entrance, and two handsome notice boards crafted by Perley Dunbar replaced a plain bulletin board.

In 1991, after a discovery that the beams supporting the tower were so badly deteriorated that the Meetinghouse was immediately closed to all use, the two upper stages of the tower, as well as the spire and weathervane, were removed and stored on the ground for six months to allow replacement of the timbers.

The Hancock Meetinghouse was among the last two in the state to be used for both church and town hall, a distinction it shared with Rindge. It was not until 1971 the town offices moved out of the Meetinghouse and into renovated space in the former school across the Common. The town continued to use its hall in the Meetinghouse for town meetings, as well for election voting, Old Home Day programs and other occasional events for a few more years. Today, it is leased to a community preschool. The First Congregational Church uses both of the downstairs offices, as well as the sanctuary upstairs for services and concerts.

## Hancock Meetinghouse Timeline

Date	Event
1764	Hancock first settled
1779	Town has 30-40 families (dramatic increase from eight in previous year) Hancock incorporated
1788, June 19	Meeting held to establish the Congregational Society
1789	First meetinghouse raised on Common (across street from existing site) - traditional "house" form with end porches
1791	Reed Paige, first permanent minister, ordained (d. by 1817)
1819, Oct. 28	First Meetinghouse burns
1820	Present Meetinghouse erected Built by Jacob Ames of Hancock (with Mr. Kilburn of Fitzwilliam) New Meetinghouse based on design of Dublin Meetinghouse Pew sales bring in \$7,000, enough to pay for construction Voted (at church meeting) to purchase "one flagon, four cups and a bason"
1820, Oct. 25	Meetinghouse dedicated
1821, April 7	Voted (at church meeting) to acquire table made of cherry (mahogany acceptable if no more expensive) for Meetinghouse Congregation agrees to meet on Sabbath days, even if there is no preacher
1822	Archibald Burgess succeeds Paige as minister (serves until 1849)
1828-1830	Building is heated for first time; separate wood stoves for the Society and town
1831-32	Great revival brings in 100+ members
1834	Town votes to paint the exterior, excepting the shingles on the roof—perhaps the first time the building was painted
1836	Congregational Society builds existing two-story brick vestry
1850, May	Asahel Bigelow succeeds Burgess as minister (d. in position in 1877)
1851	Meetinghouse moved back to current site and divided into two stories, with town hall in lower story and church above. Alterations from the conversion include lengthened windows on side elevations of 2 <sup>nd</sup> story, removal of some windows in rear, installation of blinds, dropped floor in town hall Town and church sign articles of agreement—still in effect today—governing use of and care for Meetinghouse
1854	Second revival brings in 25 new members
1857	20 new members
1858	Five-octave melodeon installed in the church—the first permanent instrument for the space
1866	Society runs hot-air pipes from the furnace rooms through the north walls and into the town hall, thence up into the church. Town cuts a door in each of those north walls
1869	Entire building receives "shingling or new covering" and paint
1872	Tower clock (E. Howard & Co.) installed by the town through private subscription
1878	New chimneys built in rear of building
1887	New furnaces installed, suggesting building previously had a furnace, perhaps installed in 1878 with rear chimneys
1888	Major renovations for 100 <sup>th</sup> anniversary of church: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New colored-glass windows</li> <li>• Walls re-lathed and plastered</li> <li>• Walls, ceiling and pews painted in red, olive and gold color scheme</li> <li>• Pews painted olive green; new red cushions</li> <li>• Band of frescos added above wainscot</li> <li>• New carpeting in shades of olive and red</li> <li>• New pulpit furnishings</li> <li>• New furnace</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Esty organ installed</li> </ul>
1889	A.C. Whitcomb leaves substantial bequest to town to convert Common to public park
1894	Ernest Bowditch prepares plan for Common
between 1888 & 1895	Two chimneys in front removed
1895	Semi-circular 180' horse sheds built by William D. Fogg – first item executed following Bowditch plan
1903	Congregational Society disbands and church incorporated as First Congregational Church
1905	Pressed metal ceiling installed
1909-1911	“Old settees under the church” sold at auction to pay for paint job
1921	Unspecified repairs that necessitated removal of two seats at the rear of the sanctuary
1923	Town purchases theatre curtain
1927	Church pews sold for \$2.50 ea. to pay for steeple repairs and repaint the vestry
1929	Two-manual Frazee organ installed for \$5,000
1938	Hurricane damages colored and figured-glass windows-- replaced with clear glass Church interior painted in tones of green and lavender
1966	Major renovations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Colonial lamps and signs installed at main entrance</li> <li>• Red carpet</li> <li>• Church walls painted white</li> <li>• Organ pipes gilded with gold leaf</li> <li>• West room (1<sup>st</sup> floor) converted to pastor’s study</li> <li>• New chandeliers and matching wall sconces in church</li> <li>• Howard tower clock regilded</li> <li>• Exterior painted</li> </ul>
1971	Town offices move out
1973	Former selectman’s office (East room, 1 <sup>st</sup> floor) remodeled for church office
1976	Fire escape added to rear
1985	New two-manual organ made by Bill Brys of Charlestown, NH, installed; many pipes from Frazee organ reused
1991-92	Upper two stages of tower removed; supporting timbers replaced and the upper stages set back in place
1993	Fire and burglar alarm systems installed
2000	Building made accessible through earthen ramp and raising level of top step

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### **Maps, Views & Plans**

1840 "View of Hancock Town Common." Collection of Hancock Historical Society.

1895 "Landscape Plan of Hancock Common." Prepared by Ernest W. Bowditch for Town of Hancock

### **Photograph collections**

Hancock Historical Society

New Hampshire Historical Society

## Architectural Description & Character-Defining Features

The Hancock Meetinghouse was erected in 1820, but its present appearance, both exterior and interior, reflects a major remodeling that occurred in 1851 when the building was moved and divided into upper and lower spaces.

The purpose of the following narrative is to provide information on the origins of the building's architectural features in order to make informed decisions on future repairs and alterations. The building's present appearance is described, with a focus on historic architectural features and alterations, their date/period, and where appropriate, the rationale for the alteration. Dates are based on physical analysis, coupled with research into town and church records and analyses of historical photographs.

### Site

This site has been associated with the Meetinghouse since 1851, when the building was moved here from its location on the Common, a short distance away. The land on which the building stands is part of town land that includes the Common and Pine Ridge Cemetery in the village center of Hancock. The Meetinghouse itself is owned jointly by the Town and the First Congregational Church. It fronts south onto Main Street (NH Route 123), the primary route through the village. The sloping lot is terraced in the immediate vicinity of the Meetinghouse; a stone retaining wall that was constructed when the horse sheds were built in 1895 runs behind the building. (Previously, there was a precipitous slope behind the building.) An unpaved, horseshoe-shaped drive encircles the sides and rear of the Meetinghouse and provides access to the horse sheds.

### Exterior

The Meetinghouse is a 2 ½ story, 58' x 85', Federal-style, timber-frame, south-facing building sited gable-front to the road.

### *Foundation*

The building rests on a dressed granite-block foundation, one row high. In the rear, where the foundation is fully exposed, there is irregularly laid, mortared stone below the granite block.



Detail view of granite block on foundation

### ***Roof & Chimneys***

The roof is covered with variegated-color slate that was laid sometime in the latter part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, quite likely when the new horse sheds were built in 1895. The original covering for the roof was wood shingles.



The rear chimneys were built in 1878 with corbeled caps, perhaps damaged by and removed following the 1938 Hurricane. (They were gone by 1947.)

While there are two pairs of chimneys in the building, only one pair now rises above the roofline. Located in the rear of the building, this pair was constructed in 1878; it is quite possible a wood furnace was installed at this time. Historic photos show they had corbeled caps.

The other pair, buried in the side walls near the front of the building, was constructed in 1851 and ventilated stoves. The portion of the chimneys above the roofline was removed sometime between 1888 and 1895, possibly during the major renovations of 1888. At least one of the bases is readily visible in the cellar.



### ***Tower***

The four-stage tower is perhaps the most prominent feature of the building and one of the hallmarks of the Templeton Run meetinghouses. As the tower rises, each stage diminishes in size. There are four different balustrades. The tower is capped with a tall, six-sided, wooden spire covered with wood shingles and crowned by a wooden ball from which rises a metal weathervane with a lyre-shaped wind indicator between two balls. A wooden balustrade with corner posts capped by urns and curvilinear latticework encircles the spire.

The first stage of the tower is a tall, square, solid base sided with clapboards and trimmed with paneled cornerboards, reeding on the frieze and small modillions at the cornice. The Howard & Company clock, which has

Roman numerals, ornate hands and was purchased in 1872, is mounted on the three public faces (east, south and west). A window punctures the rear (north) face.

The second stage—the belfry—is sided with flush boarding; the flooring is standing seam metal. Each of the four faces is identical. Architectural details include wooden, pyramidal finials (recently replaced) at each corner; paired corner pilasters flanking an arched opening with a keystone and imposts and balustrade consisting of square balusters set on the diagonal and molded handrail; and architrave with diamond-shaped ornament in the frieze and small modillions at the cornice.

The Congregational Society ordered this bell in time to hang and ring it at the dedication on October 25, 1820. It was made by the Revere & Son workshop in 1820, one of three made that year and the only one destined for New Hampshire. At 1,193 pounds, today it is the fourth heaviest Revere bell surviving in New Hampshire.<sup>33</sup>



The bell, obtained from the Revere workshops, was installed in time for the Meetinghouse dedication in 1820.

The third stage is octagonal, with an encircling balustrade with decorative sawn slats, molded handrail and square corner posts topped with carved urns. Each face has an arched opening containing, in alternate form, either a 6/6-sash window and a louver in the tympanum or just louvers. A pilaster defines each corner, and the cornice features mutules.

The fourth—and top—stage is also octagonal, with an encircling balustrade similar to that on the third stage. It is sheathed in flush boarding and trimmed with corner pilasters and a cornice with modillions. Painted on each face is a simulated oval opening with radiating “muntins,” the whole of which recalls the oval window in the façade pediment.

### ***Walls***

All of the exterior walls are sided with clapboards, most of which, regardless of age, are lapped. (This, despite the fact that butt clapboard was commonly used after the mid-19<sup>th</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Larger Revere bells in New Hampshire are found in Newport, Deerfield and New Boston churches. The Revere workshop made 959 bells during its thirty-six years of operation (1792-1828), of which 134 survive (as of 1976). Twenty-eight of those were in New Hampshire. Nearly half of Revere’s bells were for churches; most of the remainder hung in factories, schools and on ships. (Stickney, 1976)

century.) There is no indication of infill on the second story of the side elevations, where 1820 windows were removed in 1851, indicating that new, lapped clapboards were installed there.

On the rear of the building, however, there are obvious cuts where the second story windows and even the center pulpit window, which was between the two stories, were located. This is important physical documentation.



The shadow line of the pulpit window directly above the door and window to the right is readily apparent. It was removed in 1851. Note the cuts to either side, which were second story windows that were directly above those on the first.

The only wall area lacking clapboards is the façade pediment, which is sheathed in flush boarding.

The fire escape on the rear elevation was added in 1976.

### ***Wood Trim***

The Meetinghouse is richly ornamented with Federal-style trim, particularly on its façade. Façade trim includes arched modillions along all cornices, including the Palladian window; four sets of paired pilasters with carved Ionic capitals across the façade; carved, flat, foliate ornament in the façade pediment and swags in the frieze of the Palladian window.



The carved foliage on the pediment and arched modillions along the cornice are features found on other Templeton Run meetinghouses. Other trim includes paneled cornerboards at the outer corners of the side elevations and plain cornerboards on the rear; plain sill boards; molded box cornices with returns on the rear gable end;



When the building was renovated in 1851 and first floor windows dropped, the town obscured evidence of the cut by installing a horizontal trim band immediately above the window heads.



Near the foot of every cornerboard and pilaster, as well as on the pilasters and frame of the front entrance doorways, there is a horizontal cut at a consistent height from the bottom trim board. A sure explanation of this cut cannot be made, but it could have been tied to sill replacement during the 1851 move, or it could reflect the available length of boards and this was a neat way to work with shorter boards.

### ***Window openings & sash***

The window openings date from two primary periods: 1820 and 1851, but the sash and casings are 1820 and 1888. Most of the windows are fitted with exterior aluminum storm sash.



All of the windows on the lower level, as well as all of those on the façade, are original to the building. These windows contain 12/12 sash with a typical Federal-era muntin profile. Their casings have typical Federal-style moldings.



All of the 1820 windows along the side elevations and rear were dropped approximately 18" in 1851. Though the cuts were carefully concealed on the side elevations with wooden trim, in the less visible rear, no such care was taken. Note the cut line above this window.



The six existing openings across the lower level of the rear were all here in 1889; what is now a door was then a window. It is probable that when the building was originally built in 1820, there was only one window in the middle, rather than two. (Although there are no extant views showing the rear prior to 1851, views of other Templeton Run meetinghouses show a row of five windows on both the upper and lower levels and a pulpit window, often arched, between those rows, centered under the ridge line.)



The only 1820 window that is different is the Palladian window above the front center doorway. It has 24 panes in the middle, surmounted by a semi-circular fanlight with radiating wood muntins; on either side there is a false sidelight with two vertical rows of five panes each. (The sidelight does not puncture the wall to light the balcony within.)



The side elevation windows on the upper level date from 1888, but the openings were made in 1851 when the church altered the fenestration following the move. Every other window was removed, leaving four spaced across the wall. Each of those openings was slightly widened and elongated, most likely by both raising the lintel a little bit and dropping the sill a bit more. Since there are no visible signs of the blocked in openings, new lapped clapboards must have been applied as infill. In 1888 these windows were replaced with the existing sash, but fitted out with red and amber glass perimeter panes and figured glass in the center. After some of those windows were damaged from the 1938 Hurricane, all of the glass was replaced with clear glass.

Historically, all of the windows of the Meetinghouse had exterior louvered blinds (usually closed) on all of the front and side windows. (Though there are no close-up historic views of the rear elevation, it is likely they, too, were provided with blinds.) The blinds were removed sometime between 1938 and 1947, perhaps following the 1938 Hurricane. They are stored in the cellar.

### ***Front entrance***

Each of the three doorways has a four-panel door and a fixed leaf above. The doors date from the 20<sup>th</sup> century, but closely resemble those in place by the late 19<sup>th</sup> century.

In 2000 the front entrance was made accessible by creating an earthen ramp on the left side and adding a concrete slab at grade with the granite thresholds at the three entry doors. (It may have been laid on top of the two historic granite steps that spanned the width of the entry pavilion.) Two granite slab steps with an iron railing were installed in front of the center doorway.

The lamps that flank the center door and the two sign boards with broken scroll tops, crafted by Perley Dunbar and mounted on the corner pilasters, were installed in 1966.



Pre-1903 view of entry with original granite steps and lantern light fixture. By the 1930s there were showing round glass globes mounted on brackets flanking the center doorway.

## **Interior: First Floor**

### ***Vestibule***

A smaller vestibule served the Meetinghouse from 1820-51; its back wall was originally between the first two windows where there is now a chimney stack. In 1851 that wall was moved north just past the second window.

In the 1990s, the floor boards in the vestibule were flipped over and refinished. The wider crack in the flooring in the vestibule marks the location of the 1820 partition wall.



The door on the right encloses the east stairway (see below) to the sanctuary. The arched niche is sheathed with vertical bead-board secured with wire nails, suggesting turn-of-the-20<sup>th</sup> century construction. Both of the four-paneled doors date from mid-19<sup>th</sup> c.



The paneling on the vestibule walls may well have been made from old box pews. It matches the paneling that survives in the northeast corner of the church and would have been installed in 1851.



The flat-board wainscot between the front doors dates from 1820.



Viewed from the Town Hall side, these double, six-panel doors were probably reused from the 1820 Meetinghouse and may well have led from the 1820 vestibule into the main hall of the Meetinghouse.



Two small storage rooms under the stairs were created in 1851. The town claimed the east room for wood storage; it shows the wear and tear of hard use. (It is not known what the church used the west room for, as the finish is far less worn.) The doors that close these rooms off from the space under the stairs are from the 1820 era, even though the staircase was rebuilt after the building was moved.

Two “stove” rooms with chimneys were created in 1851, one at either end of the vestibule. (They are now offices.) In 1866 the town allowed the church to cut a doorway from each into the town hall so it could extend their hot-air pipes up into the sanctuary.



1851 paneling survives in the east office

The west office, renovated in 1966, has no surviving historic fabric, but an original post is exposed.

### ***Stairways***

The two stairways replace earlier stairways of unknown configuration that would have been used in the 1820 building. These appear to date from 1851, but possibly were part of the 1888 renovation (although they are not mentioned in any of the descriptions of that work).

The pewter sconce on the stair wall was electrified as part of the 1966 renovation.

### ***Town Hall***

The Town Hall, which is the main room on the first floor, reveals construction from two primary building campaigns: 1820 (when this was the main, two-story space of the Meetinghouse) and 1851 (when it became the Town Hall).



Town hall, looking north. The two chimneys on the rear wall were added in 1878.



The wainscot that runs the perimeter of the space is from the original (1820) Meetinghouse. In many places, shadow lines of the 1820 pews are still visible, making it possible to reconstruct the spacing of those pews.



As part of the 1851 move and remodeling, both the windows and the floor in the Town Hall were dropped approximately 18" and a bench installed along the sides for seating.



Posts were added in 1851 to support the new floor of the sanctuary above. One post, however, located in the southeast corner, survives from 1820; it would have supported the gallery. Note the chamfered corners.



One of the two doorways installed in 1866 to access the town hall from the “stove” rooms (now the offices).



The town installed the stage along the west wall sometime around the turn-of-the-20<sup>th</sup> century. Part of the construction included a plank back wall that left a narrow corridor for performers behind the stage. The stage was accessed via rough-made steps on either side.



Aladdin Scenic Company of Boston painted this 16'4" x 8'6" curtain for the town hall stage; it was delivered to the town in 1923. The scene depicts Norway Pond in the summer. Curtains were painted either by local or itinerant artists or, as in the case of Hancock's, by a scenic studio in a major city. Today, these latter curtains are often in more stable condition, because paints used in studios were generally made from higher quality materials and were more professionally mixed. In 2006 Curtains Without Borders, Inc., of Vermont restored this curtain. It is currently stored in the Town Archives Room.

## **Interior: Second Floor**

### ***Lobby***



This table was purchased by the Congregational Society when the Meetinghouse was first constructed in 1820.

### ***Sanctuary***

The doors leading into the church date from 1851. The sanctuary floor is at the height of the original gallery and dates from 1851. It is likely that the entire floor was laid at that time, rather than just the center section infilled and the gallery floors reused. The existing oak floor probably dates from the 1888 renovation; most of it is covered with carpet. Walls are plaster and painted white. Paneling dating from 1851 survives in the northeast corner; shadow lines of pews are evident.



The pressed metal ceiling was added in 1905.

### *Pews*

The sanctuary pews were installed in 1851. There are three tiers/blocks of pews with two center aisles. Each tier/block is divided down the middle by a partition wall that is the same height as the pew backs. Aisle side walls have sawn, scrolled caps of unpainted wood. The backs and partition walls are finished with a low-profile cap, also unpainted. Four rows of choir pews in front of the organ face the back of the sanctuary—and have done so since at least 1947.

The pews do not follow one standard design. The side walls are paneled, some with salvaged late 18<sup>th</sup> century (Georgian) raised paneling of indeterminate origin and others with newer paneling. Seat backs are a mix of flat boards and raised panels. Kick panels (below the seats) are mostly flat, but some have Georgian-style panels.



An example of late 18<sup>th</sup> century Georgian paneling found on many pews in the center area. Pew nos. 1-13 (odd nos) all have such paneling.



The pulpit stands on a low dais that extends between the two rear chimney stacks and forward as far as the midsection between the first and second windows from the rear. A curved platform mounted on the dais holds the altar. It is likely both the dais and platform were part of the 1966 renovations. The pulpit and flanking furniture were acquired during the church's 1888 centennial celebration.



Remnants of the 1888 fresco work and paint scheme remain hidden on walls now within the organ pipe room.

The current organ is at least the third housed within the building, replacing a Frazee organ installed in 1929, which in turn replaced an 1888 Esty organ. It is a two-manual Brys Organ made in Charlestown, NH, and reuses many of the Frazee pipes. It was installed in 1985.

## *Upper Stairways*



The curved stairways that start on the first floor continue up to the balcony. An iron railing on the inside wall appears ca. 1900. The unpainted handrail between the first and second floors is late 20<sup>th</sup> century. At the bottom of the run between the second floor and balcony (see above photograph), there is a plain, round, unpainted newel post with flattened round cap and a plain, unpainted handrail, which is original to the ca. 1900 construction.



The balcony spans the width of the building; the floor is raked only by the first row of pews. There are two rows of pews in the front, behind which are three rows of bench seating. Access to the tower is from the balcony.

### ***Roof framing***

The roof frame is a major rafter-minor purlin frame with king posts. Given the close proximity of the purlins and evidence of larger pockets, they were likely added or supplemented, along with bracing at the king posts, in order to strengthen the roof when the slates were installed ca. 1895.

### **Cellar**

The only current access to the cellar is exterior, from the rear. However, the cellar was once accessible from inside, from the west office on the first floor, where remnants of that staircase are visible. The cellar has a dirt floor.



Remnant of stairway that led from west office into cellar



Note the upside-down writing “south end” on this block of granite, visible in the cellar; it was clearly reused, most likely from the 1820 Meetinghouse foundation, but in an entirely different location. To the right is a timber carrier (the lower beam) for the dropped-down town hall. When the building was moved, these beams were cut off where they had attached to the sill, lowered down approximately 18” and placed on new wooden piers. All of the other carriers from here to the rear gable end are similarly positioned: cut from the sills and dropped down.

## Horse Sheds

This 180' long structure was constructed in an arc of approximately 100 degrees in 1895 by local builder William D. Fogg. Today, it is one of the most valuable legacies of the recommendations offered by landscape architect Ernest Bowditch. It sits on a dry-laid fieldstone foundation, exposed only on the rear due to the sloping site. Walls are clad with clapboards and the roof with variegated-color slate that seems to match the Meetinghouse.

The roof has a wide overhang along the front (south), somewhat sheltering the nineteen bays. Each bay has a segmentally arched opening. The thirteen easterly bays are open, with dirt floors, as originally designed. The remaining bays have been enclosed (post-1903) with vertical beaded boarding and a paneled door of varying types. Above each door there is a two-pane transom, most of which are now boarded up.



Horse sheds, looking east



Interior view of typical bay

## Existing Conditions Survey

The overall condition of the Meetinghouse is good. While there are areas of concern noted below, the people of the town of Hancock should be proud of their committed and longstanding stewardship of the Meetinghouse.

### ***1. Site***

The overall site has good drainage and on several site visits during varying weather conditions and different times of the year, the basement area of the Meetinghouse appeared dry.

The curved stone retaining walls towards the back of the meetinghouse are in reasonably good condition. However, the easterly side of the retaining walls is beginning to bow-out due to the increasing pressure of the root systems from the cedar bushes (now trees) planted behind them.

It would appear that over the years, several repairs have been made with various types/colors of mortar.



### ***2. Foundation, Posts, Cellar and Furnaces***

While this area is in overall good condition, there are several issues that should be addressed. There is a fairly large hole in the foundation at the westerly front corner that should be filled in to prevent larger animals (skunks, raccoons, foxes etc.) from getting into the basement. There are some smaller holes that should also be filled to keep out the wind and cold.

Along the exterior of the easterly long side of the meetinghouse, there are two major areas in which the water coming off of the roof is being directed into the building rather than away from the building.



Areas along the east elevation with water infiltration problems

While the majority of the posts and the stone pilings within the cellar appear to be in reasonably good condition, there are some that should be adjusted and straightened.



Listing posts in the cellar

The two furnaces that serve the town and church portion of the building appear to be in working order. According to the most current service tags, it would appear that the furnaces were last serviced in 2009.

The burners seem to have been updated since the original installation of the furnaces.

The current furnace insulation covering the ductwork is inefficient, in poor condition and is an attraction for animals to nest.



A typical amount of debris has accumulated in the cellar. There are several remnants of historical benches, pews and building parts, including exterior blinds (shutters), doors and finials that are currently in contact with the ground (dirt).



Examples of the stuff currently stored in the cellar

### ***3. Floor Framing under the Town Hall room***

When this area of the building was renovated, the floor was lowered approximately 18” to allow for greater headroom. In so doing, the main carriers were simply cut off, lowered and additional carriers installed under the original ones. Neither the ends of these cut-off

original carriers nor the later carriers are connected to the exterior framing of the structure at all. Instead, additional posts were added to support the weight of the floor system. The lowered framing is at the level of the granite foundation instead of being tied to the original sills located on top of the granite.

To a certain extent, these lowered timbers are floating within the granite foundation in this area of the meetinghouse with only the bench seating and non-structural elements holding the framing in place. This would account for the greater number of supporting posts placed under the timbers.

In the vast majority of situations, this arrangement would not have worked. However, in this situation, due to good soil conditions and good drainage, this unusual framing approach appears to be working adequately.



Lowered framing under the partition separating the vestibule from the former Town Hall.

#### ***4. Clapboards and Trim***

The clapboards and trim are in good condition considering their age and appear to continue to be very serviceable. There are a few minor places where clapboards have deteriorated, such as under the fire escape on the north gable end. Overall, the paint is in good condition with only a few areas of paint beginning to peel. However, it should be noted that during just this past winter (2010-2011) more areas with peeling paint emerged, especially on the rear gable end of the building.

#### ***5. Windows and Doors***

All of the windows on the meetinghouse, despite the fact that they date from the 19<sup>th</sup> century, are in good condition. Some of these windows have minor issues with window-stop alignment and opening/closing.

There are two window sills that have been replaced on the rear gable end of the building under the fire escape. These window sills were replaced with laminated materials rather than a solid piece of wood and have now failed.



These sills were replaced with laminated wood that has now failed

The storm windows appear to be in reasonable condition and help provide additional energy efficiency as well as additional protection for the historic sash. Some of the storm windows have not been closed properly causing heat loss. Also, one of the upper storm windows on the first floor, west side, is not fully closed and has now hastened the deterioration of one of the historic window sash.



When the storm window is not fully closed, it hastens the deterioration of the primary sash.

The front entry exterior doors currently used appear to be in good working order with only minor problems, such as occasional sticking, not latching properly, etc.

### **6. Roof Covering**

The slate roof of the meetinghouse (probably installed in the 1880s or 1890s) was placed directly over an earlier wood shingle roof. While the slate roof does not appear to be leaking at this time, just over the winter of 2010-11, a large amount of slate fell off the roof, and a pile of slate has accumulated on the ground near the northeast corner of the building.



West roof slope, showing slate conditions prior to Winter 2010-2011



The same slope, showing its condition after Winter 2010-2011



### ***7. Roof Framing System***

The roof structure appears to be in good condition with only minor deflections in some of the rafters and purlins. Because the roof was constructed from the outset with purlins set closer together than in most buildings, it allowed the weight of the later slate roof to be carried without any major problems.

There is a noticeable sag in the ridge directly behind the tower, as well as a lean to the tower. The two issues are directly related. See section on the Tower below for a full discussion on them.

## 8. Chimneys

The existing chimneys, both located near the rear of the building, are in poor condition and should be rebuilt. The chimney on the west slope is damaged at least through to the attic floor.



West chimney, between attic floor and roof ridge, showing creosote seepage and missing mortar.

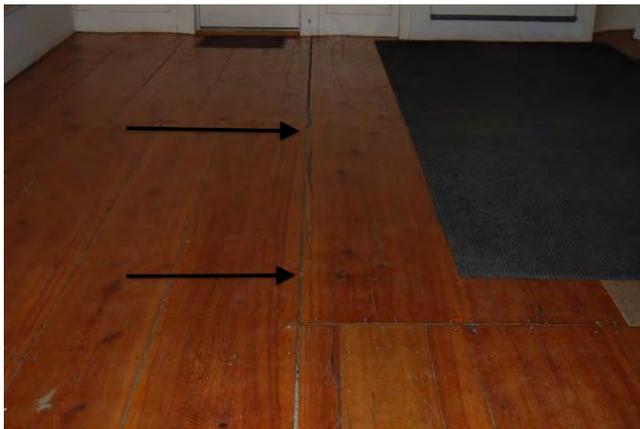
The chimney on the east slope appears to be in better condition and may only have to be repaired to just below the roof line.



East chimney, shown between attic floor and roof ridge

### **9. Timber Framing**

In general, the wood framing of the Meetinghouse (exclusive of framing above the belfry, reviewed elsewhere in this report) is in good condition. However, during the renovations undertaken after the building was moved in 1851, the partition wall between the front vestibule and the Town Hall (downstairs) was moved back to the north to the existing location. The original location of this partition is readily detectable by the “hump” in the floor of the vestibule. The moving of the partition caused partial failures in the tower.



The crack in the floor boards in the vestibule, shown in the middle of the photograph, follows the line of the original partition wall.

Upstairs, there was no wall where the north lobby wall now exists; however, there would have been posts that helped to support the tower. Those posts were cut off when the new balcony was added in 1851, and new posts were added that are outside the structural frame of the tower and therefore do not support it as well as it should.

Before the building was moved, there was probably a foundation or another framing arrangement under the first floor partition, since part of the purpose of this wall was to help transfer the weight of the tower above through the structure and to the cellar. Once the partition was relocated and the supporting posts in the balcony area were changed, the vestibule floor sagged. To counter the sag, a post was inserted under the carrier in the cellar. However, the post was cut too long, resulting in the hump in the floor.

## ***10. Tower***

After careful inspection of the tower, no signs of recent water damage or leaking were noted in or around the tower. The town and church have clearly made good faith attempts to keep this structure in good condition, which is no small task given its age, exposure to the elements and just the physical difficulty in making repairs to this area due to the tower's height.

Currently, the two lower stages (clock and belfry sections) of the tower lean toward the back, out of plumb approximately one inch (1") for every five feet (5'). Thus, the floor of the clock tower slants back towards the center of the Meetinghouse approximately three and one quarter inches (3 ¼ ") over its approximate sixteen foot (16') span. Between the northwest and northeast corners of the clock tower floor, there is another sag that is approximately five inches (5").

It is common for towers on wooden buildings to lean back towards the center of the building, because the front wall of the tower typically has a solid timber-framed wall below it, while the back wall of the tower is supported by an open timber-framed arrangement. However, the degree of lean in the clock tower and belfry of the Hancock Meetinghouse, while somewhat stabilized, is beyond what is typical. This is because the renovations undertaken in 1851 that moved the partition between the vestibule and Town Hall, and either removed or relocated posts, have caused the tower to list over the years.

When the previously described partition between the vestibule and Town Hall space were moved back toward the north in 1851 and has since remained, and the support timbers in the balcony were moved and/or modified, this caused the back section of the tower to lean beyond what is the norm for towers in most meetinghouses. This lean, in turn, has caused the sag in the roof ridge pole, since it is attached to the leaning tower.



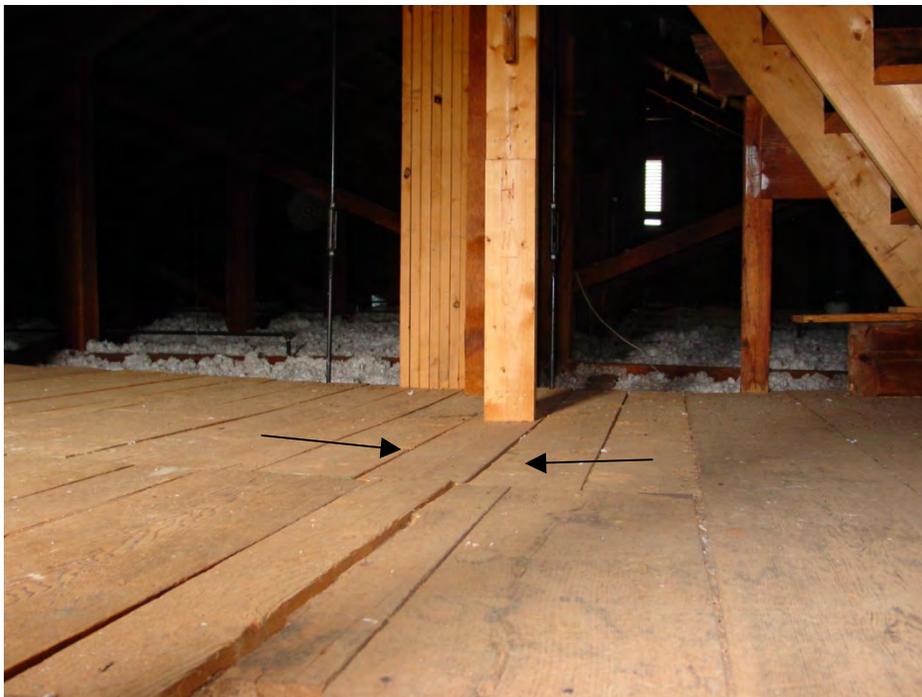
Note the backward lean of the clock tower and belfry.



Arrow points to the roof sag behind the tower



Looking west at the roof framing just behind the tower, showing the sagging rafter.



The arrows show the sag towards the center of the attic floor

The work on the upper stages of the tower that was done in 1992 was precipitated, at least in part, by water damage. The decision was made to remove the two upper stages of the tower, plus the spire, with a crane, in order to properly repair the damage. The heavy timber frame was repaired or replaced, as needed, with laminated kiln-dried stock.

While the upper stages were removed, it was decided to repair the two lower stages (clock tower and belfry) in place. Supplemental framing was added to address the lean of the tower. However, that new framing is actually putting additional pressure on the carrying timber that supports the tower. The result can be seen in the ceiling of the balcony.



View taken of steps leading to clock mechanism, showing additional framing members added to attempt to address the sag in the ceiling of the sanctuary below.

No additional supporting framing was added underneath to help transfer or spread the load to the ground level. The end result is that the clock tower and belfry are still considerably out of plumb and will only continue to sag more in the future.

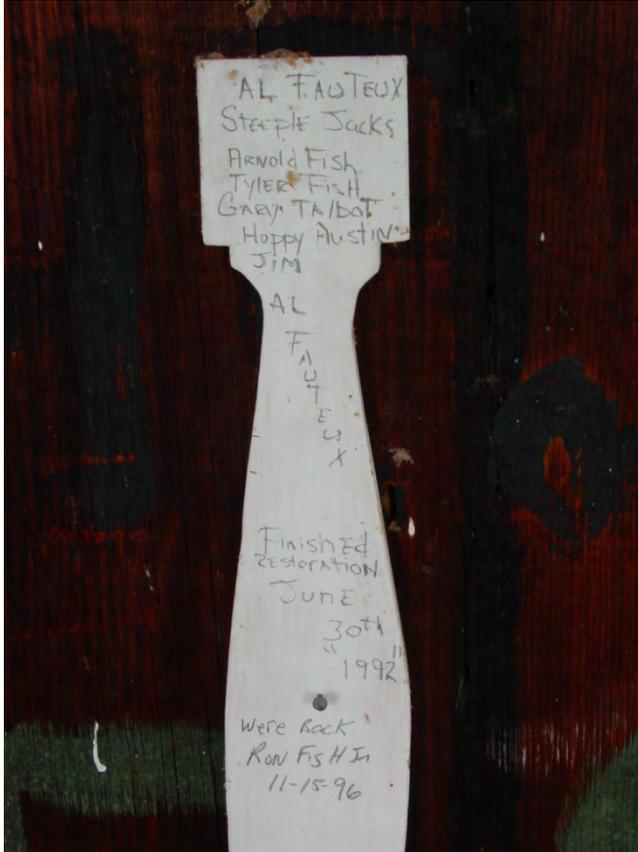
With the clock and bell towers left considerably out of plumb, a decision must have been made to add framing to the north side of the belfry roof so as to make the upper stages and spire plumb, when they were put back on the tower. Today, those upper sections of the tower are still plumb, but unfortunately the lower stages are considerably out of plumb.



The arrow shows the framing added to the belfry roof in 1992 in order to make the upper sections of the tower plumb.



View showing the lower section of the spire, as it runs internally through the upper sections of the tower. All of the framing of these upper sections radiate out from this center pole. Note the additional framing added in 1992 (secured with metal corner brackets).



The writing on this remnant of the tower railing, which is nailed to an inside wall of the upper stage, documents the major work undertaken in 1992.

Though repairs to the trim work of the tower were made in the mid 1990s, the railings, balustrades and exterior trim are currently in poor condition, due to paint failure and rot.



By contrast, the repairs/replacements made to the finials have held up well, and they are in good condition.

### ***11. ADA access***

While the town and church have made major—and very sensitive—improvements to create an accessible entrance to the building, movement within the building is still not ideal. Once inside, an older-style, single-seat, winding chair lift provides access to the second floor church sanctuary. While the lift is serviceable, it does not meet current ADA requirements, nor is it comfortable for all. There is no ADA access to the former Town Hall in the rear of the ground floor of the Meetinghouse.



The chair lift brings people from the vestibule to the church sanctuary

### ***12. Interior Spaces***

Overall, the interior spaces of the Meetinghouse, including the vestibule, first floor offices, former Town Hall, stairways, church area and balcony are in good condition with no major issues evident. Minor issues, such as paint loss and doors that may need to be adjusted, were noted, but are considered routine ongoing maintenance.

### ***13. Existing Insulation***

Currently, there is blown-in insulation in the church ceiling (attic floor), which is in reasonable condition, but apparently none in the walls. The hatch into the attic is not insulated and therefore is allowing heat to easily escape from the church up into the attic.



Existing insulation in the attic is limited to the floor

#### ***14. Electrical and Alarm Systems***

The electrical system is a 200 amp service with sub panels that is in working order and has been updated from time to time. There is still some older cloth wiring and some older style BX wiring that remains in use. The underground feed for the electrical service comes into the building from the east wall, near the south end.



The alarm system is a fairly new system that appears to be in working order.

## Preservation Guidelines & Estimated Costs for Needed Work

### *Overall Approach to Treatment*

The Hancock Meetinghouse has benefited from good stewardship throughout its lifetime. Decisions to preserve rather than modernize, as well as continued maintenance to keep the building dry and secure, have left the Meetinghouse with a majority of its historic exterior and interior fabric. The building today is a superb expression of how it has evolved over the years.

Its present-day appearance reflects its last major renovation, undertaken in 1888—a period from which it retains an exceptionally high level of integrity. Therefore, the consultants recommend that any future work acknowledges that period and does not remove features from the 1880s to return to an earlier appearance, such as 1820 or 1851. The recommendation does not suggest that post-1888 alterations, such as the substitution of clear glass for colored glass in 1938, lack significance. Rather, many of the changes that have occurred have acquired importance in their own right and serve to interpret the building's history.

Thus, we strongly recommend that any future work program follow *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Preservation* as outlined in the Appendix. The term 'preservation' means that there should be retention of the greatest amount of historic fabric to reflect how the building and its form, features and detailing have evolved over time. In essence, protection, maintenance and repair of existing historic fabric is emphasized, while replacement is minimized. If it becomes necessary to replace a material, it should be replaced with like materials. In general, we adhere to a "common sense approach" to this work, as well as to the rules of "do no harm" and "only do things that are reversible."

The following outlines various needs the building will require in years to come, based on the Existing Conditions Survey in the preceding section. Many of these projects—or parts of them—could be accomplished with volunteers, thereby greatly reducing the costs associated with each phase. For the purposes of this report, however, we have estimated costs assuming professional contractors are employed. When hiring contractors, select those who have a proven track record working with old timber frame structures and are willing to understand and follow the Secretary of the Interior's Standards.

### *1. Site*

Carefully remove the cedar bushes (now trees) from the inside of the curved retaining walls on the backside of the meetinghouse. As these trees continue to grow, added pressure will be applied to the retaining walls causing them to further bow-out and potentially fail. Also, fix the drainage issues outlined in the Existing Conditions Survey under "Site."

Estimated Cost : \$ 1,700 to \$ 2,000

## **2. Foundation, Posts and Cellar, including insulating these areas**

A. Salvage all architectural remnants, such as blinds (shutters), finials, doors and benches that came off the building label them, and store them in a secure, dry place. At the very least, get them off the cellar floor and lay them on pressure-treated bunks.

Remove all scrap wood. Rake and clean out the basement floor. Deteriorated wood, allowed to accumulate on a dirt floor, will only increase rot and add unwanted moisture to the basement area.

Estimated Cost: \$ 750 to \$ 1,000



Sample of the miscellaneous stuff that needs to be sorted and disposed of or properly stored

B. While the existing furnaces appear to be in working order, it is suggested that a qualified HVAC contractor review the heating systems to determine if it makes economic sense to replace both systems with more efficient furnaces that are reconnected to the existing duct work or replace everything. Given the existing floor registers throughout the building, it may be sensible to remain with hot air. Furthermore, a hot air system is relatively inconspicuous. At a minimum, the burners should be serviced, the old furnace insulation removed, and the existing duct work re-insulated with appropriate duct wrap.

Estimated Cost: yet to be determined

C. Fix the large holes in the granite foundation by using granite similar to the existing granite in texture and color. Smaller cracks and holes can be filled with oakum.

Estimated Cost: \$ 1,200 to \$ 1,500

D. While the majority of the posts and stone pilings appear to be in reasonably good condition, there are some that should be adjusted and straightened. A survey of the posts should be done after the basement area is cleaned out. There is NO NEED for all of them to be adjusted and/or replaced. The posts will be of varying height depending on the elevation of the basement floor and the height of the stone pilings, as well as whether the posts are located under the original lowered carriers, or if they are under the added lower carriers.

Estimated Cost: \$ 5,000 to \$ 7,500

E. While insulating the cellar ceiling may seem like a wonderful idea to obtain additional energy savings, it can do far more harm than good. It will be costly to effectively insulate the ceiling, very difficult to keep the insulation from being ruined by rodents, and also may cause moisture to accumulate against the wood members causing mold and rot. Putting chicken wire under the insulation will only allow the insulation to be suspended for the eventual mouse, rat, chipmunk and/or red squirrel nests, thus still ruining the insulation and rendering it ineffective. The only effective barrier that we have found to protect a basement ceiling full of insulation is ½” hardware cloth. This method is also very costly, especially since the Meetinghouse footprint is so large.

Spray on foam insulation is NOT a solution, as it may trap moisture against the wood members. Furthermore, it is irreversible and should also not be used on a stone foundation.

### ***3. Clapboards and Trim***

There are several clapboards, particularly in the rear of the building, that need attention. We highly recommend continuing the use of feathered, quarter-sawn, extra-clear spruce, back-primed clapboards for any repair.

Since the Meetinghouse was painted recently, it would be easier and more cost effective to focus short-term efforts on specific areas with paint failure. Those spots should be scraped, primed and then topped with a finish coat.

In the future, on all exterior painting projects, we strongly recommend a high-quality paint such as Sherwin-Williams Exterior Duration, which is a latex paint. It is more expensive than most paints, but the major expense in any building painting project is the labor, not the paint. While self-priming, when applied over previously painted surfaces, their A100 primer should be used first.

### ***4. Doors, Windows, and Storm Windows***

The windows on the Meetinghouse, all of which date from the 19<sup>th</sup> century, are highly significant architectural features. The fact that they are of different sizes from two different periods is important in understanding how the building has evolved. Furthermore, the 1820 window sash, located primarily on the first level and façade, retains many old panes of glass.

It has been proven over and over again that it is more cost effective to maintain historic windows with good quality storm windows than to replace this arrangement with vinyl windows. First, vinyl windows are costly and are only estimated to last 20 years. Second, a well-maintained historic window with a high quality storm window has about the same efficiency as a new, vinyl replacement window. Third, a single-glazed, wooden window is far easier and more economical to repair, as it can be taken apart to repair only those areas requiring it. By contrast, when a vinyl window fails, the entire window may necessitate replacement.

A list of qualified window restoration professionals is available from the New Hampshire Preservation Alliance ([www.nhpreservation.org](http://www.nhpreservation.org)).

The existing storm windows need minor adjustments, as well as ensuring they are closed properly. The windows that currently lack storms should be fitted with them. Install a high-quality storm window with a white finish and that aligns with the meeting rail of the sash.

Estimated Cost to adjust all the storm windows so that they operate properly:  
\$ 650 to \$ 950.

Estimated Cost for additional storm windows (installed): \$ 250 to \$ 400 per  
window

Exterior doors can be repaired, adjusted to open and close properly, and weather-stripped to help with energy savings. There are ways to weather strip exterior doors so that the weather stripping is not seen at all when the door is closed.

Estimated Cost to install weather stripping on all of the exterior doors: \$ 400 to  
\$ 500

## **5. Roof**

After more than 100 years of service, the slate roof is nearing the end of its life expectancy.

The existing slate roof ideally would be replaced with a new slate roof that matches in color, size and texture, both for a higher level of architectural integrity and for a longer life span. It is our understanding that matching slate may still be available. While it would be costly to replace the existing slate roof with a new slate roof, it would certainly be the most historically accurate approach. It should also have a longer life.

If the replacement roofing material is slate, it may be necessary to strengthen the roof structure. This could be as simple as adding plywood on top of the roof sheathing or may be more complicated, if additional framing members/bracing, etc. must be added to the existing roof structure.

If a slate roof is chosen, the roof structure should be reviewed by a licensed engineer familiar with timber frame buildings, especially meetinghouses, to determine if any additional framing is required to the roof structure.

If it is determined that only plywood is needed, first remove both the slate and the earlier wood shingled roof beneath it. Any damage to the existing roof structure should be repaired at that time. Then add a layer of 5/8" plywood to the existing roof deck.

Estimated Cost to replace the roof with slate: \$ 85,000 to \$120,000

*NB: Any slate roofing work should only be done in conjunction with needed work on the tower.*

It would certainly be considerably less expensive, at least in the short term, to reroof with something other than slate, such as 35 or 50-year architectural asphalt shingles. Another alternative might be to investigate some of the newer roofing materials that simulate slate. If the town opts for something other than slate, we recommend that the chosen roofing material first reviewed by the NH Division of Historical Resources.

Estimated Cost to replace the roof with 35-year architectural asphalt shingles:  
\$ 23,000 to \$ 27,000.

*NB: If the new roofing material is asphalt shingles, it would still be optimal to undertake the tower work at the same time, but not necessary.*

## **6. Chimneys**

The two chimneys need to be rebuilt. First, they should be carefully documented. The west chimney needs to be taken down to at least the attic floor level and the east chimney to at least the roof line. Both chimneys should be rebuilt using a water-struck restoration brick of the same approximate size and color as the existing brick. It is also very important that the mortar color and brick spacing match the original as closely as possible.

This work should be accomplished in conjunction with re-roofing the Meetinghouse.

Estimated Cost to replace the west chimney: \$ 2,700 to \$ 3,200  
Estimated Cost to replace the east chimney: \$ 1,500 to \$ 2,000

## **7. Tower**

The tower will ultimately require a complete restoration that would optimally occur with re-roofing. If the new roof is asphalt, the tower work could be delayed a while longer. If the new roof is slate, it needs to be done in concert with that.

When the tower is restored, the work should occur as follows:

- Hire an engineer familiar with meetinghouses and old timber-frame structures to consult with a contractor familiar with timber-frame and tower construction to determine how to cost-effectively approach supporting the existing tower all the way down through to the foundation of the building.
- Remove the entire tower, so that the clock tower and belfry can be repaired appropriately.
- Install an appropriate framing method to support the tower.
- Adjust the roof of the belfry by removing blocking, etc. that was added when the upper stages were re-installed in 1992 in an effort to make them plumb.
- Repair all of the damaged components of the clock tower and belfry, including their structure and trim elements.
- Repair and re-roof the spire, including all trim details, etc.
- Re-install the entire tower.

Any replacements of trim, railings, etc. should match the original in dimensions. It is reasonable, however, to replace the original material, typically old growth pine, with a material such as Spanish cedar or mahogany. These alternative materials, back primed

and painted with a high quality paint, will last many years longer than the “new fast-growing pine” available today.

**It should be clearly understood that given the ability to visually see the vast majority of the structure that needs to be repaired, there is no reason that an accurate contracted price to do all of this repair can not be obtained.** Too many times, unrealistic estimates are given because of so-called “unknowns” and/or that the bidding companies are unfamiliar with the process. Before any work is started, a reasonable “known” price should be determined, so that fundraisers will have a clear sense of the amount of money needed.

Estimated Cost yet to be determined, however it would be expected that a project such as this, done appropriately, could easily cost \$ 200,000 to \$300,000.

#### **8. ADA Access**

Since there is currently no ADA access to the former Town Hall and access to the second floor is minimal, it would make sense to consider achieving and improving access to these areas. The approach that could achieve both and be sensitive to the architecture of the Meetinghouse would be to add an elevator tower/stairway to the rear of the building in the area of, and replacing the outdated fire escape. The rear of the building is the least visible and most altered elevation. If such an approach is followed, it would be optimal to retain evidence of the former window patterns from the 1820 building as much as possible.



This solution would also provide better access to the cellar door, which is now partially covered by the fire escape. Also, there would be ample parking in close proximity to the tower, thus minimizing the distance from a vehicle to the door.

Estimated cost: \$ 95,000 to \$ 120,000

As a temporary measure, we recommend installing a folding, portable, lightweight ramp to access the entrance to the former Town Hall space. Such ramps are very reasonably priced and readily available.

Estimated cost: \$ 250 to \$ 500

### ***9. Insulation in former Town Hall***

There is a substantial amount of cold air infiltration and heat loss occurring in the areas of the benches located along exterior walls and the common wall with the vestibule. This space was created when the floor in this room was lowered in 1851 by 18-20", and the framework consisting of the main carriers and floor joists was dropped into the area behind the granite foundation stones. Now, when one of the bench seats is lifted, you can look down directly into the cellar. This area should be sealed off and then insulated with ridged insulation. It may be necessary to open up the area under the stage along the exterior wall to insulate that area.

Estimated Cost: \$ 1,800 to \$ 2,200



The arrow in the photograph above shows the open space beneath the bench seats that opens directly into the cellar and should be insulated.

### ***10. Insulation in general***

The vast majority of heat loss in any building, particularly those with reasonably good windows with storm window protection, is through the "cap" into the attic. For this reason, it would be prudent to increase the amount of blown-in insulation in the attic floor of Meetinghouse.

Estimated cost to add attic insulation: \$3,800 to \$ 4,500

Insulating the exterior walls is NOT recommended, as it could cause mold, as well as exterior paint failure. Spray-in foam insulation anywhere is also NOT recommended as it is not reversible.

With insulation added in the attic and along benches in the former Town Hall, window stops repaired, exterior doors properly weather stripped, foundation better sealed, and

duct work properly insulated, a substantial energy savings should be realized, in which case, why risk a potential major problem by insulating the walls?

### ***11. Electrical and Alarm Systems***

While these systems appear to be in working order, because older cloth wiring remains in the building, it may be wise to have these systems evaluated by an electrical engineer and/or the town code enforcement officer.

### ***12. General Interior Work***

We recommend that items in all of the storage areas be sorted and organized to remove unneeded material. This is especially true in the area under the stairways.

Doors that do not open or close easily should be adjusted by a reputable carpenter before damage occurs to the hinges and/or door itself.

## Recommended Work Phases with Estimated Costs

These numbers are based on best guess estimates, based on similar previous projects. Prior to applying for grants and embarking fund-raising, numbers for this specific building and task should be obtained.

### Phase I

**Time Period:** As soon as possible

Site work	\$1,700-2,000
Clean out the basement area	\$750-1,000
Fix holes in the foundation area	\$1,200-1,500
Straighten and repair cellar posts	\$5,000-7,500
Adjust storm windows	\$650-950
Weather stripping on exterior doors	\$400-500.
Day care/old town hall area (insulation)	\$1,800-2,200
Additional insulation in cap etc.	\$3,800-4,500
Total Project Range	\$15,300-20,150
10% contingency	\$1,530-2,015
<b>Total Phase I</b>	<b>\$16,830-22,163</b>

*NB: The totals do not include amounts that have "yet to be determined" for the HVAC, as well as for any additional storm windows.*

### Phase II. Option A

Rebuild chimneys, replace the roof with architectural asphalt shingles (35 to 50-year life)

**Time Period:** Within the next couple of years

Rebuild chimneys	\$4,200-5,200
Replace roof with architectural asphalt shingles	\$23,000-27,000
Total Project Range	\$27,200-32,200
10% contingency	\$2,720-3,220
<b>Total Phase II Option A</b>	<b>\$29,920-35,420</b>

### Phase II. Option B

Rebuild chimneys, replace roof with slate to match the existing, repair entire tower

**Time Period:** Within the next couple of years

Rebuild chimneys	\$4,200-5,200
Replace roof with new slate	\$85,000-120,000
Repair entire tower	\$200,000-300,000
Total Project Range	\$289,200-425,200
10% contingency	\$28,920-42,520
10% supervision	\$28,920-42,520
<b>Total Phase II Option B</b>	<b>\$347,040-510,240</b>

*NB: The wide cost range is due to the as-yet-to-be-determined figure for the repairs to the tower*

*If Phase II Option A is chosen, this would be the next phase:*

**Phase III. Repair towers and steeple**

**Time Period:** Eventually, but should be monitored 2x/year

Repair towers and steeple	\$200,000-300,000
10% contingency	\$20,000-30,000
10% supervision	\$20,000-30,000
<b>Total Phase III</b>	<b>\$240,000-360,000</b>

**Phase IV.**

**Time Period:** As funds allow

Elevator/stair tower	\$95,000-120,000
10% contingency	\$9,500-12,000
10% supervision	\$9,500-12,000
<b>Total Phase IV</b>	<b>\$114,000-144,000</b>

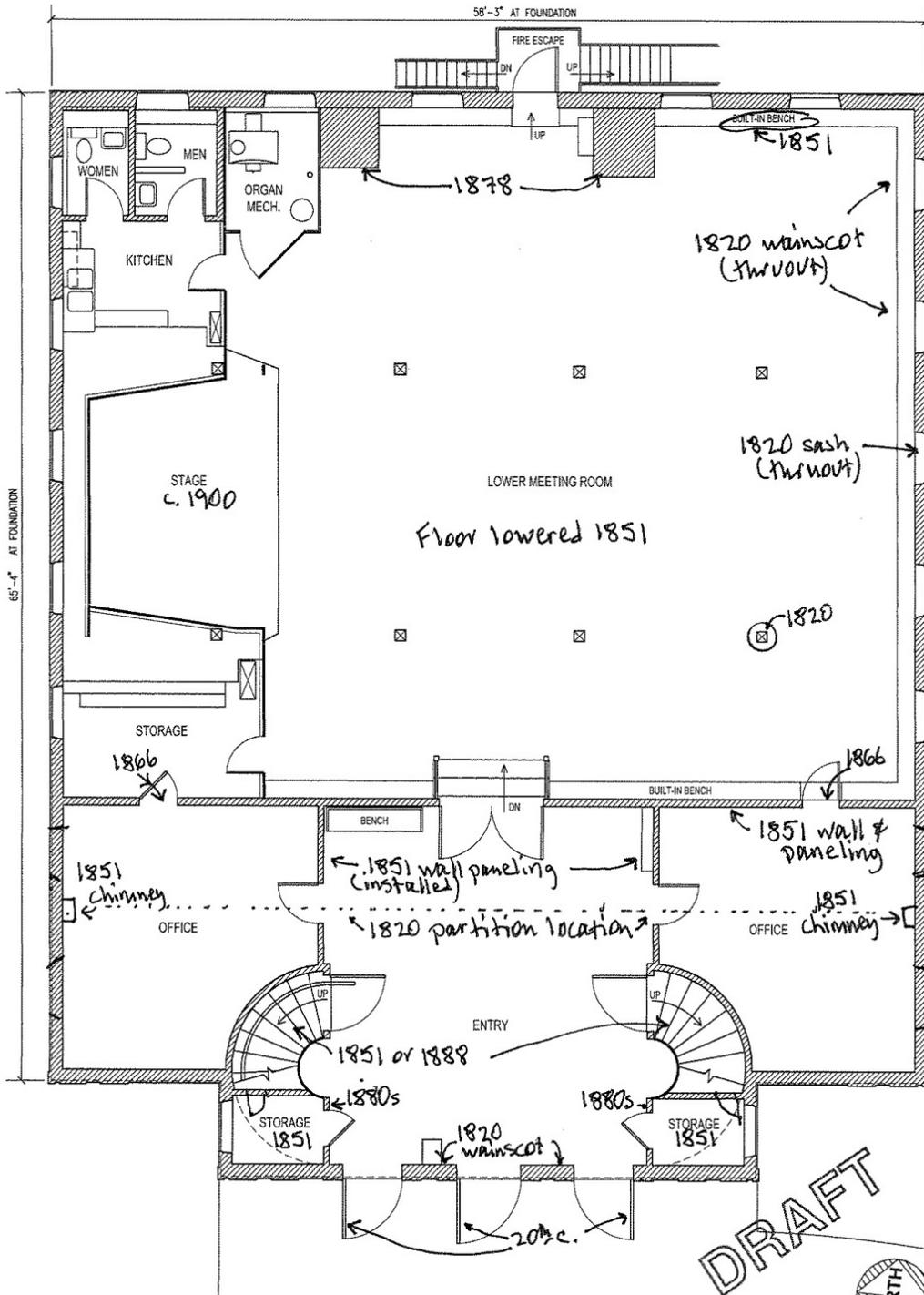
## **APPENDIX A**

### **The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Preservation**

1. A property will be used as it was historically, or be given a new use that maximizes the retention of distinctive materials, features, spaces, and spatial relationships. Where a treatment and use have not been identified, a property will be protected and, if necessary, stabilized until additional work may be undertaken.
2. The historic character of a property will be retained and preserved. The replacement of intact or repairable historic materials or alteration of features, spaces, and spatial relationships that characterize a property will be avoided.
3. Each property will be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Work needed to stabilize, consolidate, and conserve existing historic materials and features will be physically and visually compatible, identifiable upon close inspection, and properly documented for future research.
4. Changes to a property that have acquired historic significance in their own right will be retained and preserved.
5. Distinctive materials, features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property will be preserved.
6. The existing condition of historic features will be evaluated to determine the appropriate level of intervention needed. Where the severity of deterioration requires repair or limited replacement of a distinctive feature, the new material will match the old in composition, design, color, and texture.
7. Chemical or physical treatments, if appropriate, will be undertaken using the gentlest means possible. Treatments that cause damage to historic materials will not be used.
8. Archeological resources will be protected and preserved in place. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures will be undertaken.

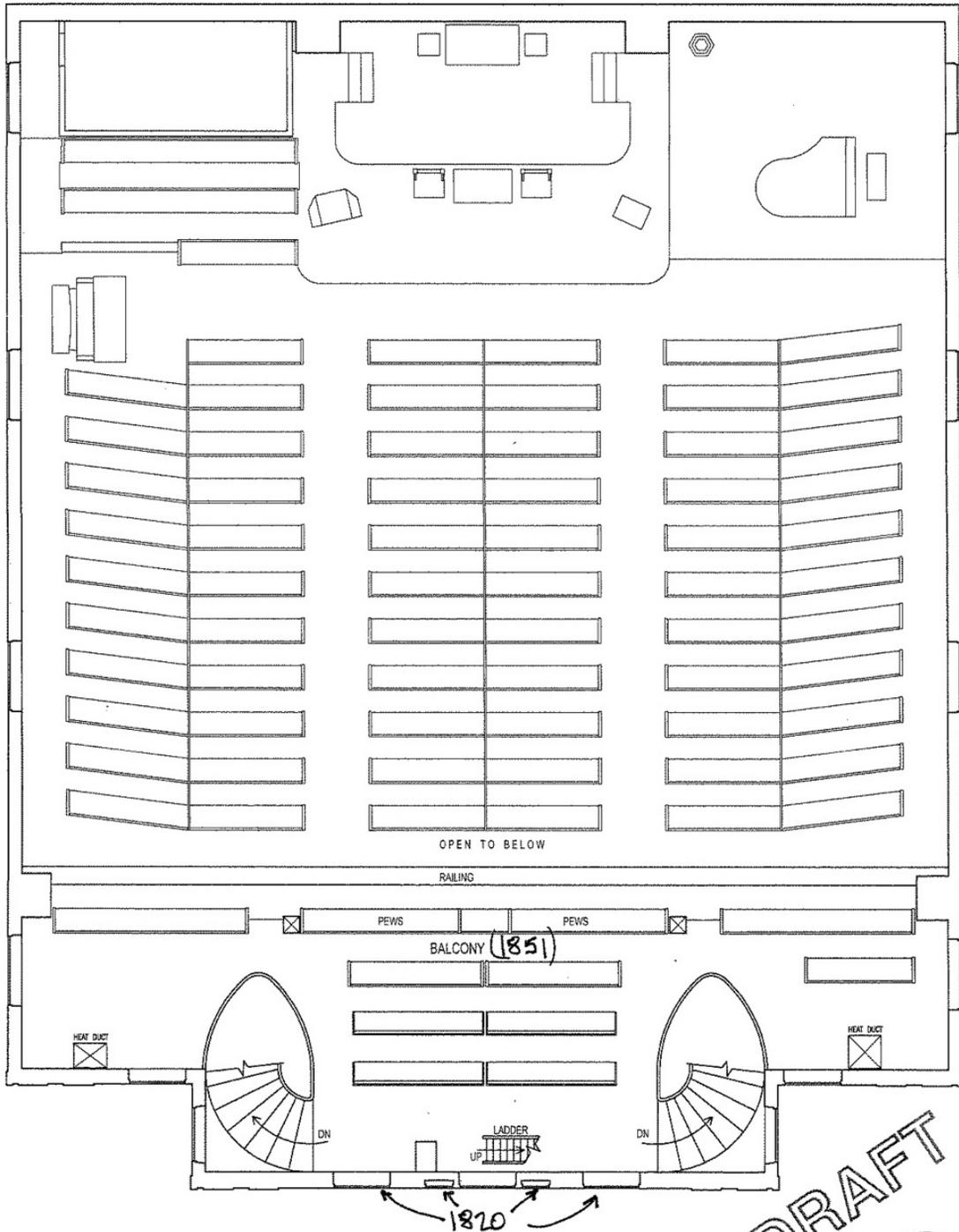
*For more information, visit the National Park Service's website for these standards:  
[http://www.nps.gov/history/local-law/arch\\_stnds\\_8\\_2.htm](http://www.nps.gov/history/local-law/arch_stnds_8_2.htm)*

**APPENDIX B**  
**Measured Drawings (Annotated)**  
 Prepared by David J. Drasba, AIA, November 15, 2010



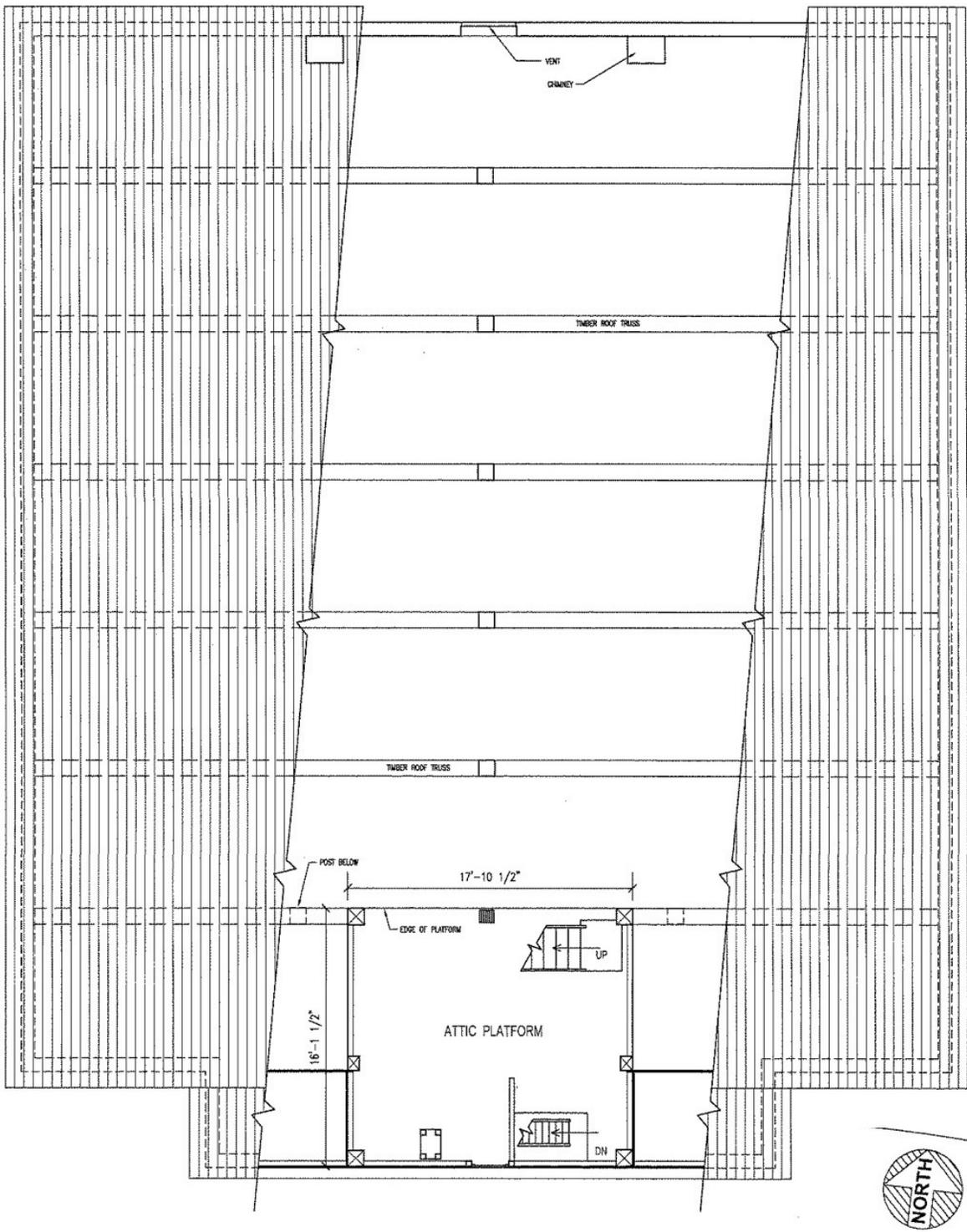
**GROUND LEVEL FLOOR PLAN**  
 (1<sup>st</sup> floor; including Town Hall)



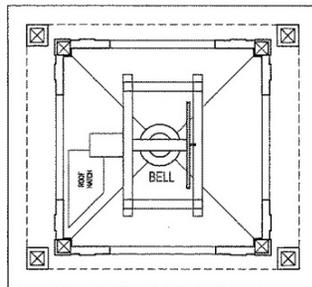


**BALCONY LEVEL FLOOR PLAN**

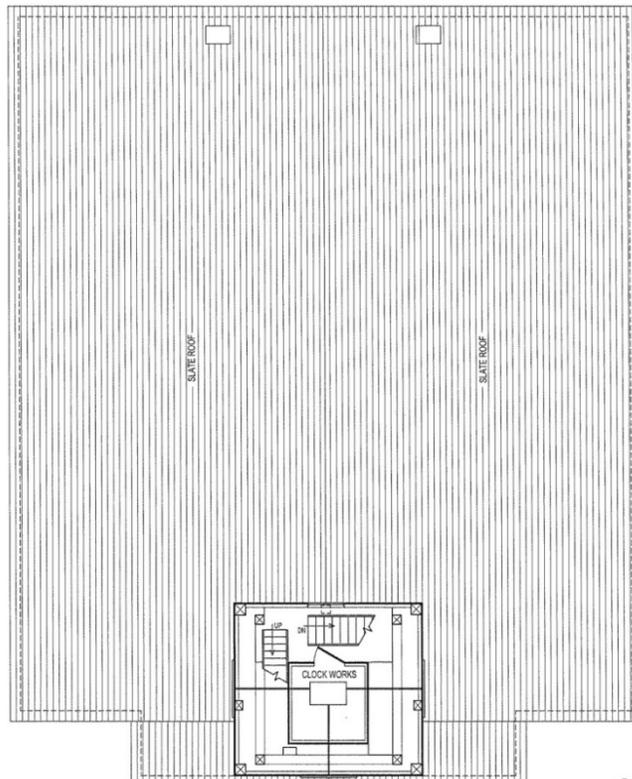
**DRAFT**



**ATTIC LEVEL FLOOR PLAN**



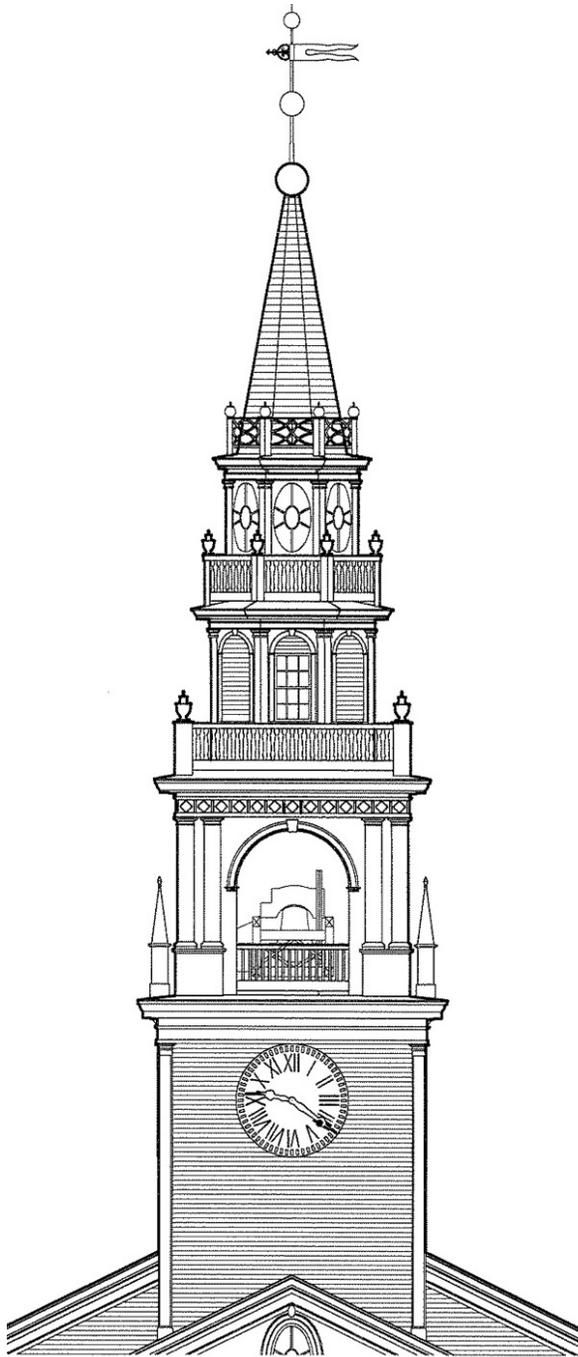
**BELL LEVEL FLOOR PLAN**



**CLOCK LOFT FLOOR PLAN**

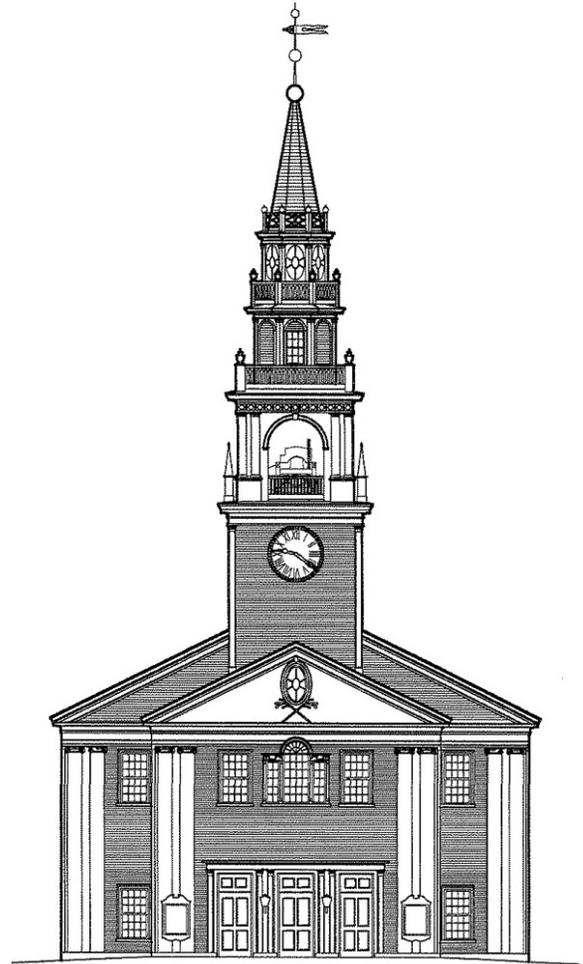
DRAFT



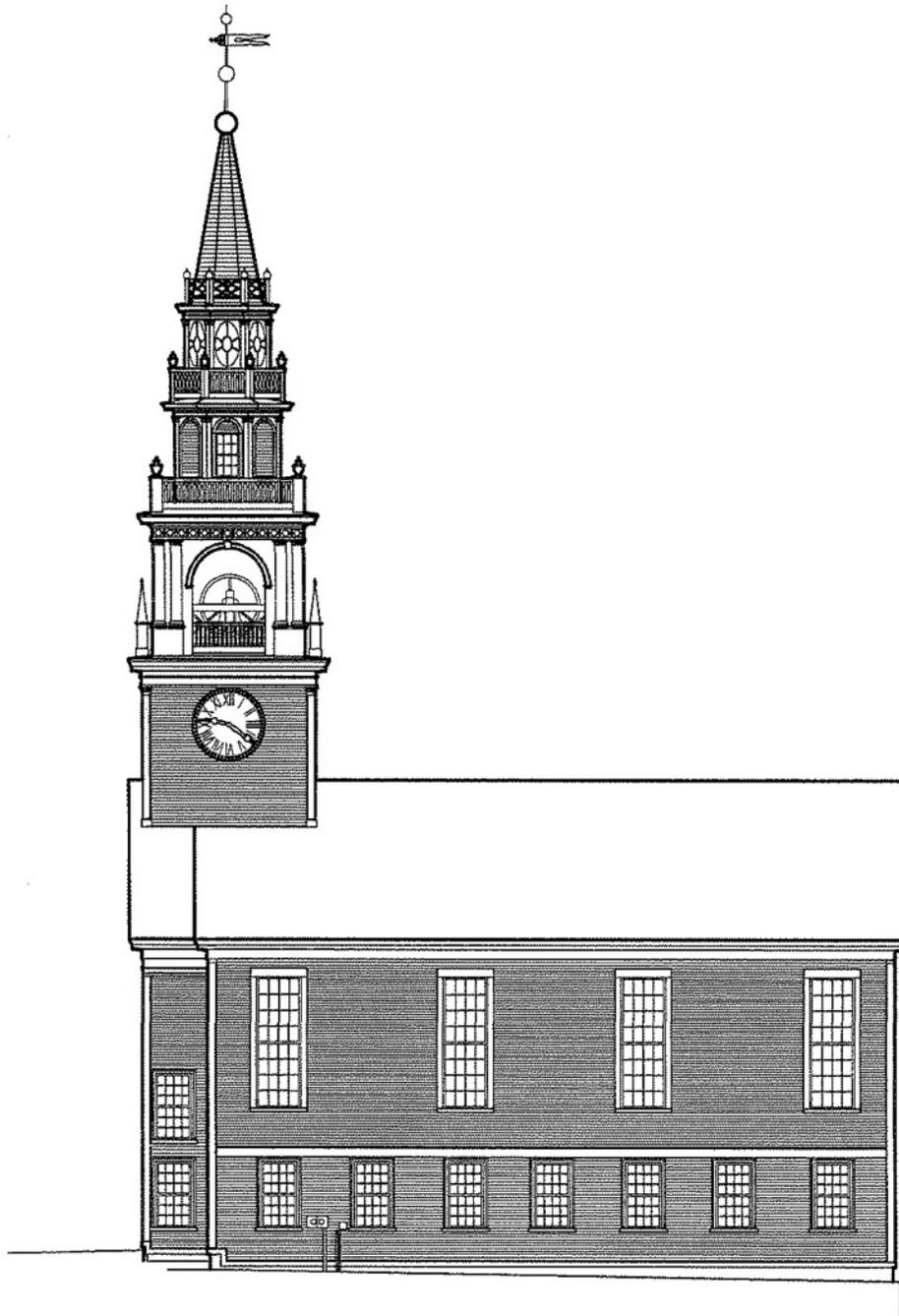


**SOUTH STEEPLE ELEVATION**

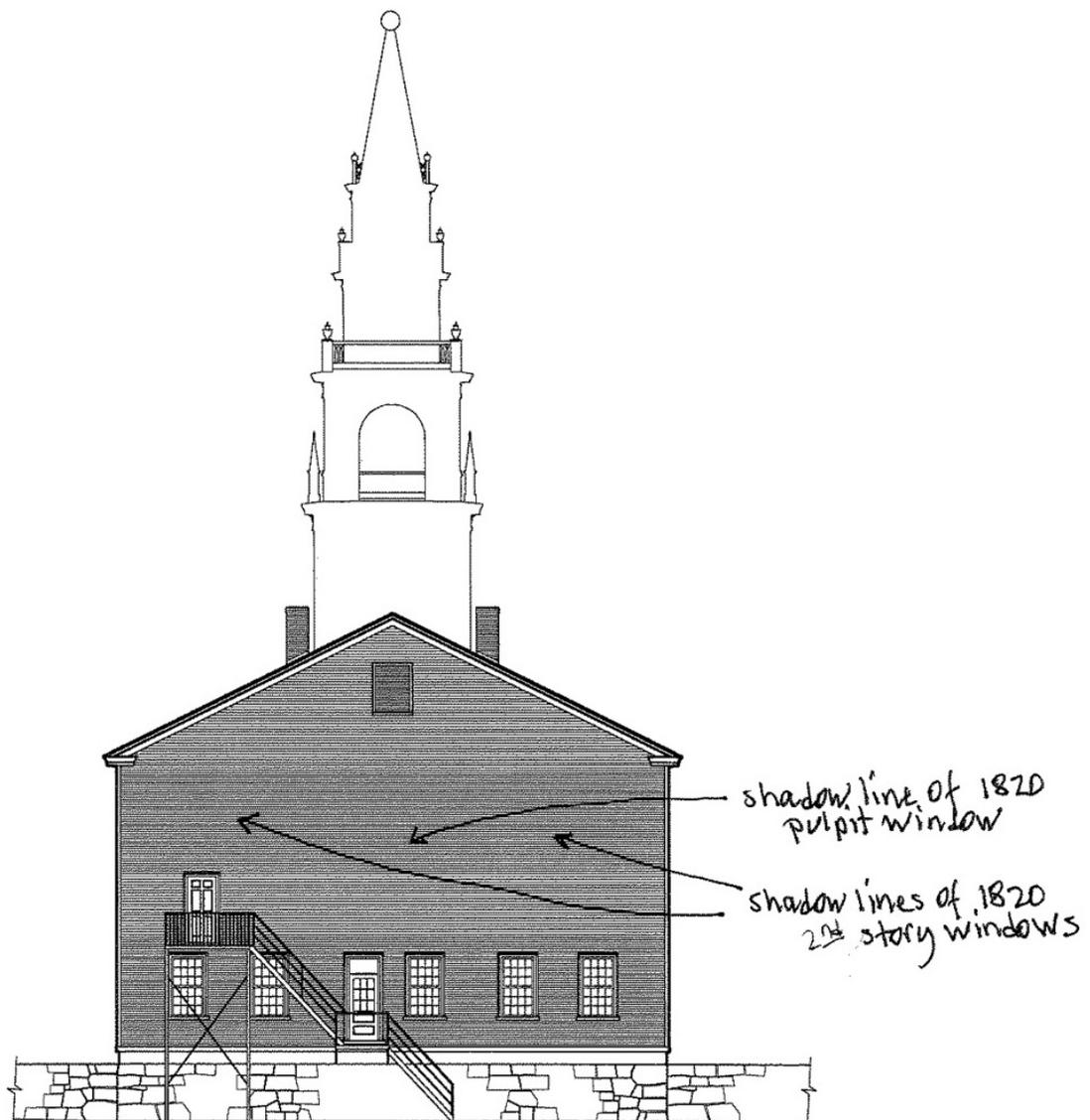
SCALE: 1/4" = 1'-0"



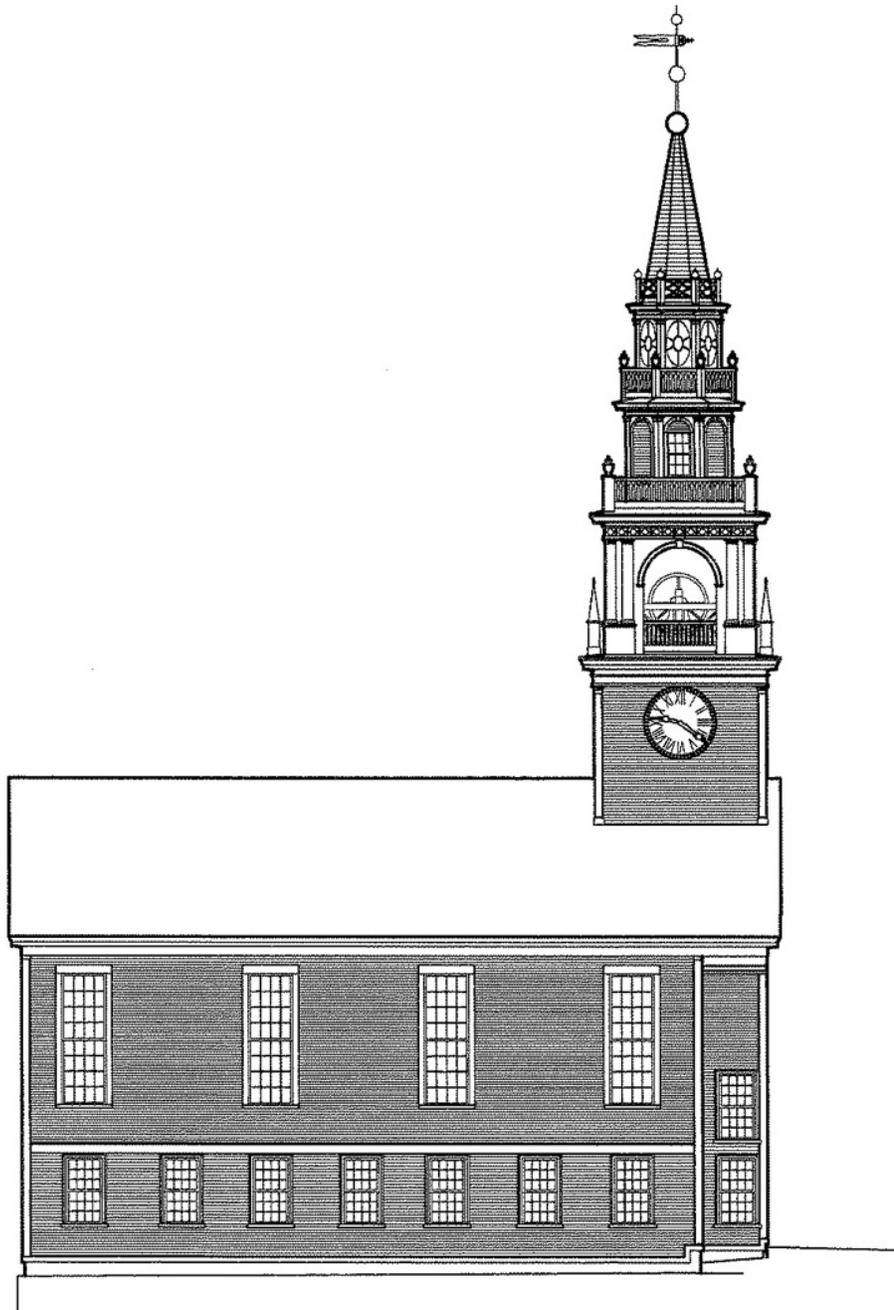
**SOUTH ELEVATION**



**EAST ELEVATION**

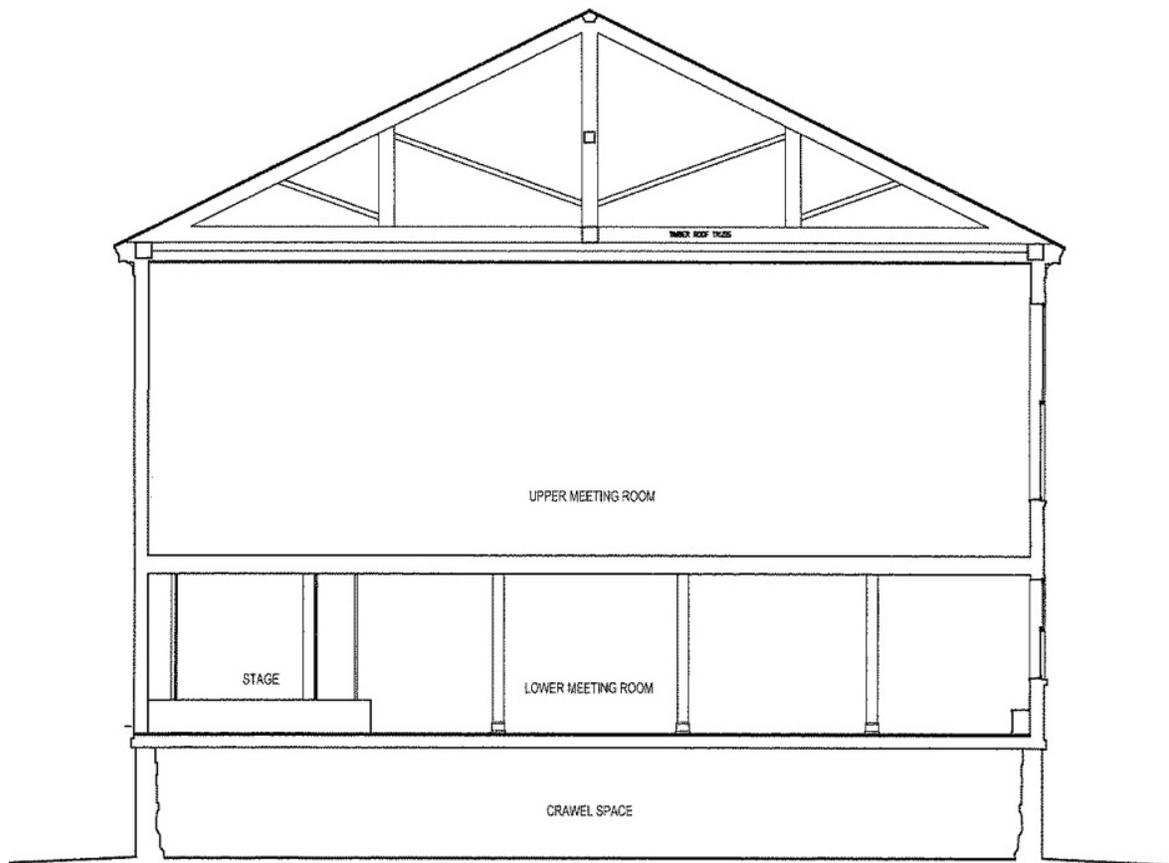


**NORTH ELEVATION**

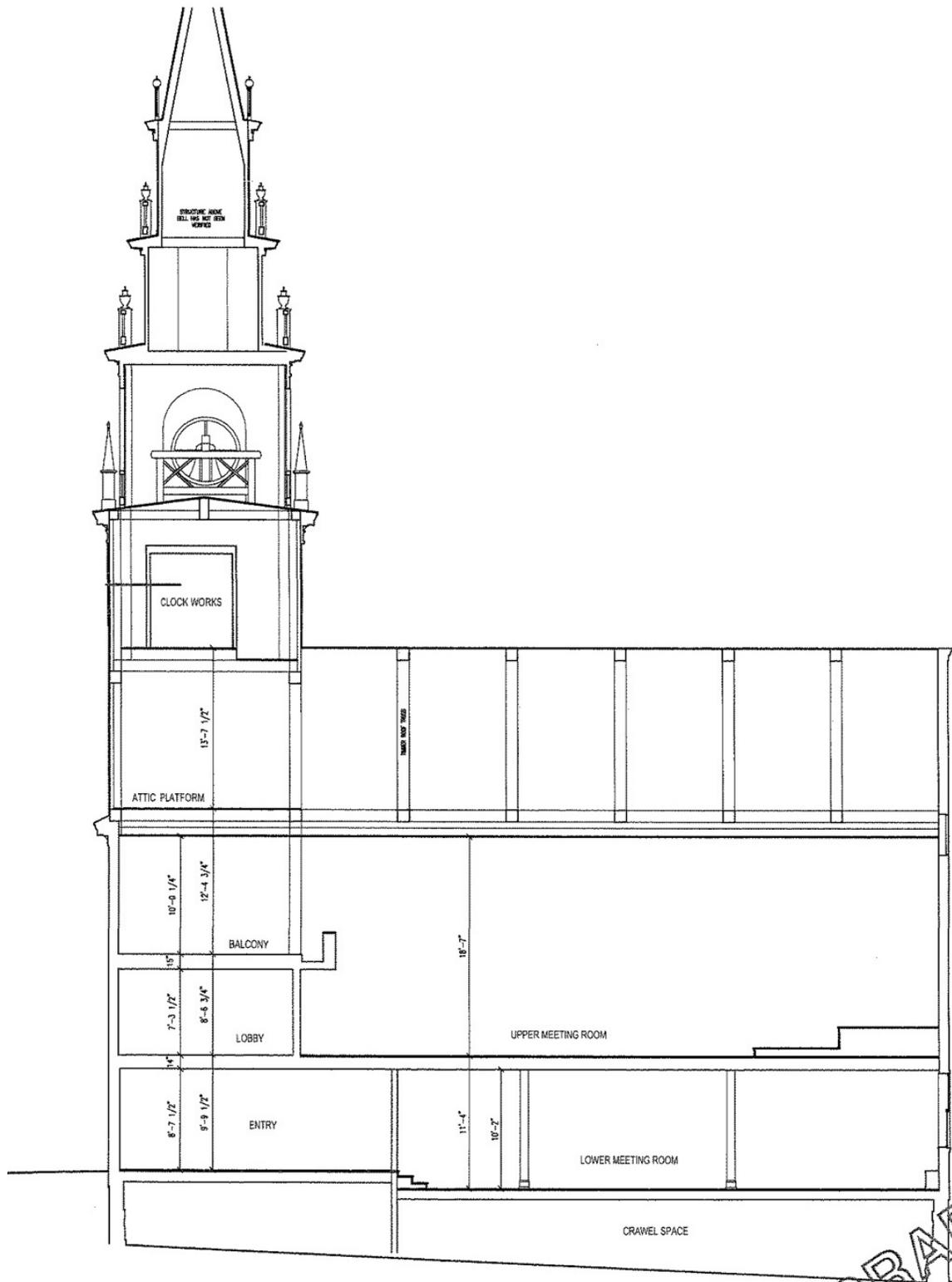


**WEST ELEVATION**

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**EAST-WEST BUILDING SECTION**



**NORTH-SOUTH BUILDING SECTION**

## APPENDIX C Articles of Agreement (1851)

Articles of agreement between the town of Hancock in the County of Hillsboro and state of New Hampshire, and the first Congregational Society in Hancock.

Whereas the said society heretofore had built a meetinghouse in said town, on land belonging to the town, and which had been dedicated by the town to that use, to the building of which house the town had contributed the sum of one thousand dollars, and whereas the said town and society have recently agreed to make a thorough repair of said house at the expense of both said parties and to alter the internal construction of the same, the lower part to be converted into a town Hall at the North end with doors at the south end and entry leading to the Hall, and stairs on each side leading to the upper part and two small rooms, one on each side leading to the entry, the upper part to be converted into a Church and Meetinghouse for the use of said Society.

Now the said town and society in consideration of the premises have agreed and do hereby mutually agree and do covenant each with the other as follows, and do hereby release and quit-claim each to the other the rights and privileges herein after mentioned, the town is to have exclusive use and occupancy of the Town Hall, and a right to conduct the stove pipe into the chimney built by the society and the use of the entry to pass to and from the Hall. The town is also to have the use of the small room on the east side of the entry for meetings of the select men and town committee, to transact town business, and a privilege of putting a desk in the same to keep the town records and papers, and also a box stove to warm the same, the pipe to be conducted into the chimney. The use of said room is to belong to the society subject to these privileges of the town. The town is also to have the use of the bell to be rung and tolled at deaths and funerals and for meetings to be held in the town Hall. The society are to have exclusive use and occupancy of all other parts of said house and its appendages not herein before mentioned. The town is to keep in repair the windows belonging to the town Hall.

All other windows are to be kept in repair by the society. The expense of maintaining and keeping in repair the outside of said house exclusive of windows is to be defrayed one third by the town and two thirds by the Society. If any disagreement shall hereafter arise between said parties as to the repairs of the outside of said house, the same shall be submitted to, and decided by, referees mutually chosen by the parties.

In witness whereof we William Gray  
 L. W. Brooks and Joel Gates select men of said  
 town, have hereunto and to a counterpart hereof  
 signed our names and affixed the seal of said town.  
 And J. Christy Duncan agent of said society  
 have signed my name and affixed the seal of  
 said Society, this 17<sup>th</sup> day of Dec. 1851.

Signed sealed and delivered William Gray  
 in presence of us J. W. Brooks } Select men  
 David Patten Joel Gates } of  
 William S. Hall Hancock

Christy Duncan } Agent for the  
 First Congregational  
 Society in Hancock

Hillsborough S.S. Dec. 17<sup>th</sup> 1851.

Then the town of Hancock  
 by William Gray, L. W. Brooks and Joel Gates select men  
 of said town, and the First Congregational Society in  
 Hancock by Christy Duncan their agent acknowledged the  
 foregoing instrument by them executed, to be their  
 free act and deed.

Before me David Patten } Justice of  
 the peace.

April 14, 1852 the above instrument received  
 in the records of the Society by  
 Samuel Lewis, Clerk

## APPENDIX D

### News Article on the 1888 Renovations

**HANCOCK.**

A few years ago some of our benevolent ladies conceived the idea of raising a fund to defray the expense of putting new furnaces in our church, and of completely renovating the auditorium of the building. The interest in the project increased with the fund till Tuesday, Aug. 28th, witnessed the completion of the work on a much grander scale than the most sanguine have even dared to dream, and with sufficient funds to defray every dollar of the expense. A small portion of the fund was raised through public entertainments, but much the larger portion was obtained by subscription. The people of the town not only have responded most generously, but many whose birth and early home was with us have felt it a privilege to assist in the good work, and have contributed most generously. For this and all other material assistance our people feel themselves under a very heavy obligation.

The furnaces were put in place last autumn and give very general satisfaction. The work of renovating the interior was put in charge of a committee consisting of Messrs. Benj. Goodhue, A. D. Tuttle, W. A. Washburn, Mrs. Helen E. Patten and Mrs. A. M. Crockett. They have the satisfaction of knowing that the results of their efforts meets the general approval of the people. The work of relathing and plastering was very acceptably done by Mr. G. W. Crockett. The painting, frescoing and staining was done by Geo. B. Randall of Newton Upper Falls, Mass., to the entire satisfaction of the committee. The design of the frescoing is what is known as the flat decorative—the object being to reduce apparently the size of the room. The walls are terra cotta, with borders of olive green, defined by gilt lines; the dado a shade of red, decorated with a deeper red between dado and panels; the frieze a deeper shade of terra cotta than the sides, embellished with darker lines of red and gilt. The more elaborate decorations were reserved for the ceiling. It is divided into panels, with an elaborate centrepiece. The colors are shades of olive, warm yellow, terra cotta and ashes of roses. The pews are painted in olive green, with upholstery to match the dado in color. Carpets, shades of olive and red, to harmonize with the decorations. Windows—cathedral borders of red and amber, with figured ground glass centers.

*Peterborough Transcript  
September 20, 1888*

The base of the pulpit, with heavy tapestry carpet for same, was presented by Chas. S. Davis of Newton Centre, Mass. The pulpit furniture, consisting of pulpit, three chairs, bible stand and communion table, were made by S. C. Small & Co., Boston. They are of solid massive mahogany, with French antique finish, upholstered in olive plush. They are simply perfect in design and finish, and beautiful to look upon. The pulpit and chairs were presented by Mrs. Chas. Wells and her sister, Miss Emily Smith of Manchester, in memory of their parents, the late Col. David and Mrs. Low, of this town; the bible stand was the gift of Miss A. Davis of this town; the communion table that of Mr. H. J. Davis of Davis, Mass.

The S. S. library room has been painted, carpeted, new book case, &c. The ante-room opposite the library room has also been painted, carpeted and fitted up with the old pulpit furniture as a church parlor. The upper and lower vestibules have been renovated, the floor of the upper covered with a cord matting. The carpets were bought of John H. Pray; the windows of William Emery & Co., Boston; C. E. Watkins of Keene cut and laid the carpets; also, with Mrs. G. W. Crockett's assistance, re-covered and stuffed the cushion.

A new organ of the Esty manufacture has also been placed in the church. The fund for this purpose was started last autumn by Mrs. Annie L. Woods. The proceeds from the cantata, which was brought out under her direction, amounted to about half the cost of the organ. The christian endeavor and the temperance societies each contributed a very generous sum, and the balance was secured by private subscriptions.

The length of this article necessarily forbids little but the briefest details. The results will have to speak for themselves, and they are more eloquent than words of mine. But our hearts are all filled with gratitude to those who have so generously assisted in this work, though our lips may not be eloquent with praise. The restful and elevating influences of this room upon the minds and hearts of those who worship therein must be their highest recompense.

Elmwood, Sept. 10. INTERDUM.