



NEW HAMPSHIRE DIVISION OF HISTORICAL RESOURCES

State of New Hampshire, Department of Cultural Affairs
19 Pillsbury Street, Box 2043, Concord, NH 03302-2043

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7 November 1997

Mr. Craig J. Brown
Director
Durham Historical Museum
P.O. Box 305
Durham, New Hampshire, 03824

Dear Craig:

I greatly enjoyed meeting you and the several trustees of the Durham Historic Association on Tuesday night. The Association is very fortunate to have secured your services.

Just for your information, I enclose a copy of a letter I wrote to Sally Ford regarding the Historic American Buildings Survey drawings and photos of the old Durham town hall. I saw that you have at least some of the drawings of the building in reduced size.

I also enclose copies of the photographs in case you hadn't seen them. Though undated, the photos date from 1936, I believe.

In case the town didn't supply the Historic Association with architect Allen Hill's report on the old town hall, I enclose a copy of the relevant pages of his study of three town-owned buildings.

Several of our discussions on Tuesday night revolved around the possibility of state, federal, or private grants to assist in the rehabilitation of the old town hall if it should come into the possession of the Durham Historic Association.

Regrettably, the State of New Hampshire itself has no fund that could help to underwrite preservation projects. While most other states have grant programs or tax-based incentives to help qualified private individuals, municipalities, and non-profit groups to acquire or maintain historic properties, we have not yet been able to get such programs funded in New Hampshire.

While our office formerly received various types of federal funding to aid local efforts at historic preservation, that funding has long since been withdrawn. Prospects for its restitution are not very high at the moment despite our efforts to keep the need before our congressional delegation and national preservation organizations.

The National Trust for Historic Preservation does have a "Preservation Services Fund," which provides small grants to Trust member organizations for technical studies, assistance in fundraising, architectural and engineering plans, and other *non*construction activities. These grants are offered only to non-profit organizations that are engaged in preservation efforts. The Trust's Northeast Field Representative can explain the program requirements and the application procedures, and may also be able to suggest other sources of encouragement and assistance. For more information, contact the Northeast Regional Office, National Trust for Historic Preservation, 7 Faneuil Hall Marketplace, 5th Floor, Boston, MA 02109 [Tel.: (617) 523-0885]. Jeffrey Harris in the Boston office is specifically responsible for Maine, New Hampshire, and Vermont projects, so you should try to speak directly with him.

The Washington office of the National Trust has recently announced the creation of the Johanna Favrot Fund for Historic Preservation. The fund offers grants, ranging from \$2,500 to \$25,000, to non-profit organizations, government agencies, for-profit businesses, and individuals. Eligible programs include the preservation of historic environments in order to foster appreciation of the nation's diverse cultural heritage and to preserve and revitalize the nation's communities. Program activities may include the hiring of consultants for a range of preservation services, sponsorship of conferences and workshops, development of preservation education programs, and the strengthening of organizations' management capabilities. Construction, repair, and rehabilitation work are *not* eligible for funding. The annual application deadline is February 1, and awards for any one year will total about \$50,000. For more information, contact the National Trust for Historic Preservation, 1785 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C., 20036 [Tel.: (202) 673-4296].

In 1997, the National Historical Society, a division of Cowles Enthusiast Media, Inc., announced a grants program that includes historic preservation grants, educational grants that use historic sites or artifacts to enhance an understanding of history, and grants to advance knowledge and appreciation of state and local history. The preservation grants give priority to projects that protect, preserve, conserve, and rehabilitate historic sites and structures, especially if such work will enhance heritage tourism. These grants are available only to private, non-profit [501(c)(3)] organizations. The program favors projects that provide permanent or sustainable benefit, especially to underserved populations, and that give evidence of collaboration or cooperation among several cultural or educational institutions. The annual deadline for grants is April 1 of each year. For more information and application guidelines, contact the Grants Administrator, National Historical Society, 741 Miller Drive, SE, Suite D-2, Leesburg, Virginia, 20175 [Tel.: (703) 779-8338; FAX: (703) 779-8342].

The New Hampshire Charitable Foundation may be a source of information about foundation and non-profit funding sources. The Charitable Foundation is an umbrella agency for many specialized funds and foundations, some of which may have been created with guidelines that would allow them to support your project. For details, contact Deborah Cowan, Associate Director of the New Hampshire Charitable Foundation, Box 1335, Concord, NH 03302-1335 [Tel.: (603) 225-6641].

The Charitable Fund also maintains a "Foundation Center Library" collection. You may make an appointment to use the library and to search a computerized data base of still other possible funding sources.

One of the trusts that is affiliated with the New Hampshire Charitable Foundation is the Greater Piscataqua Community Foundation. The Foundation now administers a relatively new fund called the Winthrop L. Carter Fund for Historic Preservation, which supports the preservation or restoration of historic structures and artifacts in the seacoast area. If you would like more information, the GPCF's address is: 500 Market Street, Portsmouth, NH 03801 [Tel.: (603) 430-9182].

The New Hampshire Coastal Program, funded by the U.S. Department of Commerce and administered by the New Hampshire Office of State Planning, provides 50/50 matching grants for acquisition and construction projects and for planning and management studies; coastal program grants have been used to fund preservation projects. The current maximum grant amount is \$50,000. The seventeen cities and towns bordering the Atlantic Ocean are eligible to apply, as are non-profit organizations within these towns. Recipients' non-federal matching share may be either cash or in-kind services. For more information, contact the Coastal Program Office, 152 Court Street, Portsmouth, NH 03801 [Tel.: (603) 431-9366], or call the Office of State Planning in Concord [Tel.: (603) 271-2155].

The Kresge Foundation is the only major national foundation we know of that makes capital grants for acquisition of real estate and for construction work both for new buildings and for preservation or rehabilitation work. Kresge accepts proposals at any time throughout the year, but only once in a twelve-month period for any single project. For more information, you may request a copy of the brochure, "Policies and Application Procedures" from the Program Office, Kresge Foundation, 3215 Big Beaver Road, P.O. Box 3151, Troy, MI 48007-3151 [Tel.: (313) 643-9630].

The Ellis L. Phillips Foundation has sometimes shown an interest in historic preservation efforts. For more information, contact Patricia A. Cate, Executive Director, Ellis L. Phillips Foundation, 13 Dartmouth College Highway, Lyme, NH 03768 [Tel.: (603) 795-2790]. We understand that this foundation has recently moved to Boston, but have no new address for them.

The American Association for State and Local History (AASLH) has a variety of programs and services (including consultant grants) for member organizations. For more

information, contact AASLH, 530 Church Street, Suite 600, Nashville, TN 37219 [Tel.: (615) 225-2971].

The New Hampshire State Council on the Arts administers the "Cultural Facilities Grant" program, which provides matching grants for planning and capital projects to New Hampshire non-profit organizations that maintain cultural facilities. Historic preservation projects are eligible for consideration under this program *only* if the purpose of the project is to make a building suitable for arts programming, but the Council has awarded several grants to historic cultural facilities when those projects met the guidelines of the program. For more information, contact Rebecca L. Lawrence, Director, New Hampshire State Council on the Arts, 40 North Main Street, Concord, NH 03302-4974 [Tel.: (603) 271-2789].

The State Council on the Arts also has available (for reference at the Council office, but not for loan) a copy of the *Directory of Building Equipment and Grants*, with over 5,000 funding entries indexed three ways, and a copy of the *Handicapped Funding Directory*, which lists more than 1,200 entities that grant funds to nonprofit organizations, indexed four ways.

Rehabilitation of some buildings may be eligible for a USDA Farmer's Home Administration "Community Facilities" loan or grant. For more information, call the Concord District Office at 505 South Street, Bow, NH 03304 [Tel.: (603) 225-1661].

Inherit New Hampshire, Inc., our statewide non-profit historic preservation advocacy organization, has a broad network of information sources and preservation resources. INH can be contacted at: Eugene Kincaid, Executive Director, Inherit New Hampshire, Inc., P.O. Box 268, Concord, NH 03302-0268 [Tel.: (603) 224-2281]. The phone has an answering machine, so you can leave messages at any time.

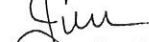
The Preservation Institute for the Building Crafts is a non-profit organization that is helping contractors, architects, building tradespeople, and property managers in New Hampshire and Vermont to develop specialized preservation expertise through courses, workshops, tours, and lectures. The Institute also maintains a list of consultants, contractors, and craftspeople with preservation skills, and for a minimal fee will provide names of qualified specialists. The Institute also occasionally "adopts" a building to use in training its students in some specialized preservation activity; for example, the Institute has been using buildings at Canterbury Shaker Village as laboratories in which to teach plaster preservation and restoration. PIBC's address is P.O. Box 1777, Windsor, VT 05089-0021 [Tel.: (802) 674-6752].

In addition to traditional sources of assistance like those I've mentioned, many other local sources of help may be available. Many fund-seekers focus on foundations or on large business firms with facilities in the area, but smaller local businesses can sometimes take an interest in preservation projects. It may also be worthwhile to speak to bank trust officers about local or individual trusts, bequests, and foundations that they may

administer which have guidelines that may coincide with your needs. There may even be a municipal trust fund that could help; check with your local Trustees of Trust Funds for more information.

I'm sorry to have mentioned so many possible sources, only a few (if any) of which will be likely to prove to be of help. As you know, however, you must ask before you'll ever receive financial help from any source. Please call if you have any further questions; I'll call you if I think of any other possible sources of assistance.

Sincerely,



James L. Garvin

Architectural Historian



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5 November 1997

Ms. Sally Ford
433 Bay Road
Durham, New Hampshire, 03824

Dear Sally:

I greatly enjoyed meeting you and the other Association members last night. Both D.-B. and I are excited about the possibility of the Association's acquiring the use of the full Town Hall building, and each of us will be happy to support that outcome if it is the ultimate wish of the Association.

I have made slightly enlarged photocopies of the Historic American Buildings Survey prints of the Durham Town Hall. The original prints measure 5" by 7." If you want to borrow some or all of the photos for use in the Durham Historic Association newsletter, I'll be glad to send the prints by mail.

I have also photocopied the first and second floor plans of the building as it was in 1936. I wanted to find the location of the "selectmen's room" that is shown in one photo. As you'll see, that room was obliterated when the new corner entrance to the court room area was constructed.

There are twenty-two drawings of the building in the HABS series, ranging from floor plans to framing plans and hardware details. If the Association doesn't have the full series, it might be worthwhile to order them from Washington someday. I can provide ordering information.

Again, it was a great pleasure to be with you. I look forward to being of any further help that I can.

Sincerely,

Encls.
Cc: Craig Brown
Donna-Belle Garvin

James L. Garvin
Architectural Historian

THREE BUILDINGS IN DURHAM

An assessment of
The Davis Building, formerly The Grange Hall,
The District Courthouse, formerly The Town Hall,
and The Smith Family Chapel

Undertaken for
The Town of Durham, NH, and
Banwell White Arnold Hemberger & Partners, Architects

by The Office of Allen Charles Hill, AIA
August, 1995
revised October 6, 1995

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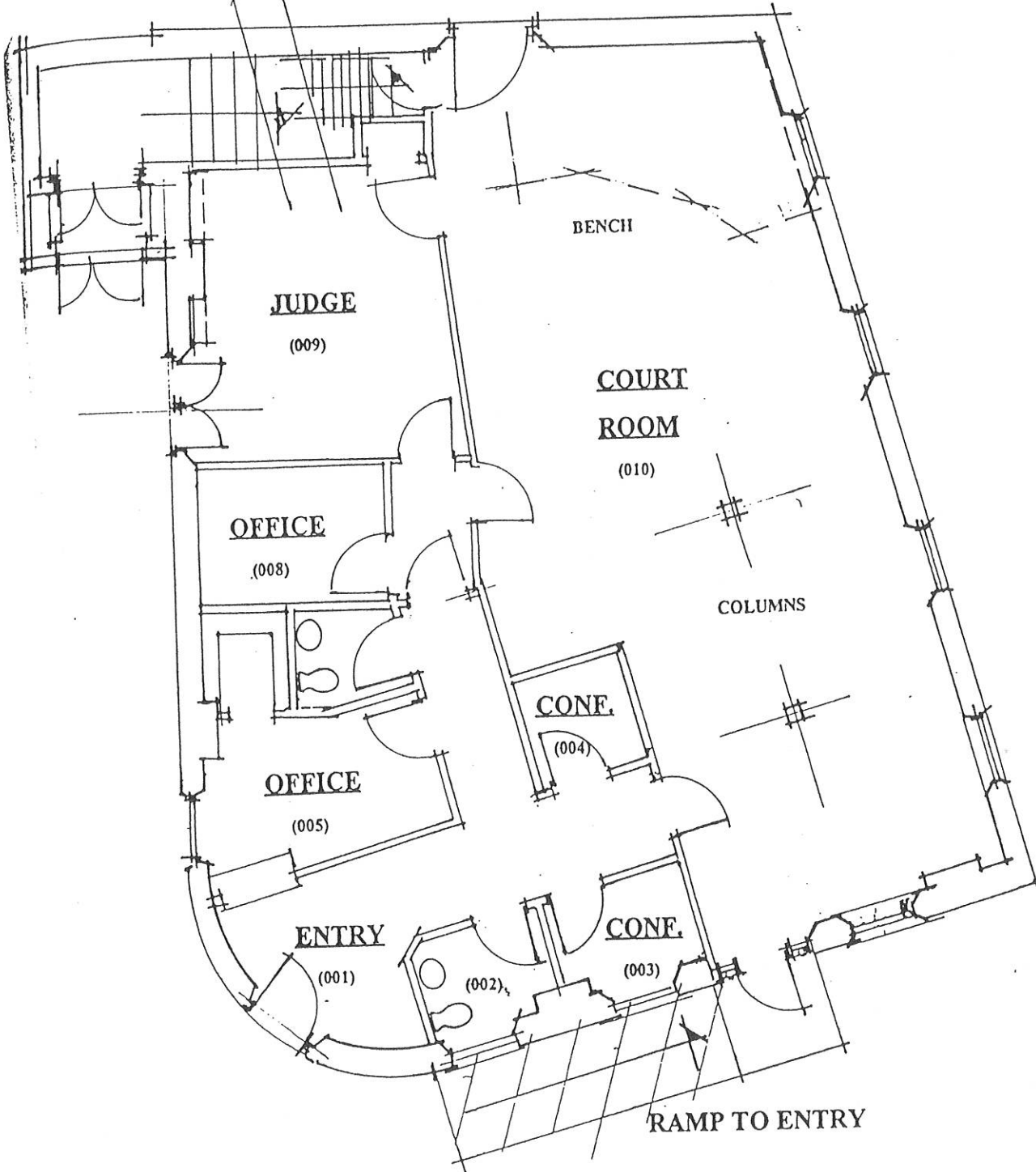
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THE OFFICE OF ALLEN CHARLES HILL, AIA
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617 729 0748

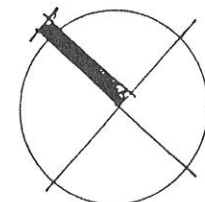
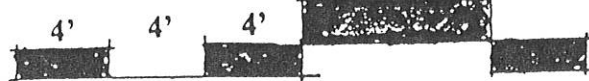
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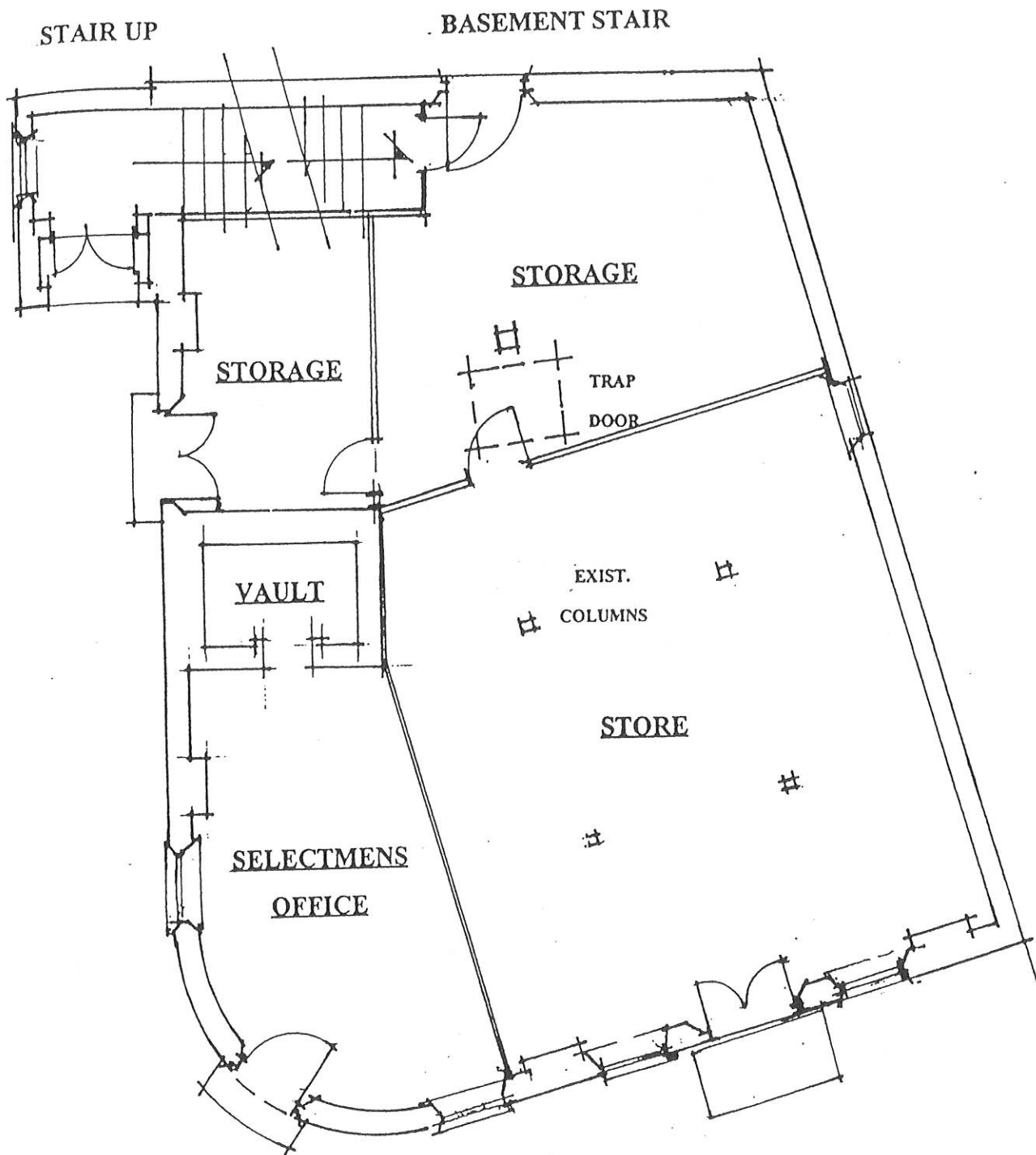
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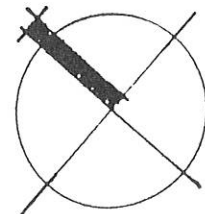
GROUND FLOOR PLAN





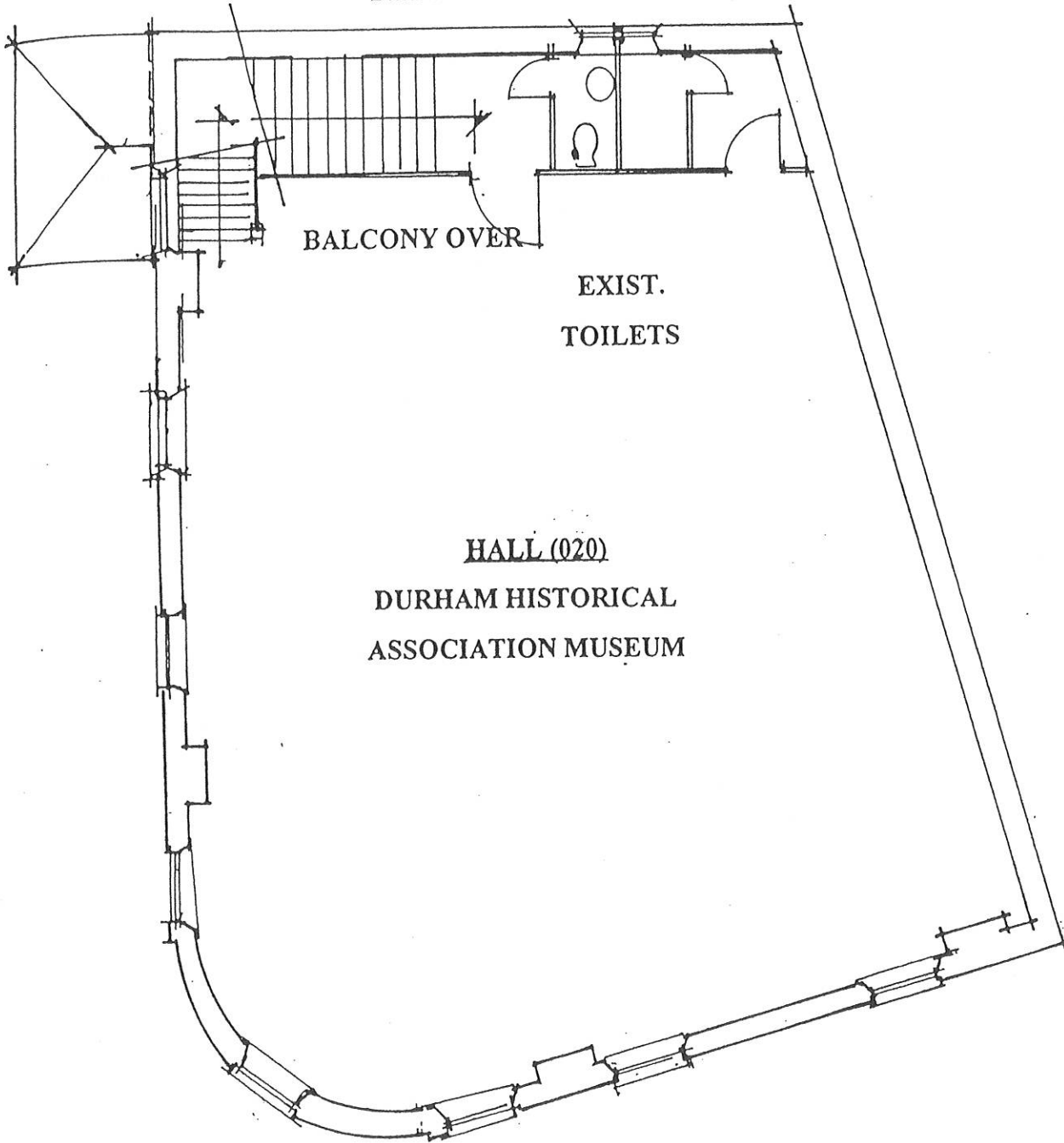
PRE-EXISTING CONDITIONS PER H.A.B.S. DRAWINGS

GROUND FLOOR PLAN



**DURHAM TOWN HALL
DURHAM, NEW HAMPSHIRE**

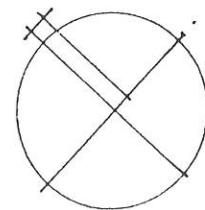
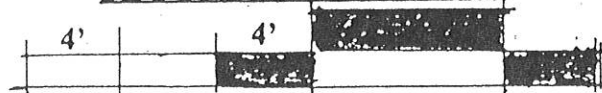
STAIR FROM
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HALL (020)
DURHAM HISTORICAL
ASSOCIATION MUSEUM

PER H.A.B.S. DRAWINGS

SECOND FLOOR PLAN



Three Buildings in Durham, New Hampshire
Summary assessment, August 1995

II. The District Court, formerly the Town Hall

In general, this building presents as a stable and attractive Federal-period brick structure with stone trim which, given appropriate care and maintenance, should continue to be a "community heirloom" for the indefinite future. That said, the District Court contains conditions which need attention, some of it immediate:

Critical priority:

- **The building is overgrown with vines, which are slowly destroying it.** The building is covered with creeper, which has been allowed to grow over the walls, into the gutters, and onto the roof. The damage this vegetation is causing to the building is serious. The plants are:
 - Deteriorating brick joints and compromising the ability of the walls to resist water,
 - Holding moisture against the building and preventing drying,
 - Blocking gutters and downspouts and interfering with proper drainage,
 - Invading wood joints and forcing them apart,
 - Invading the roofing and inviting leaks,
 - Covering large parts of the building exterior and preventing monitoring and proper maintenance.

It was not possible to conduct as thorough an exterior assessment on this building as is normal, due to the concealing effects of this vegetation.

The only appropriate action is an **aggressive** and **immediate** program to destroy and remove this vegetation, and to prevent it from growing back. Completion of this work will expose significant areas that need attention, but which are presently hidden from assessment.

Critical to necessary priority:

- **The roof and associated flashing appear to be at or near the end of their useful lives.** Visual inspection from the street shows an asphalt shingle roof that is rough and shaggy looking. Chimney flashings appear to be in fair condition.¹ We noted evidence of minor leaks in the ceiling of the second story, and the Historic Association staff mentioned this as an issue. The overgrown vegetation mentioned above exacerbates the overall situation, which is not improved by the radio tower mounted on the roof, and its associated guy lines.

Once the vegetation has been removed, the roof, eaves, flashings, gutters, and downspouts should be inspected for damage, and appropriate repairs made. If at all possible, the radio antenna should be removed. The roof should be replaced with—in ascending

1) Flashings and other sheet-metal components rarely turn out to be in better condition on close inspection than they do from afar.

order of cost—either new asphalt shingles in a pattern reminiscent of slate,¹ with a slate substitute,² or with actual slates.

Necessary priority:

- **There is only one escape route from the second story.** When the Town Hall was built, there were no codes to require multiple escape routes from buildings, and it was common for buildings to be erected with meeting rooms on their topmost floor, reached by a single stair. Present-day codes, however, generally call for multiple means of egress, something which this building lacks.

Ample precedent exists for allowing non code-conforming egress arrangements to exist in small historic buildings, provided appropriate measures are taken to minimize the risk.³ Article 513.0 of the BOCA National Building Code, which is used in most New Hampshire communities, provides for alternative compliance for buildings “identified and classified by the state or local government authority as historic...” subject to reasonable restrictions.

Classification as historic would include listing in The National Register of Historic Places, being a contributing structure in a local historic district, or other recognition, such as a local landmark ordinance or recording in the Historic American Building Survey.

The Town Hall was recorded in the Survey shortly after its creation in the 1930s, and is listed in the National Register as part of the Durham Historic District, giving it historical status within the intent of the Code.

- **Lintels above windows and doors are subsiding.** Above most windows and doors the masonry is cracked in the “stair-step” pattern that is characteristic of settlement. In this case, the cause of that settlement is likely to be failure of the lintels which support the brick above these openings.

Although the lintels are granite at the exterior face of the wall—and in what appears to be unremarkable condition—that stone commonly does not extend through to the interior. Behind the stone lintels are wooden members which carry the weight of the inner part of the wall. Over the building’s life, these members can move, allowing the brick they carry to settle, causing cracks to open above the openings.

This movement can be the natural result of the wood’s aging and shrinking somewhat, accentuated by bending, or by compression of the fibers at the ends where the lintel bears on the jambs of the opening and the load is concentrated, or it can be due to decay caused by water entering the wall through poorly-maintained pointing.

If there is no decay present, the condition may not need action beyond periodic inspection and repointing of the exterior masonry joints. When decay is present, however, the situation is more serious, and frequently requires replacement of the lintels, a process involving removing interior finish and a significant mess.

At present, we recommend monitoring conditions on a regular basis visually and with photographs, several times a year. If particular areas appear to be moving significantly

1) Slateline, manufactured by GAF, 60 Curve Street, Millis MA 02054, is an example. Many standard roofing manufacturers offer similar products.
2) Supra-Slate, manufactured by Supradur Manufacturing Corp., Box 908, Rye, NY 10580, is an example. Other roofing manufacturers offer a similar product.
3) Such measures might include restricting the number of persons that can occupy the space, providing automatic fire detection and alarm systems, providing automatic suppression systems (water-based or otherwise), and so on.

or at an accelerating rate, then destructive investigation and probable repair are indicated.

- **Exterior masonry needs to be repointed.** Periodic repointing is, for a masonry building, analogous to repainting a wooden one: It restores the building's appearance and—after the roof—its primary defense against the entry of water. What can be seen of the brickwork of the Town Hall appears to be in good condition, but fine cracks in the mortar joints indicate the need to remove cracked and loose mortar and replace it with new work.

In repointing a building of this age, it is important not to use too hard a mortar. Old brick is not as hard as the modern product, and so is easily damaged by a mortar that is inappropriately strong.¹ Samples of the existing mortar should be analyzed for content before the specification for new mortar is written.²

The existing brick was laid with very narrow joints. In raking out the existing mortar, it is important not to enlarge them. This may mean that hand raking will be required, and that it will not be possible to use power tools for this work, something that will significantly increase the cost of the work.

During repointing, the joints that have enlarged as lintels have subsided should be cleaned of mortar and other foreign matter,³ and repointed with mortar.

Regardless of the raking method used, it is important to have the contractor prepare in-place samples of both raking and repointing, which will then serve as the standard for comparison as the repointing progresses. We recommend making them about four feet square, and locating them low on the wall away from Dover Road.

- **The basement is damp and unventilated.** As is characteristic of buildings of its age, the basement of the Town Hall has stone walls and an earth floor through which water vapor easily passes from the ground into the space. Once in the space, there is no exit for it, allowing humidity levels to rise to where the wooden building structure can be threatened with decay.

Although a layer of gravel atop the earth, as is found in this basement, can mean that a vapor-retarder membrane⁴ has been laid on the floor, this does not appear to be the case here. Complicating attempts to lay one is the ledge that projects up into the space, particularly at the end away from Newmarket Road.

The goal is to reduce the amount of moisture entering the basement, and, if possible, to ventilate it to help maintain a relative humidity that is closer to that outside the building. During times when the basement temperature is above sixty to sixty-five degrees,⁵ providing mechanical dehumidification will be an effective and easy-to-implement measure.⁶ It will also incur a significant energy cost to operate.

-
- 1) In addition to resisting water penetration into the wall, mortar also cushions the bricks as they expand and contract in response to changing weather. Over time, a mortar that is weaker than the brick will fail under these stresses, and require repointing. If the mortar is stronger than the brick, however, the brick will cushion it, leading to failing brick in a matrix of intact mortar.
 - 2) Preservation Technology Associates, One Washington Mall, Boston, MA 02108, (617) 227 0900 (Judith Selwyn) undertakes this sort of analysis.
 - 3) Caulking compound, some of it reinforced with what appears to be glass fibers, has been used in some of these cracks and open joints. It is rarely, if ever, appropriate to use such materials in pointing masonry walls.
 - 4) Formerly called a vapor barrier, a vapor retarder is a layer of polyethylene sheeting which greatly reduces the movement of water vapor.
 - 5) Dehumidifier coils tend to ice up at lower temperatures, blocking their effectiveness and, if not caught in time, causing the machine to burn out. Accordingly, any basement dehumidification system should include an automatic low-temperature cut-out switch to prevent this from happening.
 - 6) Drainage can be taken through an air gap into the house drain, or into a drywell beneath the floor.

Ventilation, while desirable, will be difficult to introduce without damaging the building's fabric, and so appears unfeasible at present.

A vapor retarder on the floor is desirable, but may be difficult to install an effective one, due to the gravel on the floor and the ledge which penetrates it.

In addition to taking steps to reduce basement dampness, a program should be set in place to monitor the basement for signs of water leakage from outside in the area around the base of the stair, both after major rains and when snow is on the ground outside.

- **There is a need to develop and follow a periodic maintenance plan.** Periodic maintenance covers everything from daily and seasonal opening and closing routines, to housekeeping, to repainting and reroofing. The absence of an effective program of periodic preventive and restorative maintenance lies behind many of the observed detrimental conditions.

An ongoing periodic maintenance and repair plan, properly prepared and kept up-to-date, will provide an orderly structure for property maintenance, help financial planning to meet building needs, and ensure continuity of effort by moving long-term maintenance needs and scheduling from an individual's mind into the institutional memory, where it will be accessible when needed. When resources are scarce and multiple organizations are involved, as is the case with the Town Hall, the existence of a carefully-prepared plan helps ensure that both owner and tenants will understand their responsibilities, that resources will be used to yield the most benefit, and that major items will be budgeted for.

A periodic maintenance plan serves also as a tool for alerting the Town finance process of the building's ongoing needs and for promoting awareness of the need for action to meet them. We recommend immediately starting to prepare a such a plan.¹

- **The building does not comply with the requirements of the Americans With Disabilities Act.** As both a place of employment and a public accommodation, the Grange Hall is required to conform to the requirements of A.D.A., a sweeping civil-rights law which is enforced through actions in Federal Court.

Detailed discussion of A.D.A. requirements is beyond the scope of this assessment; suffice it to say that these requirements cover all aspects of the building's "accessibility," including access to and through it, and size and configuration of lavatories.

The Town Hall is not presently an accessible building, although the ramp added outside the Newmarket Road front does provide access to the courtroom. Access to the remainder of the first story appears marginal, but upgradable. Second-story access may not be required; A.D.A. generally does not require elevators in buildings under three stories high and containing less than 3,000 square feet per floor.

A critical component of meeting the A.D.A. requirements is an audit of the building to determine where it does not comply, and an ongoing plan for bringing the building as nearly into compliance as possible. To allow setting priorities globally rather on a building-by-building basis, a program for meeting A.D.A. standards (and the rationale for not meeting them where that is appropriate) should be developed for all Town-owned buildings as a group.

1) A useful resource is J. Henry Chambers, AIA, CYCLICAL MAINTENANCE FOR HISTORIC BUILDINGS, 1976. Available from the U. S. Department of Commerce, National Technical Information Service, 5285 Port Royal Road, Springfield, Virginia 22616, telephone 703 487 4600. NTIS order number PB87-118659.

Some accommodation is possible for historic buildings;¹ key questions include:²

- What is historically significant about the building?
- What are the accessibility deficiencies?
- What are the possible solutions, given the context?
- Will the accessibility modification “threaten or destroy” the historic integrity? (If yes, the decision *not* to provide accessibility must be substantiated.)

Renovations must meet the standards for new construction, unless they can be shown to be structurally unfeasible. That showing must be substantiated.

A plan for bringing a building into compliance with A.D.A. requirements—and a strongly-substantiated rationale where compliance is not possible—is the first line of defense against legal actions. It is recommended that the State Historic Preservation Office³ and local accessibility advisory groups such as the Granite State Independent Living Foundation be involved in the process.

Necessary to elective priority:

- **Plastic storm sash are near the end of their useful life.** Non-operating windows have been overlaid with fixed plastic-glazed storm windows, primarily as an energy-conservation measure. The plastic glazing has yellowed and become foggy with age, and should be replaced with new units.

When these sash are replaced, it is important to provide adequate weepholes at their bases to allow water that may get inside to leave harmlessly and not damage the building.

- **Some second-story plaster is loosening on its lath.** Among the characteristics of some buildings of this period are very thin interior plaster, and lath whose members are not widely enough spaced to allow the plaster to flow between the laths and key securely to it.

The Town Hall appears to be one of those buildings. Historic Association personnel pointed out several areas where the wall plaster showed narrow cracks, and where the plaster yielded slightly to hand pressure. Eventually, these areas will have to be removed and replaced with patches, but at present they do not appear sufficiently serious or widespread to require action beyond continuing to monitor them for the next five to fifteen years.

Elective priority/ miscellaneous:

- **Historic American Building Survey:** The Survey began as a Depression-era project to employ out-of-work architects and draftsmen, and has developed into an unparalleled archive of drawings and photographs of over thirty thousand buildings all over the country, kept at The Library of Congress. The Town Hall was recorded early on;⁴ Survey holdings include 22 measured drawings, 5 photographs, and a page of written data, and field records.

The drawings may provide information that is useful to the ongoing care and maintenance of this building. Full-sized blue-line prints are available at \$5.00 per sheet, and

¹) The Town Hall is considered historic by virtue of its listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

²) These questions, and some of the material that follows, are taken from an article by Barbara Chalmers in NHForum, the newsletter of the NH Chapter of the American Institute of Architects, July-August 1995. Used by permission.

³) New Hampshire Division of Historic Resources, Box 2043, Concord 03302, telephone 630 271 3483.

⁴) It is the sixth building recorded in New Hampshire.

reduced (8-1/2" x 11") Xerox copies are available at fifty cents per sheet from the Library.¹

- **Possible road widening/ building relocation:** It was mentioned that the intersection on which this building sits may be widened in the future, and that it has been suggested that the Town Hall be relocated further from the road.

Leaving aside the fact that the present site follows closely the lines of the building, thus leaving no immediate place to which to move it, two observations are appropriate:

Masonry buildings are movable, but their weight and inflexibility makes the process of relocating them much more difficult and expensive than with wooden structures. Securing the funds necessary to relocate the Town Hall and repair the damage incurred during the move would pose a significant challenge.

The Town Hall is an urban building, originally set on the road and close to the adjoining buildings to either side. This close relationship to the road makes it inappropriate to relocate it, as is too often done, into the middle of a sea of lawn, or even to a side fronting on one street. If the building were to be relocated, great care would be required to maintain its relation to streets on two sides.

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1) Contact Photoduplication Service, Library of Congress, Washington, DC 20540-5230, telephone 202 707 5640. The shelflist number for the Town Hall is HABS NH,9-DUR,5-

Three Buildings in Durham, New Hampshire
FIELD NOTES, August 8, 1995

II. The District Courthouse, formerly the Town Hall

EXTERIOR

General

- Exterior descriptions are given from the viewpoint of an observer facing the building from the street, unless otherwise noted.
- This is a multistory brick building with granite trim, dating from the early nineteenth century. On three of the four façades it reads as two stories high—a normal-height ground story surmounted by a double-height space that probably functioned originally as the Town Meeting room. The Dover Road end elevation reads as three stories, due to a mezzanine which extends across that end of the second story. A small one-story element added to the left end of the Dover Road front some time after the building's construction gives access to the stair to the second story.
- The basement course, and door and window sills and lintels, are dressed granite.
- The hipped roof is asphalt shingles, of uncertain age and condition, which appear to be at or past the end of their useful lives.
- Chimney flashing likewise looks like it's pretty beat up, although close inspection may show it to be in better condition.
 - Historic Association personnel report that minor leaks are a chronic problem, particularly around the chimneys. This tends to confirm our impression that the chimney flashing needs attention.
- A radio tower sits on the ridge, and is guyed to what appear simply to be ring bolts driven through the roofing into the hip rafters. Leaks (and structural deterioration in the rafters) are a real concern; if the tower is not presently active, removal is indicated.
- It was not possible to conduct as thorough an exterior assessment on this building as is normal, due to the concealing effects of the vegetation which climbs all over it.
- The building is utterly overgrown with creeper, which has been allowed to grow over the walls, into the gutters, and onto the roof. The damage this vegetation is causing to the building is serious. The plants are:
 - Deteriorating brick joints and compromising the walls' ability to resist water,
 - Holding moisture against the building and preventing drying,
 - Blocking gutters and downspouts and interfering with proper drainage,
 - Invading wood joints and forcing them apart,
 - Invading the roofing and inviting leaks,
 - Covering large parts of the building exterior and preventing monitoring and proper maintenance.
- The only appropriate action is an **aggressive** program to destroy and remove this vegetation, and to prevent its growing back. Completion of this work will expose significant areas that need attention, but which are presently hidden from assessment.
- The bottom line with the exterior of this building is that until the creeper is removed, one cannot make a fair assessment. It is, however, safe to assume that wherever there is

creeper, the condition of the wall beneath varies from slightly to substantially poorer than where it is visible.

- I understand that the intersection on which this building sits may be widened, and that it has been suggested to relocate the building further from the road. Two observations are appropriate:
 - Masonry buildings are movable, but their weight and inflexibility makes the process of relocating them much more difficult and expensive than with wooden structures.
 - This is an urban building whose close relationship to the road makes it inappropriate to set it as an island in a sea of lawn. In that sense, it is something of an anomaly in Durham, and more in keeping with the older parts of Portsmouth.
- I can't resist commenting on the State Highway Department's benchmark set into the stoop outside the main entrance of this building. Benchmarks are intended to be basic surveyors' references, spatially fixed in three dimensions. Stoops are usually set only a few inches into the ground on informal foundations, are subject to frost heaving, and therefore are liable to move in any direction...

Dover Road end

- This side reads as three stories. There is a door roughly in the center of the facade slightly to the left of the center of this facade, pair of windows in the next story, and another pair of windows in the story above.
- The brick is laid in common bond, with narrow joints. The overall impression is that it is not in bad shape. However, closer inspection shows the need for thorough raking and repointing.
- From the ground, the windows themselves appear to be probably good to fair. There are triple-track aluminum storm sash on the second story windows but not on the third.
 - Paint on the windows appears to be in fair to good condition.
- The existing door replaces whatever was there before the c. 1970 fire. It appears to be in fair to good condition. Paint on it is fair to good.
- Lintel failures have occurred over both second-story windows and over the door. They have been patched variously with white and very dark gray mortar.
 - The dark gray material may, in fact, be caulking compound since caulking compound has been used underneath the right-hand window sill. Caulking compound is *not* an appropriate repointing material!
- This side should be gone over carefully by a skilled preservation mason, and the joints raked and repointed, using a soft restoration mortar, such as 1 part cement, 3 parts lime, and 10 parts sand.¹
- There is an aluminum gutter at the top of the wall, apparently unremarkable, with an aluminum downspout down the right-hand end.
- This wall is one of the better walls as far as creeper goes. That said, creeper is growing up from the base of the wall, and worse, it is coming across the roof and down over the gutter at both corners. Immediate removal is indicated.

Dover Road street front

- The one-story entrance addition, also brick, has been there for some time, quite obviously. Many of the details echo or replicate details on the main building.
 - The principal difference is that the granite lintel over the street-side window is rectangular rather than trapezoidal.
 - There is evidence of repointing in this brick with what appears to be a high strength mortar, unfortunately. The older pointing looks fairly good, from perhaps three feet above the street to the eaves.
 - The lintel problems referred to above exist here also.

1) Analysis of the existing mortar by a firm such as Preservation Technology Associates, One Washington Mall, Boston, MA 02108, (617) 227 0900 (Judith Selwyn) is recommended to determine the appropriate mortar proportions and color.

- The ends of the lintel and sill have been caulked with caulking compound. It appears to contain fiberglass aggregate, and movement has occurred subsequent to its installation.
- The window on the street side of the entry has four over two sash. It appears to be in good condition. An overlaid screw-on storm sash contains yellowing plastic glazing.
- The corners of this element show a lot of broken brick suggesting that it has a hard time with snow plows and other vehicles.
- The entrance to the Historical Association is a pair of double doors, perhaps of slightly earlier vintage, with a granite stoop and an iron gate. There is some corrosion apparent in the gate, but it doesn't seem to be at the point of causing any oxide-jacking damage to the brick.
- The principal part of this façade is completely covered with creeper except at the extreme left end. The bottom of the wall is hidden by an equally dense growth of yew. It is impossible to see most of the brickwork.
 - What brickwork is visible at the extreme left end of this elevation appears comparable to that which was previously noted. The lintel problems appear to exist on this facade also.
- In the first story, this side of the building is organized by four large triple-hung windows in the second story.
- In the first story a window is located beneath the right upstairs window, and a pair of doors beneath the window left of center.
- The doors appear to date from the early 20th century and appear to be in fair to good condition. The granite stoop beneath them appears unremarkable.
- The window has an aluminum screen on it now; apparently that's replacement for an aluminum storm sash in the winter.
- The second story windows have been overlaid with plastic storm sash, which has become old, foggy and yellow.
- The chimney on this side is very difficult to see because of sky glare. It appears to be in comparable condition to the rest of the wall, although it may have been repointed more recently.
 - It has a Gothic-arch brick cap overlaid with worn and failing cement pargeting.
 - A brick loss was noted in the left rear corner, about halfway up the shaft.
- The building curves around to the Newmarket Road façade. In the curve is the main entrance which appears to contain an early doorway holding a post-fire door.
 - Again, failure is apparent in the brickwork about the lintel, suggesting that the lintel has moved. Whether this caused by the wooden lintel behind the stone or just the stone itself is not clear, although this condition more commonly relates to deterioration of the inner wooden piece.
- I cannot say enough about how bad this creeper is: It runs up the side, it goes over the gutter, it goes onto the roof and it's in the gutter of the entrance addition. It not only damages the brickwork, it gets under the shingles, it damages the edge of the roof and it damages the gutters. It is in *desperate* need of total removal.

Newmarket Road street front

- This side of the building is divided into three bays in the second story with three tall triple-hung windows, with first-story windows beneath.
- Between the center and right window is another entrance whose trim appears to be Greek Revival in its origins, although the lintel matches the others.
 - The door and its paint appear to be in good condition.
- The windows appear to be in good to fair condition.
 - A lot of cross-grain cracking failure ("alligatoring") is evident in the first-story window paint. Removal is indicated to bare wood, followed by repainting with a top-quality alkyd resin primer and two finish coats of acrylic latex.

- The first-story windows have triple track storms. The two left upper windows have overlaid plastic storms. The right one has a triple track storm in its lower third below a plain plastic sash. Plastic glazing has fogged and yellowed.
- Underneath the right-hand window is a cellar access door. The brick arch above it shows minor signs of failure, and caulking-compound repointing.
 - Except for the arched head itself, which appears early, the wood here appears to date from after the fire.
 - The flight of granite steps down to this entrance appears somewhat tumble-down; otherwise, I would consider this area to be relatively unremarkable.
- Step cracking above most of the lintels speaks of failure similar to that already noted.
- The wall itself appears generally to be in good condition. The pointing needs to be checked and selectively redone.
- The chimney on this side seems to be in similar condition to the wall.
- A brick -faced concrete handicapped-access ramp has been added from the sidewalk to the door. Although the brick match is poor, it is not otherwise terribly offensive or the apparent source of severe problems.
 - It would have been nice when it was installed had a bond breaker been placed between the existing building and the new concrete, but it certainly isn't worth taking the thing apart to do that now!
- Various hardware is scattered about this façade. Some of it appears to be shutter hardware, and some appears to have been supports for downspouts that were removed when the ramp interfered with their draining.
- Creeper is growing up the right-hand end and all the way across the gutter and the edge of the roof. See previous comments.

Newmarket Road end

- Two-thirds of this wall is covered with creeper which again goes up and over the gutter and does its thing.
- The brickwork that is visible appears consistent with the rest of the building: in need of review and spot repointing, but basically in good condition, as is the granite basement course.
- There are four small-paned windows in the first story of this façade, all with rectangular granite lintels rather than the trapezoidal ones used on the other sides (This, and the absence of a door, suggest that the adjoining lot was occupied when this building was constructed).
 - The two left-hand ones toward the street have eight-over-eight sash, and the right-hand ones, six-over-six.
- A basement window lies beneath the left center window, not particularly visible through the creeper stems, and apparently in fair to poor condition.

INTERIOR

General

- The first story is arranged with a courtroom running back from Newmarket road and occupying that entire half of the building, a public corridor running parallel to Newmarket Road from the main entrance to the courtroom with a very small conference room and lavatory on the street side, and court offices along Dover Road, reached by an interior corridor along the side of the courtroom. Stairs to the basement and second story rise up the Dover Road end of the building.
- Except for the stairhall and a small lavatory and storeroom, above which is a mezzanine, the entire second story is occupied by one large space which presently serves as the headquarters and museum of the Durham Historic Association.

Basement

- The basement ceiling is low: the floor above is supported variously on brick piers and lally columns. The floor is gravel.

- The rubble basement walls below grade appear unremarkable. Ledge projects up through the floor, particularly in the Dover end of the building.
- On the exterior wall adjacent to the stair a little rising-damp damage is apparent in the brick. It appears to be quite restricted in extent and severity, and so does not appear to be a major concern.
- The structure above is very large wood beams with barked-log joists. Aside from a rat's nest of wiring, it appears unremarkable.
- The space is damp, but less so than I would expect it to be. Mechanical dehumidification would make sense here. It could be arranged to drain into the house waste lines so it wouldn't have to be tended daily.
- I noted some indications that suggest that water may enter near the stair. This condition is worth monitoring during snow melt and after heavy rains.
- Heat is forced hot water, oil-fired.
- Impounded bicycles and court records are stored in this space. It's not a good place for storing either of those things, but it could be a lot worse.

First story: Lobby

- In the lobby and passage toward the courtroom, finishes are essentially the same as the courtroom—This space is carpeted, with painted wood trim, painted (probably) plaster walls and ceiling—except the wainscot is painted rather than vinyl-covered.
- Baseboard heating units have been kicked a little at the reception desk, but otherwise appear unremarkable.
- Other conditions appear unremarkable.

First story: Conference Room 1

- Finishes in this space are similar to those in the lobby.
- The ceiling is acoustical tile suspended in exposed tee hangers, in unremarkable condition.

First story: Conference Room 2

- This space appears similar to Conference Room 1.

First story: Lavatory

- This space appears generally similar to Conference Room 1.

First story: Courtroom

- This space is carpeted, with painted wood trim, painted (probably) plaster walls and ceiling. A wainscot—apparently plaster—is finished with vinyl wall covering. Wooden benches are provided for spectators.
- Window sash along Newmarket Road date from the mid-19th century. On the side of the building, they appear to be early 20th century.
- The door to the street appears to be of recent vintage, and seems unremarkable. A minor crack at the wood-wall joint indicates minor movement between the door jamb and the wall of the courtroom toward Dover Road. It does not appear to be significant.
- This space appears unremarkable throughout with the possible exception of a couple of minor wrinkles in the rug that suggest the possibility of some moisture coming up from below.
- Access to the basement stair is provided by a door at the Dover end of the courtroom.
 - The basement stair drops down the exterior wall toward Dover Road.
 - Evidence of the c.1970 fire is apparent; otherwise this area appears unremarkable.

First story: Inner passage

- Finishes are similar to those in the public area, and appear relatively unremarkable.

First story: Reception

- Finishes are similar to those in the public area, and appear relatively unremarkable.

First story: Lavatory

- Finishes are similar to those in the public area, and appear relatively unremarkable.

First story: Clerk's office

- Finishes are similar to those in the public area, and appear relatively unremarkable.

First story: Judge's Chamber

- Finishes in this space are similar to those in the courtroom.
- The wall in back of the judge's chair is gouged where the chair tips back against it.
- Daylight is provided through an exterior door, which on the inside appears to be in good to fair condition, though not in need of any immediate work.
- The closet in this space appears unremarkable.

First story: Second-story entry

- Walls and ceiling in the entry and up the stairs are either plaster or gypsum board—I suspect gypsum board—with painted wood trim.
- Stairs appear to be a post-fire replacement, and generally unremarkable.
 - The original stairs almost certainly began inside the main envelope of the building (the entry is an addition), but when rebuilt after the fire, building-code requirements forced a less steep slope, with the present result.
- The doors appear to be in good condition.
- Interior paint is unremarkable.

Second story: Stairhall

- This space is similar to the lower story.
- The floor is old painted softwood. It's bumpy, but it's in good condition.

Second story: Lavatory

- At the head of the stairs there is a small lavatory with resilient tile flooring, two painted wallboard walls, a painted matchboard wall and painted wood trim.
- This space shares a window with the adjacent storage room. The window has been framed down, and the original sash has been replaced with two pair of narrower sash.
- It's cramped and hard to keep clean, but not otherwise remarkable.

Second story: Main space

- This is a two-story high space, used as the Historic Association headquarters and museum and therefore very, very full of objects of all sorts.
- We were told that the building was originally constructed with three complete stories, and subsequently rebuilt to its present form.
 - Although this is certainly possible, it seems unlikely that the Town Meeting room—which this appears to have been—would not have been given extra height.
 - There does not appear to be any evidence in the exterior wall to support this notion, although the fine match between the brick of the building and the brick of the entry house allow the possibility of inconspicuous major mid nineteenth-century modifications.
- Walls are plaster, ceilings are deeply coved plaster.
 - Areas exist where the wall plaster is loosening from its lath. Until it becomes more serious and more obvious, no action is indicated, because the expense and mess of dealing repair presently exceed the magnitude of the problem
- Trim is painted wood. There is a wainscot of vertical beaded matched boards.
- Floors are maple, overlaid on earlier work, and worn.
- Sash appear to be of 20th century origin.
 - The sill of the south window on the Newmarket Road side was puzzling: There appeared either to have been losses or movement (or both). It wasn't possible to open other windows to compare their sills, but this is something that should be investigated further.
- The space was apparently last painted after the fire. It appears unremarkable for its age.
- There is but a single exit stair, and no alternative exit. In the absence of sprinklers or other automatic fire suppression system, this is sufficient to render the upper story unsafe for most occupancies.
 - Precedents do exist in New Hampshire for occupancy by limited numbers of people in single-exit spaces such as this.
- A small leak is evident in the ceiling at the chimney on the Newmarket Road side.

- The chimney nearer the stair on the Dover Road side has also leaked. That area has been repaired and painted.
 - The other Dover Road chimney appears to have been terminated below the roof; we did not recall seeing it.
- Viewed from the mezzanine, the ceiling shows its age and minor cracking, but does not appear to present any cause for concern.
- From some angles, parts of the ceiling look like they have been wet. Since little or no staining is evident, this condition is more likely due to condensation than to roof leaks.
- The room is lit with floodlights mounted in a central plaster ceiling boss.
- Two fan coil units hung from the ceiling provide heat.

Second story: Storage

- To the rear of the building beneath the mezzanine is a small closet.
- Walls are matched boards toward the lavatory, and papered over plaster.
 - The wallpaper has been painted over, and has failed. Removal will be easy; it is self-removing as it is.
- The floor is painted wide softwood boards.
- The paint is worn, but otherwise unremarkable.

Second story: Mezzanine

- This space lies over the stairhall, lavatory, and storage room, and appears to be original to the building. It is reached by an extremely steep stair.
- The floor is partly painted plywood and partly boards.
- Some cracking in the wall plaster is apparent in the corner over the storage room at the beginning of the ceiling cove. It appears to be unique in the space, and not of great significance.

Attic

- We did not enter the attic because of the difficulty of getting a ladder into the space and up to the ceiling access door without risking damage to the room's contents.

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