2016

The Schoolhouse Problem: New Solutions for Preserving Historic and Obsolete Buildings in Rural New Hampshire

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Abstract
What options exist for public or nonprofit stewards of historic buildings in rural New Hampshire to re-use their properties for purposes other than museums? Over 200 historical societies exist in the Granite State, and of those, more than 40 own or manage multiple properties. These buildings – often schoolhouses, Grange halls, churches, etc. – are seldom open to the public and can be burdensome for volunteer-based organizations like historical societies that operate on small budgets. This thesis examined alternative solutions in rural communities, solutions that return a building to usefulness without compromising character-defining features. Case studies derived from conversations with various rural historical societies, local government officials, and statewide leaders in historic preservation.

Keywords
New Hampshire, adaptive reuse, historical society, historic preservation, New England

Disciplines
Historic Preservation and Conservation

Comments
Suggested Citation:

Cushing, Andrew (2016). *The Schoolhouse Problem: New Solutions for Preserving Historic and Obsolete Buildings in Rural New Hampshire.* (Masters Thesis). University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, PA.

THE SCHOOLHOUSE PROBLEM: NEW SOLUTIONS FOR PRESERVING HISTORIC AND OBSOLETE BUILDINGS IN RURAL NEW HAMPSHIRE

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A THESIS

In

Historic Preservation

Presented to the Faculties of the University of Pennsylvania in
Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements of the Degree of

MASTER OF SCIENCE IN HISTORIC PRESERVATION

2016

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Acknowledgements

Many people made this project possible, or in the case of my preservation classmates, nearly impossible. I wish to thank the following individuals for their time answering my questions over the phone, in emails, and in person:

Pamela, my advisor, for her enthusiasm and patience.

The folks at the New Hampshire Division of Historical Resources, especially Peter Michaud.

The folks at the New Hampshire Preservation Alliance, especially Maggie Stier.

Steve Taylor, former New Hampshire Agricultural Commissioner and rural culture aficionado.

The Grafton Historical Society

Kathi Bradt, Acworth Historical Society

Karen Payne, Effingham Preservation Society

Sherry Nelson, Groton Historical Society

Meredith Smith, Enfield Heritage Commission

Jack Noon, Musterfield Farm and the Old Town Store (Sutton)

Paul Lauriot, Temple Historical Society

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Introduction

The Pines Schoolhouse, a one room affair built in 1854 in Grafton, New Hampshire, sits vacant and in need of a new use. Boxes of failed yard sale items clutter its beadboard interior, and assorted desks – intended as museum pieces – collect dust. Everything about the schoolhouse is classic; its worn red clapboards and location under a grove of pine trees on a dirt road invoke romantic notions of education in rural America. It is an scene we are all familiar with, thanks to images popularized by artists like Norman Rockwell and Winslow Homer or printmakers like Currier and Ives. Carved into the clapboards are names of former students, reminding us that, though emblematic of broader narratives, each extant schoolhouse has local historical importance, too. In the case of the Pines Schoolhouse, which closed in the early 1950s, townspeople remember attending school there, including a handful of historical society members who double as today's stewards.

Starting in the 1990s, Grafton's nascent historical society saw a surge in interest; in the span of several years, the organization received hundreds of donated objects and three free-standing buildings. It only made sense that, given the interest, each building would become a museum dedicated to a specialized aspect of the town's history. But after the conversion of the fire station into the main museum, members grew tired. Money dried up. Early founders and donors passed away. In the two decades after the museum's completion, the historical society reluctantly acquired three additional properties: a church, its adjacent parsonage, and a tramp house (built in 1910 to house railroad hobos). Now spread too thin, the historical society has had no option but to let some of its buildings sit vacant, collecting romance novels and rain water.

To this day, the Grafton Historical Society is divided about the future of the Pines Schoolhouse. Some members (let's call them the "Nostalgics") still wish to preserve it as a museum. They see themselves as stewards of the town's history, of a rosier time when families owned farms, worshipped at church, and went to Grange suppers. This lust for the past influences Nostalgics' stewardship decisions. In the vein of early Colonial Williamsburg preservation, they attempt to remove accreted layers of history or fail to interpret nuances in historical fact. Other members (let's call them the "Pragmatists") see the schoolhouse as a white elephant. After years of neglect, the building distracts the historical society from accomplishing other mission goals, like educational programming and museum curation. Without money and volunteers, however, the Nostalgics cannot get their museum. And without a responsible method of unloading the building or a strategic plan for its re-use, the Pragmatists cannot appease the other members.

The Grafton Historical Society is far from alone in this conundrum. In many rural communities, Notalgics, Pragmatists, tax payers, and grant funders alike recognize these aging buildings owned by historical societies, heritage commissions, or museum-like institutions as increasingly burdensome. These organizations are no longer mere repositories for postcards, scythes, arrowheads, oat threshers, and retired ballot boxes; they are stewards for the old, oftentimes public, buildings that no one else wants. In the case of Grafton, the historical society manages six properties – a daunting task for its twenty members, of whom six are active.[1] In nearby Enfield, the historical society manages two buildings: a one room schoolhouse and an academy building. In addition to the historical society, Enfield's heritage commission manages the Enfield Center Town

[1] "Our Properties," *Grafton Historical Society (NH)*, Accessed 29 April 2016, http://www.graftonhistoricalsocietynh.org/landmarks/.

House.[2] A professional Shaker Village museum, comprised of several of its own buildings, operates just down the road from the Town House.[3] The historical society in Andover owns four buildings: a railroad depot and freight shed, schoolhouse, and general store.[4] Effingham boasts multiple stewards: the Effingham Preservation Society manages a former Grange hall; the historical society manages a former store and the state's first normal school; and three other independent nonprofits manage the Davis Meetinghouse, Lord's Hill Meetinghouse, and South Effingham Baptist Church.[5] In Sutton, the historical society owns the South Sutton Meetinghouse, a schoolhouse, and a residence used as its headquarters; the town owns and operates the Old Store Museum; and Musterfield Farm, a working farm on 250 acres, includes the Harvey Homestead (1787), four barns, two blacksmith shops, carriage sheds from a Sutton church, a schoolhouse, and eight ancillary outbuildings.[6]

The American Historical Association estimates that there are over 10,000 local historical societies across the nation.[7] In New Hampshire, over 200 exist, and that does not include the myriad independent museums like Musterfield Farm in Sutton or the Poore Family Homestead in Colebrook.[8] Of those historical societies, approximately ninety percent have some semblance of a museum space, ranging from rotating exhibits

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[2] Meredith Smith (Selectman and Heritage Commission Chair), email message to author, 4 October 2015.
[3] "Enfield Shaker Village Tour," *Enfield Shaker Museum*, Accessed 29 April 2016, http://www.shakermuseum.org/shakervillage.htm.
[4] "Places," *Andover Historical Society*, Accessed 29 April 2016, http://www.andoverhistory.org/.
[5] Karen Payne (Effingham Preservation Society), phone call with author, 20 March 2016.
[6] Jack Noon (Old Store Museum Trustee and Musterfield Farm Museum Administrator), phone call with author, Accessed 28 April 2016; "Walking Tour," *Musterfield Farm Museum*, Accessed 29 April 2016, http://www.musterfieldfarm.com/; "Sutton Historical Society Buildings," *Sutton Historical Society*, Accessed 29 April 2016, http://www.suttonnhhistoricalsociety.org/shs-buidlings.html.
[7] Debbie Ann Doyle, "The Future of Local Historical Societies," *Perspectives on History* (December 2012), Accessed 21 March 2016, https://www.historians.org/publications-and-directories/perspectives-on-history/december-2012/the-future-of-the-discipline/the-future-of-local-historical-societies.
[8] See Appendix 1.

in the town library to sprawling campuses of a dozen buildings. More than forty historical societies manage two or more properties, and there is no correlation between the size of the town or the historical society and the number of properties owned. In most cases, historical societies acquired their properties by donation, bequest, or town property transfer. Less often, historical societies purchase community landmarks threatened by demolition or the open real estate market. When these buildings – be they schoolhouses, former libraries, railroad depots, general stores, churches, residences, or Grange halls – operate as museums for local history, they return a potentially obsolete building back to the public. Local museums are important institutions; the collections can foster community knowledge and identity and the spaces can host lectures and other events. For historical society members in small towns, the regular meetings and fundraisers provide a social outlet, both within the membership and for the broader community.

Problems arise when historical societies overextend themselves. For a town of a few thousand people, a handful of dedicated individuals stewarding one museum in a schoolhouse is perhaps manageable. Even if the museum attracts only a few dozen people per year, minimal maintenance costs and volunteer hours may make the museum worthwhile. Once historical societies become repositories for multiple buildings, however, a landscape of expensive lawn ornaments appears. Members must spread their limited resources thinner. The same number of members must raise more money, solicit increasingly competitive grants, paint more clapboards, and mow more lawns in order to share history with dwindling audiences.[9] Though the intention is good – putting buildings

[9] Cary Carson, "The End of History Museums: What's Plan B?" (Presentation, New Audiences for Old Houses: Building a Future with the Past, Boston University, 28 September 2007).

in the hands of those who care most about preservation and history education – the resulting burden on the historical society is detrimental.

Let us return to the Pines Schoolhouse dilemma. Within a twenty-five mile radius of Grafton are at least sixteen schoolhouse museums, some of which operate as headquarters for a town's historical society (thus, with exhibits dedicated to broader town history) and some which replicate the schoolhouse experience, complete with desks, slate boards, and school marm. The schoolhouses are similar in appearance, both inside and out, and while local variations exist, the interpretation at each museum is remarkably similar.[10] The vacant Pines Schoolhouse in Grafton and that town's historical society sit at a figurative crossroads. Should they remove the unsellable yard sale items from the interior and stage the building as the seventeenth schoolhouse museum in the area? Or could the schoolhouse be used for another, perhaps higher, purpose, freeing the members to focus on telling stories or preserving buildings also in their collection, but that are less represented in the region?

One thing is clear. New Hampshire does not need more schoolhouse museums. Many historical societies have reached a critical point that demands a shift in how they steward historic assets. I argue that in order to address issues affecting rural communities' vernacular historic building stock, a new approach to preservation is needed. For too long, preservationists (amateur or professional) and historical society members have been hesitant to relinquish control of excess historic buildings that are rarely open, a struggle to maintain, and insignificant contributors to a town's social or civic vibrancy. These

[10] Schoolhouse museums near Grafton include Danbury, Enfield, Dorchester, Newport, Hanover, Sutton (2), New London (2), Andover, Springfield, Bridgewater, and Groton. Academy museums can be found in Enfield, Canaan, and Lyme Center.

societies must learn to let go, but they first need the tools to do so. There are methods of ensuring buildings retain their architectural details while also fostering creative solutions that benefit the community more directly. More successful case studies and improved communication would help allay the concerns that small town societies and preservationists share about embracing alternative solutions.

It is important to note, somewhat sheepishly, that I am guilty of belonging to an organization that behaves in the very manner I describe above. As the youngest member of my hometown's historical society (that, more accurately, is the septuagenarian society), I have struggled with the desire to save history despite a paltry budget and dwindling membership. Historical societies are wonderful organizations doing important work, but they cannot save rural buildings alone and they should not aim to museumify each building they own. If preservation is to have relevant and tangible results for everyday people – which it must for the field to survive – our approach to saving places in rural areas must evolve.

Methodology

I am limiting my focus to New Hampshire for several reasons. First, the median population for a New Hampshire town (the state's thirteen cities excluded) is about 2,390. This makes the majority of towns in the state decidedly rural in character. Second, New Hampshire is a small state, geographically. The proximity of its towns allows for the sharing of ideas and resources. Third, the tax structure in New Hampshire is heavily based on property. Without a sales or income tax, local municipalities are charged with raising funds for schools and local and county government through property taxes.

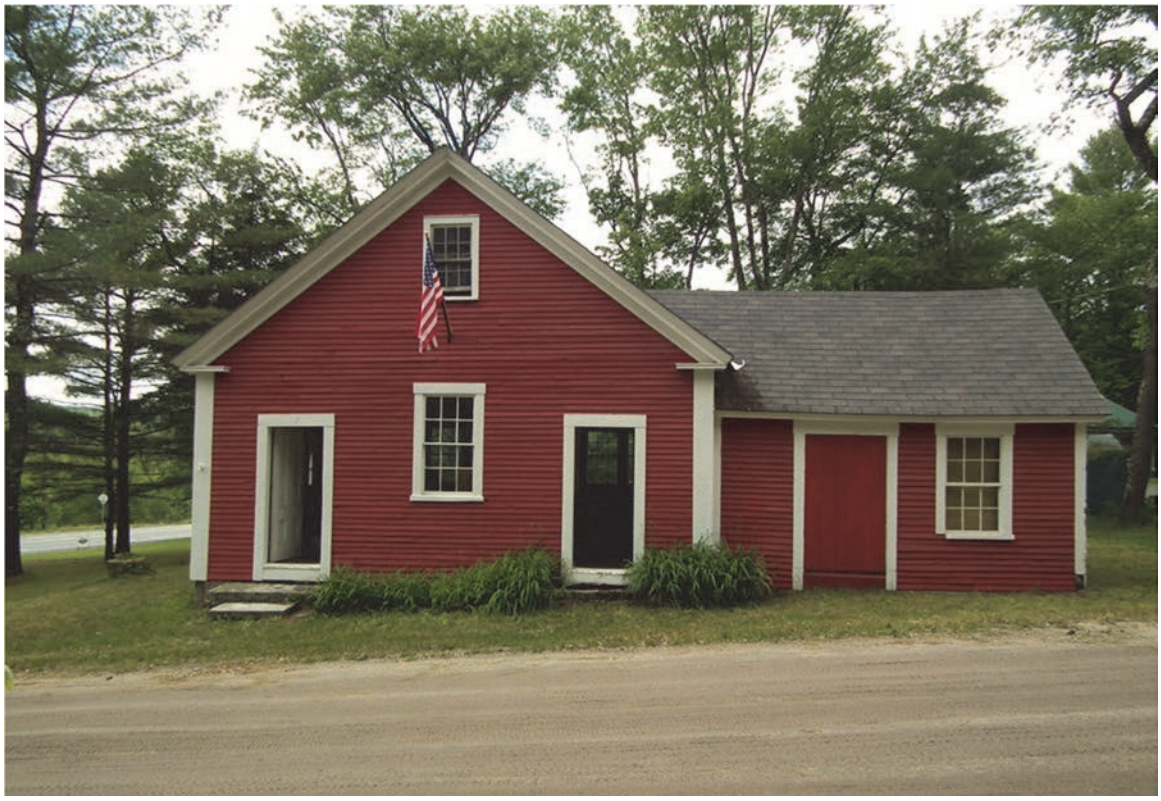

Figure 1. Pines Schoolhouse, Grafton., 2015. Photograph by author.

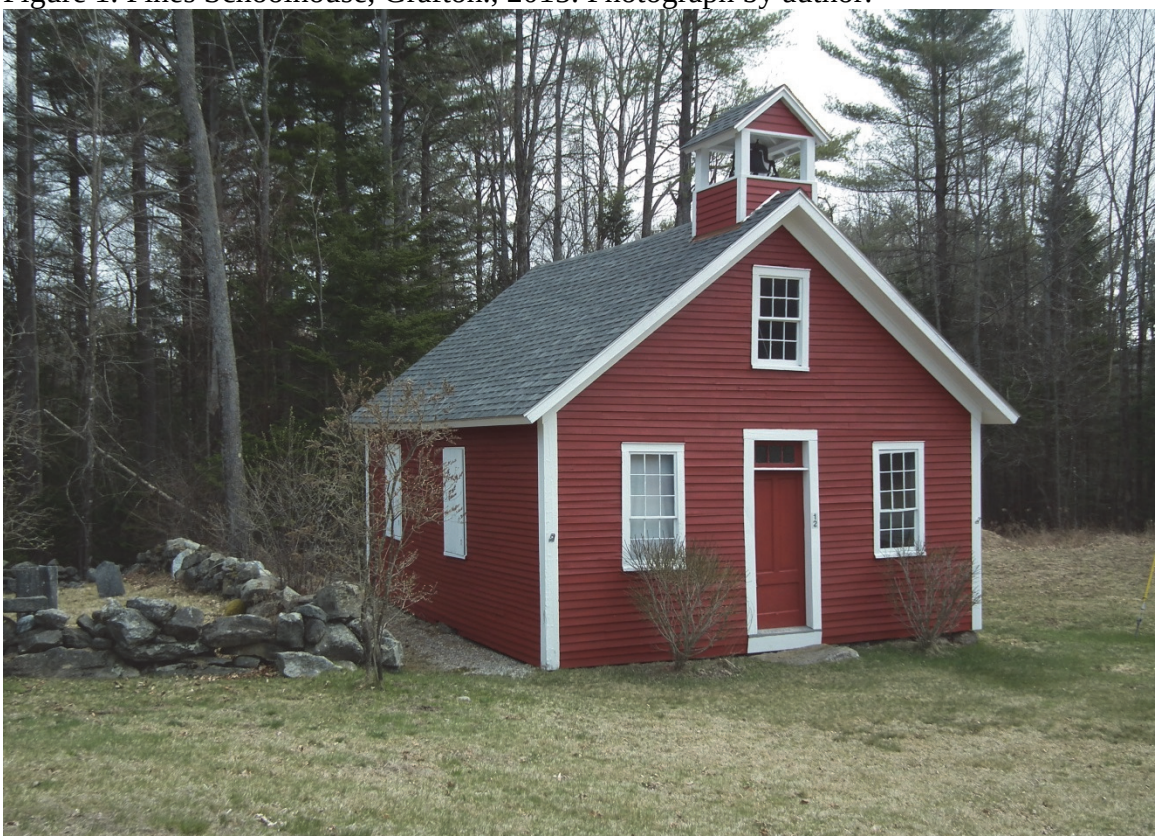

Figure 2. Dorchester Historical Society, 2016. Photograph by author.

Selectmen and voters attempt to build strong tax bases and limit exempt properties, which makes the accepted practice of historical societies and towns owning ample historic real estate all the more problematic. Lastly, the state's Live Free or Die ethic creates strong local control and some latitude when it comes to land use. Though the merits of such libertarianism have limits, "the New Hampshire advantage" can result in creative solutions unimpeded by onerous regulation.[11]

This project included interviews with leaders in New Hampshire's preservation, planning, community development, and agricultural circles. Historical societies are small volunteer affairs; their members do not have the time to compile reports on preservation projects, and newspapers do not always report on such matters. Most societies lack detailed websites and some have officers who are difficult to contact. Historical societies throughout the state have been made all the more insular by the recent disbanding of the Association of New Hampshire Historical Societies, the former sole clearinghouse. Because this research included historical societies, however, outreach was critical to understanding the issues facing obsolete historic buildings in rural communities. Case studies were derived from recommendations made by the New Hampshire Preservation Alliance, the Division of Historical Resources, newspaper articles, or from conversations with historical society members.

Definitions

Before we proceed, it is important to define the terms fundamental to this paper.

[11] Though only thirteen towns in New Hampshire lack zoning, smaller towns' zoning ordinances are intended to maintain a "rural character." Fifty-three towns have historic district commissions, but most of them are located in towns outside of this study area.

The US Census defines *rural* as any area not within an "urbanized area" or within an "urban cluster."[12] The USDA offers further criteria; typically, a rural area has an abundance of open space and jobs related to natural resources or agriculture.[13] In the case of this study, most examples derive from communities with fewer than 5,000 people. While towns with populations greater than this may contain rural sections, my goal is to identify solutions for towns that lack sizeable downtowns or enough residents to enable a café or art gallery to be a viable alternative to a vacant building. Most of the towns in these case studies have at most a library, town office, general store, and/or elementary school as their "downtown." Residents may drive over thirty minutes to work and income and house values stand below the state average.

Rural cannot be defined by statistics alone, of course. Broadly speaking, people in rural towns share deep connections to the land, even if their primary source of income is no longer derived from it. People in rural regions are remarkably good at maintaining traditions and sharing collective memory about the landscape, built or natural. "I doubt if there is any other part of the modern world where the contrast between the traditional landscape and the contemporary landscape is so easy to observe," wrote vernacular landscape scholar J.B. Jackson.[14] The rural landscapes that Jackson observed and wrote about, and the interplay between traditions and contemporary influences, can be seen in New Hampshire's Old Home Day celebrations, agricultural fairs, or Grange suppers.

Preservation can mean many things. The National Park Service, the voice on preservation standards, actually divides treatment options for buildings and landscapes

[12] An "urbanized area" has more than 50,000 people; an "urban cluster" has 2,500 to 50,000 people.
[13] Louise Reynnells, "What is Rural?" *Rural Information Center (USDA),* April 2014, https://ric.nal.usda.gov/what-rural.
[14] J.B. Jackson, *Landscape in Sight: Looking at America*, Helen Lefkowitz Horowitz, ed. (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2000), 313-314.

into four categories: preservation, rehabilitation, restoration, and reconstruction. Restoration, the process of returning a property to a specific point in time by removing later alterations, and reconstruction are rarer in rural towns because they are often expensive and reserved for properties of exceptional significance. Preservation retains the layers a property acquires over time, but makes appropriate repairs. Rehabilitation retains the property's character-defining features, but makes changes that enable new or changing uses.[15] This paper focuses on how the latter two treatment options, preservation and rehabilitation, can be marshalled by historical societies and like-minded organizations to find broader uses for properties.

Adaptive re-use is another term for rehabilitation. Since 1976, rehabilitation has enjoyed widespread recognition with the help of federal historic tax credits. When done according to Secretary of the Interior Standards, and applied to an income-producing property on the National Register of Historic Places, developers are eligible for twenty percent of the qualified rehabilitation project costs to be recaptured through federal income tax returns for up to twenty years. In some instances, the federal historic tax credit is not substantial enough to make rehabilitation possible; for that reason, thirty-three states offer additional tax credits.[16] The federal incentive is responsible for the rehabilitation of over 41,000 buildings nationwide since the program appeared. Buildings that do not qualify for, or owners that cannot afford, the tax credit process still benefit from adaptive re-use's acceptance by the public.

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[15] "Four Approaches to the Treatment of Historic Properties," *National Park Service*, Accessed 29 April 2016, https://www.nps.gov/tps/standards/four-treatments.htm.
[16] "State Historic Tax Credits," *National Trust for Historic Preservation*, 10 February 2016, http://www.preservationnation.org/take-action/advocacy-center/additional-resources/historic-tax-credit-maps/state-rehabilitation-tax.html. New Hampshire does not offer historic tax credits.

Lastly, what is an *obsolete* building? Simply put, obsolescence means that the intended purpose of the building is no longer relevant or that the need remains, but the original buildings no longer suit them. Shifting demographics, economic trends, and/or cultural changes have rendered schoolhouses, railroad depots, churches, general stores, Grange halls, or other similar building stock in New Hampshire obsolete. Some of these buildings can find new lives as housing or community spaces, but others could be used for commercial or other private uses. In an ideal world, these white elephants become tax-producing properties. Whatever the outcome, changing the dialogue about a building that is considered obsolete to one that is considered invaluable keeps that building useful and appreciated – a sustainable approach to preservation.

Literature Review

Research on rural communities is often sociological or economic, and seldom architectural. A generation of rural sociologists was born starting with the Lynds' 1929 publication, *Middletown: A Study in American Culture* and their follow-up in 1937, *Middletown in Transition: A Study in Cultural Conflicts*. The Lynds' intent was to determine how small towns shaped residents' cultural norms and behavior (in this case, the city of Muncie, Indiana). The USDA also explored the economic and social conditions of communities after the Great Depression with six case studies published between 1940 and 1943. The USDA Rural Life Study, which included Landaff, New

Hampshire, and the Lynds' rural sociologist protégés, are credited with allocating policies and attention toward rural regions during the mid-twentieth century.[17]

Other rural studies focus on economic development. In *Small Town and Rural Economic Development* (2000), edited by Peter Schaeffer and Scott Loveridge, researchers weigh various factors in economic development: community capacity, maintaining economic bases, attracting large-scale industry, public-private partnerships, and effective rural businesses.[18] Successful communities, most researchers agreed, shared commonalties that can easily be applied to preservation projects. Well-trained and inclusive leaders, engaged citizens, and widely-shared vision (with attainable goals) made for a sustainable community.[19] Other successes came from businesses carving out niche markets or developing food preparation cooperatives (i.e., to process bison or wheat or vegetables), but mostly in the form of towns setting aside industrial parks for manufacturing.

When it comes to adaptive re-use (or even historic preservation) in rural communities, less research exists. The 1970s saw a surge of interest in historic preservation, with the passage of the National Historic Preservation Act in 1966 and America's Bicentennial in 1976. With the introduction of the National Trust's Main Street Program in 1980, historic preservation and downtown revitalization became inextricably linked. In 1978, preservationist Barbaralee Diamonstein published *Buildings Reborn: New Uses, Old Places*, where she stated: "Preservation does not, and emphatically should not, mean merely restoration. Probably the single most important

[17] A.E. Luloff and R.S. Krannich, eds. *Persistence and Change in Rural Communities: A 50-year Follow-up to Six Classic Studies* (New York: CABI Publishing, 2002).
[18] Peter V. Schaeffer and Scott Loveridge, eds. *Small Town and Rural Economic Development: A Case Studies Approach* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2000).
[19] Ibid, 2-3.

aspect of the preservation movement is the recycling of old buildings – adapting them to uses different from the ones for which they were originally intended." In her seminal book, Diamonstein shared ninety-five case studies, including the popular adaptive re-uses of Ghirardelli Square, Seattle's Pioneer Square, and Boston's Faneuil Hall. None of them were in rural areas.[20]

Eight years after Diamonstein's first book, she returned with another portfolio of forty-eight projects. The smallest of the towns in this second round included Bellows Falls, Vermont, where a former hotel was converted to senior citizen housing, and Readington Township, NJ, where a vacant train station became a public library. Most re-uses worthy of publication were located in large urban areas.[21] It is not just an issue of scale that multi-million dollar conversions of warehouses and post offices into luxury condominiums or headquarters of national corporations are not replicable in small towns. The tools in place that allow such rehabilitation of large structures – historic tax credits, transfer of development rights, big investors – are likely not available for converting a former church into a brewery in a town of 500, for example.

But a brewery in a church is just what successful preservation looks like to millennials. In *Historic Preservation: An Introduction to its History, Principles, and Practices,* Norman Tyler argues that, because the American landscape is mostly built out, developers and builders must "address the issues of quality of life and to recognize elements worthy of preservation, even if they no longer serve a primary economic

[20] Barbaralee Diamonstein, *Buildings Reborn: New Uses, Old Places* (New York: Harper and Row, 1978), 13.
[21] Barbaralee Diamonstein, *Remaking America: New Uses, Old Places* (New York: Crown Publishers, Inc., 1986).

function."[22] Tyler's findings are corroborated by the National Trust's Preservation Green Lab report, "Older, Smaller, Better," which analyzed data and proved that historic, dense, mixed-use neighborhoods are livelier, more diverse, and economically robust compared to their monolithic successors.[23] This important realization is a powerful marketing tool for even the smaller New Hampshire downtowns, and is starting to ring true in places like Peterborough, Winchester, Enfield, Littleton, and Bristol.

Jane Holtz Kay's book, *Preserving New England* (1986), read today, elicits questions about whether fusty New England, with its flanneled Yankees and traditions, can coexist with millennial-minded preservation. Kay's prose and photographs do well to remind readers that romantic images of New England are a construct; that the region is not all silos and stone walls.[24] In the thirty years since Kay's book, however, the region has lost more of its red barns, Holsteins, and weathered signs that announce "Maple Syrup for Sale." According to Kay's identified preservation challenges, these losses are due to gentrification, façadism, and poor overdevelopment – three challenges that my research did not confront in rural New Hampshire. This is likely because Kay failed to survey more vernacular landmarks – the mills, Grange halls, or general stores in the smaller towns. This omission, and Kay's insipid call to arms, led one reviewer to conclude, "This work does not seem destined to have a lasting impact on preservation in New England."[25]

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[22] Norman Tyler, *Historic Preservation: An Introduction to its History, Principles, and Practices* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 2000), 14.
[23] "Older, Smaller, Better: Measuring How the Character of Buildings and Blocks Influences Urban Vitality," National Trust for Historic Preservation, May 2014, http://www.preservationnation.org/information-center/sustainable-communities/green-lab/oldersmallerbetter/.
[24] Jane Holtz Kay, *Preserving New England* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1986).
[25] Valerie Talmage, Book Review, *The New England Quarterly* Vol. 60, No. 2 (June, 1987), 284.

Preservation cannot just be about pictures, then; solutions are needed. Jo Allen Gause's *New Uses for Obsolete Buildings* (1996) offers solutions. Despite being published by the Urban Land Institute, many of the questions the author poses are germane to small towns: What is the community? What is the need? What are the incentives? The answers provided, however, were not always replicable outside of urban areas.[26] Chief among the concerns for reusing large industrial spaces in rural areas as housing is the demand and rental market. Developers in Troy (NH) cannot make the numbers work for an old blanket mill suffering from years of neglect and failed rounds of re-use plans. The cost of the rehabilitation cannot be easily recuperated through the area's median rent.[27] Furthermore, with only 2,000 people, there is not an immediate need for a large apartment complex. A similar issue arises in Franklin, where mills exist, but residential rehabilitation cannot be supported without additional government subsidies.[28] Urban rehabilitation examples are helpful, but there are special concerns for rural communities.

Saving America's Countryside (second edition, 1997) focuses primarily on land use policies that help protect open space. Conservation of open space is a preservation goal, too, of course, but the bulk of case studies relate to controlling sprawl and unwanted development through conservation easements, design guidelines, zoning, and proper regional planning.[29] An important lesson for rural towns is their reliance on the

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[26] Jo Allen Gause, *New Uses for Obsolete Buildings* (Urban Land Institute, 1996).
[27] Megan Foley, "Selectmen delay acting on proposal about future of Troy Mills," *Keene Sentinel*, 20 January 2015, http://www.sentinelsource.com/news/local/selectmen-delay-acting-on-proposal-about-future-of-troy-mills/article_e8d97e27-76f4-53de-a55c-5f3155bea56d.html.
[28] Elodie Reed, "CATCH Housing Funds, Coordinator to Add to Franklin's Downtown," *Concord Monitor*, 8 January 2016, http://www.concordmonitor.com/Archive/2016/01/franklincouncil-cm-010716.
[29] Samuel N. Stokes, A. Elizabeth Watson, and Shelley S. Mastran, *Saving America's Countryside: A Guide to Rural Conservation*, second edition (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1997).

surrounding communities. To this extent, *Saving America's Countryside* encourages networks like trail systems, scenic byways, and tours. Tom Daniels and Deborah Bower's book, *Holding Our Ground: Protecting America's Farms and Farmland*, also focuses on preserving the working landscapes of rural communities.[30] A landscape approach is logical for rural communities; preserving the livelihood and context of small towns is impossible without first protecting the farmland or forestland on which people rely. On the other hand, doing land conservation or historic preservation successfully requires attention to details; politics and teamwork vary from town to town and from year to year.

The recently-published *Anarchist's Guide to Historic House Museums* provides fodder for those who believe there is a surfeit of house museums, or at least those that believe house museums need to evolve. Authors Franklin Vagnone and Deborah Ryan share blunt observations: historic house museums tell biased histories, are irrelevant and boring, are curated like doll houses (no touching!), and siphon valuable preservation dollars from other projects.[31] The American Association for State and Local History, or AASLH, acknowledges these concerns. "We MUST get beyond our head in the sand mentality and be proactive," Michelle Zupan, a member of the AASLH Historic House Committee wrote when confronting the reality of dwindling museum attendance. A 2010 survey cited by Zupan shows that thirty-seven percent of Americans never visit museums, a statistic that does not bode well for the field unless advice from anarchists like Vagnone and Ryan is heeded.[32]

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[30] Tom Daniels and Deborah Bowers, *Holding Our Ground: Protecting America's Farms and Farmland* (Washington, D.C.: Island Press, 1997).
[31] Franklin D. Vagnone and Deborah E. Ryan, *Anarchist's Guide to Historic House Museums* (Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Print, 2016).
[32] Michelle Zupan, "The SCARY Truth Facing Historic Houses," *AASLH Views from the Porch* (blog), 28 October 2015, http://blogs.aaslh.org/the-scary-truth-facing-historic-houses/.

Anarchist's Guide has many valuable lessons for historical society museums in New Hampshire. If a museum is the best option for an obsolete building, then it should strive to be one that engages with audiences and piques the interests of patrons. At a schoolhouse museum, this would mean providing nuanced history. Black and white photographs and town reports reveal that the majority of pupils were malnourished and had rotted teeth, or that women were paid less to perform the very same teaching duties. Why would curators at a historical society choose to gloss over these details? Exploring these thornier issues in education helps to make historical societies – and their buildings – more relevant to modern audiences. Zupan found that museums that reinterpret their sites to include more nuanced and complete history report increased attendance and revenue.[33]

Rural preservation is a topic that deserves more research. After all, in New Hampshire, half of the state's communities have populations less than 2,500 and their historic fabric deserves more attention. Researching and surveying rural buildings are only the first step. What matters most to residents is not that their local icons are cataloged in the Library of Congress thanks to HABS photography or written about by academics, but that these buildings remain useful and accessible to future generations. In this regard, rural buildings can benefit from increased preservation and adaptive re-use.

Identifying Challenges, Proposing Solutions

This paper is organized around common problems facing obsolete buildings, but more importantly, the solutions that are available for making these buildings more useful. For each challenge, several case studies will be provided to showcase how towns or

[33] Ibid.

nonprofit organizations successfully changed the conversation in their community, from a building's shortcomings to its potential. While the list is not exhaustive, it is meant to be geographically diverse and illustrate many options beyond the obvious museum solution. The common problems were generated after consulting with preservation professionals, historical societies, and local government officials. These common issues surfaced during these discussions: location and access (including parking), outdated (or non-existing) mechanical systems, deferred maintenance, preservation of character-defining features, and support and/or stewardship. Chapters One through Five explore each of these issues independently.

The issues are not mutually exclusive. A building can become obsolete because it suffers from all of the above issues, for example. And sometimes, the chief limiting factor to a building's re-use may not be building-related at all. Spotty cell phone service, inadequate internet access, and aging populations disproportionately impact rural communities. While the solutions for those challenges are beyond the scope of this study, it is worth noting that preservation in rural New Hampshire cannot happen in a vacuum. It behooves communities to identify their building's issues and tailor solutions to benefit the unique needs of residents.

It is my hope that, by proffering a variety of solutions developed and implemented by rural communities for rural communities, we can think more broadly, judiciously, and positively about obsolete historic assets. Guiding the case studies will be the following questions: What opportunities and challenges exist when it comes to preservation in rural communities? How can underused or abandoned civic, religious, and struggling commercial buildings in rural New Hampshire be best adapted to provide their

communities increased usage, and if possible, increased tax revenue? What partnerships need to be pursued in order for a building to be successfully re-used? How can today's stewards of historic properties learn to evolve in a manner that benefits people as much as the building itself?

Chapter 1: Location and Access

There are two types of location with which a rural building must contend. The first is the location of the town in which the building stands. Despite their rurality, most small towns benefit from something – lakes, mountain views, a rail trail, a major highway, beautiful architecture – and it is in the town's best interest to highlight these benefits rather than apologize about location. After all, rural towns are, by nature, a twenty minute drive to the grocery store or a forty minute drive to work. People will choose to invest in a community if they like it, and a lot of that has to do with attitude and spirit within the community. The second type of location is the building's site within the town. Schoolhouses are often tucked away on dirt roads and older social or civic buildings may be built on small village lots that prohibit parking, expansion, or septic/well systems. A building's context is an important part of its history, however, and the problems that arise due to its location are seldom insurmountable.

Access refers more to a person's ability to enter and enjoy a building. Making an historic building compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act can require money and thoughtful design, but increasing accessibility allows everyone to enjoy a building and opens up more opportunities for re-use. Parking, as tired as the discussion is for many planners and preservationists, can be an obstacle for reusing a building. Without parking, general stores, town halls, churches, or any building that attracts a large volume of traffic are at a disadvantage. And while parking for seasonal and poorly-attended museums is non-issue, if these buildings are to be re-used parking must be addressed – and ideally in a cost-effective manner that is sympathetic to the surrounding environment.

One solution for a building's challenging location is to move it. Relatively speaking, small wood-frame buildings are easy to move and precedents abound for moving structures to make them more useable. Today, such action jeopardizes a potential listing or existing status on the National or State Historic Registers, barring extenuating circumstances. Small towns, strapped for cash, rely on such designations for grant dollars – and so their hands are tied.[34] Moving a building to a location with more options for expansion or visibility has benefits, especially if a strategic plan guides the decision. The Temple Historical Society moved their town's last standing schoolhouse in 2001, "alarmed by its deterioration and fearful for its future safety." The schoolhouse's new location reinforced the historical society's physical and social presence in Temple.[35] Considering a used building is a preserved building, a broader conversation about the benefits of moving buildings is worth broaching in the preservation circle.[36]

Sometimes, a building's isolation is part of its charm and a move is unnecessary. A building's setting, location, and feeling contributes to its significance, which is why historic buildings should not be moved according to the National Park Service. If marketed well, the destination is part of the experience, as distilleries and breweries in Tamworth, Winchester, Alstead, and Canterbury prove.[37] In fact, the Canterbury Ale Works' slogan reads, "A little out of the way, a lot out of the ordinary!" The Green

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[34] New Hampshire's Land and Community Heritage Investment Program and the Moose Plate grants require such designation. These are the largest government grant providers in the state.
[35] "About Schoolhouse No. 6," Temple Historical Society, Accessed 10 May 2016, http://www.templenh.org/temple-historical-society/pages/about-school-house-no-6; Phil Lauriot (Temple Historical Society President), phone conversation with author, 28 April 2016.
[36] John Obed Curtis, *Moving Historic Buildings* (Washington D.C.: Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service, 1979); David Ewing, *Moving Historic Properties: A Valid Method of Preservation* (Presented at the 2013 National Trust for Historic Preservation Conference), http://www.preservationtimberframing.com/david-ewing-to-present-at-2013-national-preservation-conference/.
[37] Tamworth Distillery opened in 2015; Winchester's Sweetwater Distillery opened in 2016; Alstead's Belgian Mare Brewery opened in 2009; Canterbury Ale Works opened in 2012.

House, a popular local watering hole in Warren, is actually relocating to a *more* remote address than where it was in the village. The restaurant, known for its live entertainment on Saturday nights, will move into the mountains, near an Appalachian Trail crossing.[38] While not all of these examples are housed in historic buildings, their success, despite their rural location, suggest that with the right marketing strategy, rural businesses can be competitive.

This chapter includes two case studies that illustrate how a town or historical society can solve issues of location. The first explores a trend in nonprofits converting struggling, privately-owned general stores off the beaten path into successful businesses. The second proposes towns along trail systems in New Hampshire use the recreational opportunities available to them to increase economic activity along the former railroad beds or current hiking paths. Lastly, the chapter explores making historic buildings more handicap accessible, even in the smallest of towns.

Keeping the General Store in Business

In 2000, rumors reached the people of Acworth that the owners of the South Acworth Village Store were considering retiring and selling. In operation since 1865, the large white clapboard building has been an architectural and social fixture in the small village. Located on NH Route 123A, a winding and isolated route that follows the Cold River, the store is the sole business for miles around. Fearing the loss of their general store and post office located within, the Acworth Historical Society stepped outside their

[38] The Greenhouse is not moving its building, but its business to an existing (though long-vacant) building on Route 25C.

comfort zone and purchased it in 2001. The group's vision was to preserve the building as a general store first, and the building as an historical artifact second.[39]

Prior to purchasing the store, the historical society was on the verge of losing its tax exempt status; dwindling membership and lack of direction resulted in low interest for the group. The prospect of running the store attracted new members, though, and soon enough the revived organization received grant funding and took out a mortgage. After one difficult year spent attempting to run the store with volunteer labor, the historical society opted for a new management framework. In 2002, a sister corporation was founded, and the historical society leased the store's first floor to the newly-formed Acworth Community Project. Today, the historical society uses the rental income from the store and the one apartment on the second floor to pay the mortgage, utilities, and insurance. The selectmen agreed to grant tax exemption to the store in 2007, saving the historical society around $3,000 per year.

Kathi Bradt, the historical society treasurer and Acworth town clerk, acknowledges that the arrangement has had its difficulties. Acting as landlords is not in the normal bailiwick of historical societies and the board has discussed selling the store at most annual meetings. Fortunately, it is financially successful and popular with residents. Having celebrated its 150th anniversary in 2015, the store now boasts community gardens in the back yard, pizza nights with pies made in the outdoor brick oven, and six paid staff, making it the third largest employer in town.[40] The historical society members are Pragmatists first and Nostalgics second. Members are conscious of the building's role not

[39] Debby Hindman and Jim Neidert, "Our Story," 2 March 2016, http://www.acworthvillagestore.com/.
[40] Acworth, NH Community Profile, NH Employment Security, http://www.nhes.nh.gov/elmi/products/cp/profiles-htm/acworth.htm.

as a museum, but as a vibrant center of social and commercial life in town. According to the Acworth Community Project board chairman, the store "will only survive the next 150 years if it can find a way to continue to serve the changing needs of the Acworth Community."[41]

Though the model does not make the historical society money (the store's lease is kept artificially low so that the Acworth Community Project can invest into their business and outreach), it does fulfill the mission of the historical society to save the town's most important historic treasures. At one time, Acworth had five or six general stores. Retaining the living history of the community is a benefit to the town and organization. Ms. Bradt proffers some words of caution for organizations interested in following suit, however. Leasing in a small town can be difficult. Many times, the historical society has forgone months of rent in order to avoid conflict. Eviction is difficult.[42]

South Acworth is not the only community-owned general store in the state. The concept started when Harrisville's general store came up for sale in 2000. Downtown Harrisville, a mill village listed as a National Historic Landmark, is majority owned and managed by Historic Harrisville, Inc., which restores and leases mill spaces to local businesses and artists. Other nonprofit-owned stores can be found in Hooksett, Freedom, and Canterbury. A group in Sandwich attempted to operate a store under a similar model, but lack of support and a surplus of community gathering space resulted in the campaign being cut short despite fundraising prowess in a town known for its summer homes and preservation ethos.[43]

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[41] Hindman and Neidert, "Our Story," http://www.acworthvillagestore.com/.
[42] Kathi Bradt (Acworth Historical Society), phone call with author, 16 March 2016.
[43] Maggie Stier (New Hampshire Preservation Alliance), phone call with author, 31 March 2016.

Thanks to the energy and vision of nonprofits, these general stores continue to employ local residents, sponsor events, and provide space for locals to buy local goods and necessities. As Sandwich suggests, however, the model does not work for every town. Successful examples share commonalities: all have a pre-existing clientele base (meaning the store recently closed); are located in towns or neighborhoods lacking other community space; are supported by communities with median family incomes above the state level (the exceptions are Acworth and Freedom); offer rental housing on the second floor to help defray costs; lack gasoline pumps and competition from nearby stores; rely on quality lessees; offer hours similar to a privately-run businesses; and specialize in purveying local goods.[44]

Small towns continue to support for-profit enterprises, too. For communities that benefit from proximity to well-traveled highways or intersections, general stores continue to be valuable real estate on the private market. General stores in Barrington (Calef's, since 1869) and Moultonborough (Old Country Store, since 1781) rely on reputation and ambiance, a model that worked in Bath (the Brick Store, since 1790) until January 2016, when the self-proclaimed "oldest continuously-operated store in America," closed its doors.[45] New owners at general stores in Danbury and Bristol provide hope that Bath's famous store will re-open. For Danbury and Bristol, a focus on providing quality foods,

[44] The general stores in this example never offered gasoline, which could have impacted their closings in the first place. The considerable expense of installing new pumps, in addition to the managerial task of ordering gasoline, is likely not worth its addition. According to the National Association of Convenience Stores, most gas stations make their money on goods inside the store – the pumps simply help lure customers. These nonprofit-owned stores lure in their customers with alternative methods.
[45] John Koziol, "Bath's Brick Store is Closing," *Union Leader*, 13 January 2016, http://www.unionleader.com/Baths-Brick-Store-is-closing.

Figure 3. South Acworth Village Store, 2013. Photograph by author.

Figure 4. Harrisville General Store, 2014. Photograph by author.

an inviting gathering space, and locally-made goods give the stores a nostalgic feel. In the case of the Cardigan Country Store in Bristol, the owners also own an apple orchard and offer cider, eggs, and pies from their farm in nearby Alexandria.[46]

Riding the Rails

In downtown Canaan and in Gerrish, a village on the outskirts of Boscawen, sit abandoned vestiges of the Northern Railroad. The weather-worn freight shed (in Canaan) and depot (in Gerrish) are historically significant; few railroad buildings remain from the former rail line that traversed central New Hampshire, and Gerrish Depot is the oldest extant among them.[47] In Canaan, the downtown suffers from vacancy and disinvestment, despite its location near the economic engines of Cardigan Mountain School, Dartmouth College and Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center. Gerrish, on the other hand lacks commercial infrastructure at all; its neighbors are the Merrimack County Prison and Nursing Home and State Nursery. Nevertheless, both benefit from their location along the Northern Rail Trail, the state's longest rail trail, at fifty-eight miles, connecting Lebanon and Boscawen.

Rail trails offer great potential for rural communities in New Hampshire. To date, the state has fifty-seven different trails totaling 463 miles, ranging from mile-long paved paths to the Northern Rail Trail at fifty-eight miles.[48] Former rail corridors weave through small towns and allow bicyclists, runners, dog sledders, snowmobilers, and (sometimes)

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[46] Donna Rhodes, "Cardigan Country Store once again open for business," May 13, 2015, http://www.newhampshirelakesandmountains.com/Articles-Newfound-Landing-c-2015-05-13-160328.113119-Cardigan-Country-Store-once-again-open-for-business.html.
[47] Lisa Mausolf, "Northern Railroad Survey," 2013, NH Division of Historical Resources.
[48] "New Hampshire State Trails - Trails in New Hampshire," *Rails to Trails Conservancy*, 30 March 2016, http://www.traillink.com/state/nh-trails.aspx.

ATV users to enjoy miles of uninterrupted travel. Multiple studies from states like Pennsylvania, Nebraska, and New York reveal that trails boost property values, provide low-cost recreational opportunities for families, create expansion opportunities for small businesses, and help communities establish identities. The Great Allegheny Passage (a 132-mile trail between Cumberland, MD and McKeesport, PA) boosted local business revenue near the trail by one-quarter and attracted users from an average of 131 miles away (overnight users traveled 289 miles). In almost all rail trail economic studies, users spent between $10-15 on things like soda, ice cream, and sandwiches along the trail – benefitting small general stores, like the ones previously mentioned.[49]

Towns along these paths can learn to cater to those who use trails. By investing in signage, building linkages to downtowns, hosting events, offering bike infrastructure (racks, public restrooms), organizing local amenities (campgrounds, stores, libraries, restrooms), and creating picnic areas, towns can attract more economic development. [50] In rural Pennsylvania and Maryland, these ideas have been formally implemented under the Trail Town Program, which works to improve conditions in towns along various rail trails for tourists and residents alike. This network approach creates substantial impacts and catalyzes development when towns and organizations piggy-back off each other, sharing marketing strategies and related costs.[51] Vacant railroad infrastructure, including depots, freight sheds, or section houses can be re-used as public restrooms, wayside

[49] "Economic Benefits of Trails," Pennsylvania Land Trust Association, 2011, http://conservationtools.org/guides/97-economic-benefits-of-trails.
[50] "Kentucky Trail Towns: A How-to-Guide for Communities," Office for Adventure Tourism, http://www.kentuckytourism.com/!userfiles/Industry/Adventure/Trail%20Town/Trail%20Town%20Guide%20&%20Overview.pdf.
[51] "About Us," *Trail Town Program*, Accessed 30 April 2016, https://www.trailtowns.org/about-us/.

stops, or bike shops. This gives purpose to historic railroad buildings, and thus ensures their maintenance and preservation.

No Trail Town program exists in New Hampshire yet, but there is ample opportunity for its implementation. A similar idea already exists along the Appalachian Trail, where Trail Communities identify themselves as "good friends and neighbors to the Trail."[52] Along the Northern Rail Trail alone, there are several towns and buildings that would benefit from such an investment approach – Canaan's freight shed and Gerrish's depot among them. Potter Place, a village in Andover bypassed by US Route 4, includes three historical society-owned buildings that could see new life should a Trail Town designation garner enough support. While the Trail Town concept is only in Maryland and Pennsylvania at this time, its framework could be franchised, or its ideas replicated, by the nonprofits that currently manage the rail trails in New Hampshire.

Parking

If an historic building is significant for its surrounding natural environment, adding parking must be done thoughtfully with good design. A mill sandwiched between a stream and a road, a church surrounded by a cemetery, or a schoolhouse confined to a 0.02 acre lot on a hillside all rely on their context to tell their history. Installing a parking lot, even if possible, would be inappropriate. In the worst case scenario, a building with impossible parking may need to be moved, but such action is an expensive solution unless the move settles several other problems.

[52] "The Appalachian Trail Community Program," Appalachian Trail Conservancy, Accessed 10 May 2016, http://www.appalachiantrail.org/home/conservation/youth-community-engagement/a-t-community-program. Only Hanover serves as a Trail Community along the A.T. in the state, although there is potential for more towns to join, including the village of Glencliff in Warren.

Figure 5. Freight shed, Canaan, 2015. Photograph by author.

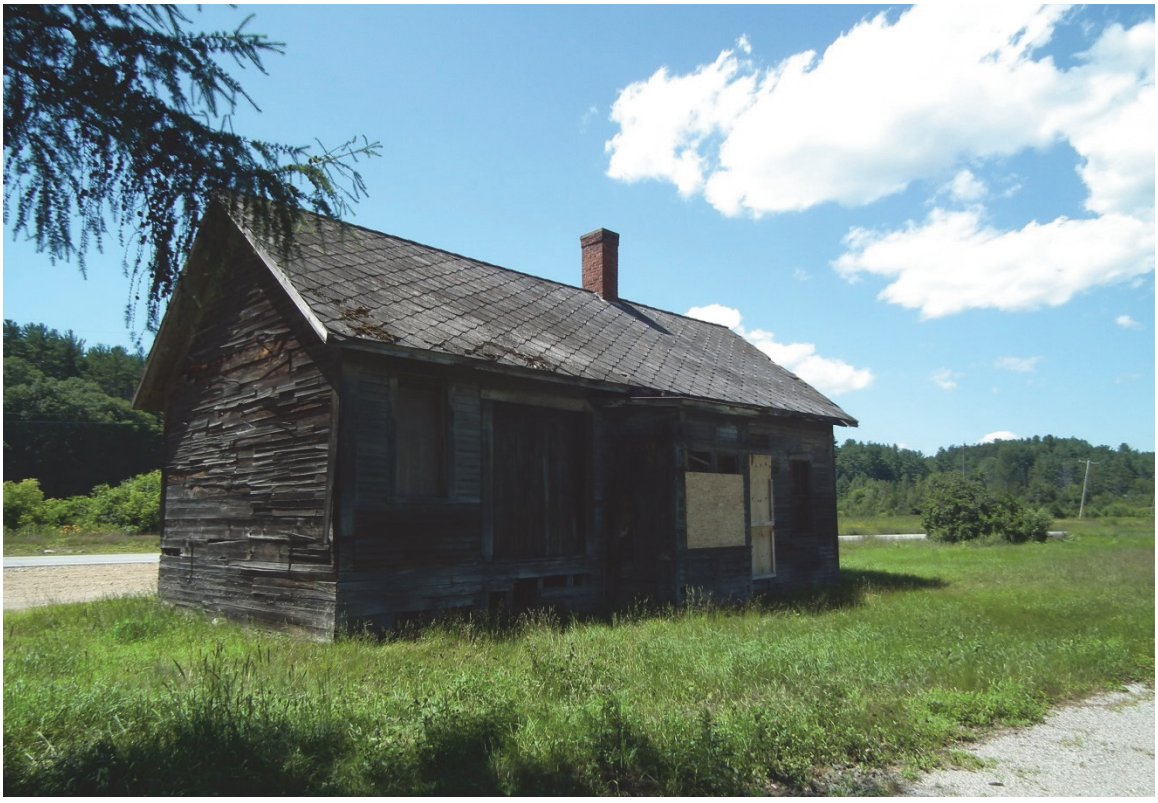

Figure 6. Gerrish Depot, Boscawen, 2015. Photograph by author.

First, the re-use of the building may need to account for the available parking. A business that needs only one permanent parking space and a few spots for periodic parking (a hair dresser, e.g.) requires an obviously different set-up than a business attracting multiple vehicles. A second consideration is if more land can be acquired, either with a land swap, lease, or purchase agreement. If the terrain and neighbors are amenable to such an arrangement, a land transaction could be a win-win. Neighbors can get extra income or a more desirable piece of land, the road is cleared of parked cars, and the leasing party can expand their business opportunities. A third option is to pursue or build complimentary parking with a fellow institution. Many churches and towns share parking lots under this arrangement. Lack of, or difficulty in, parking should not label a building unusable. That is a facile argument that can be countered with careful thought, good design, and appropriate re-use strategies.

Accessibility

Accessibility is a regulatory issue. Retrofitting older buildings to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is also a design dilemma that many small towns either ignore or implement poorly. "The ADA is designed to work *with* the Historic Preservation Act," according to the handbook *Historic House Museums*. If providing handicap access to historic buildings is considered an undue burden, then the ADA allows for alternative solutions.[53] There are three methods for complying with the law. The first, and often most expensive, method is to comply with ADA consistent with standards for new construction. This translates to widening doorways, adding handrails,

[53] Sherry Butcher-Younghans, *Historic House Museums: a Practical Handbook for their Care, Preservation, and Management* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 217-218.

building ramps, and/or installing an elevator. The second method, which is less desirable for those with disabilities, is to pursue alternative standards. For example, if a building's principal entrance cannot be compromised by adding a wheelchair ramp or a widened doorway, a rear addition that is ADA compliant could be constructed. Or, if an elevator cannot be installed, a stair chair lift could continue to allow access to floors above the ground level. The third, and last, method is to provide an alternative experience for those who cannot experience parts of the building due to handicap inaccessibility. For example, an upper story that houses exhibits or meeting space could have a similar offering on the first floor for those who request it. This would include offering photographs or videos of the inaccessible parts of the building, exhibits that are moveable, or having a second office space for when handicapped individuals attend meetings.[54]

Any parent pushing a stroller knows that an ADA compliant historic building helps everyone, not just the elderly or disabled. As the median age of New Hampshirites increases, accessibility needs will only increase. In Groton, where the historical society opened their museum in a schoolhouse in 2006, the lack of a handicap ramp became a topic so divisive that the museum was forced to close between 2012 and 2016. With a donation from a nearby wind energy company and a town appropriation, nearly $4,000 was spent installing a handicap ramp and a new door.[55] The result, according to historical society treasurer, Sherry Nelson, is rather ugly, but the members acknowledge that improved access enables them to reach broader audiences and return the museum to

[54] Norman Tyler, *Historic Preservation: An Introduction to its History, Principles, and Practices* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 2000), 166; Thomas C. Jester and Sharon C. Park, "Making Historic Properties Accessible," (Preservation Brief 32), National Park Service, https://www.nps.gov/tps/how-to-preserve/briefs/32-accessibility.htm.
[55] 2015 Annual Report, Town of Groton, New Hampshire, 70-71, http://www.grotonnh.org/annualreport/annualreport.htm.

holding regular museum hours.[56] In the case of Groton, where the only other civic building is the town hall, a schoolhouse museum is a good use for a building that, until 2006, was a neglected junk shop. The historical society's active membership brings speakers and educational events to townspeople on a regular summertime basis, making the schoolhouse a sustained focal point in town.

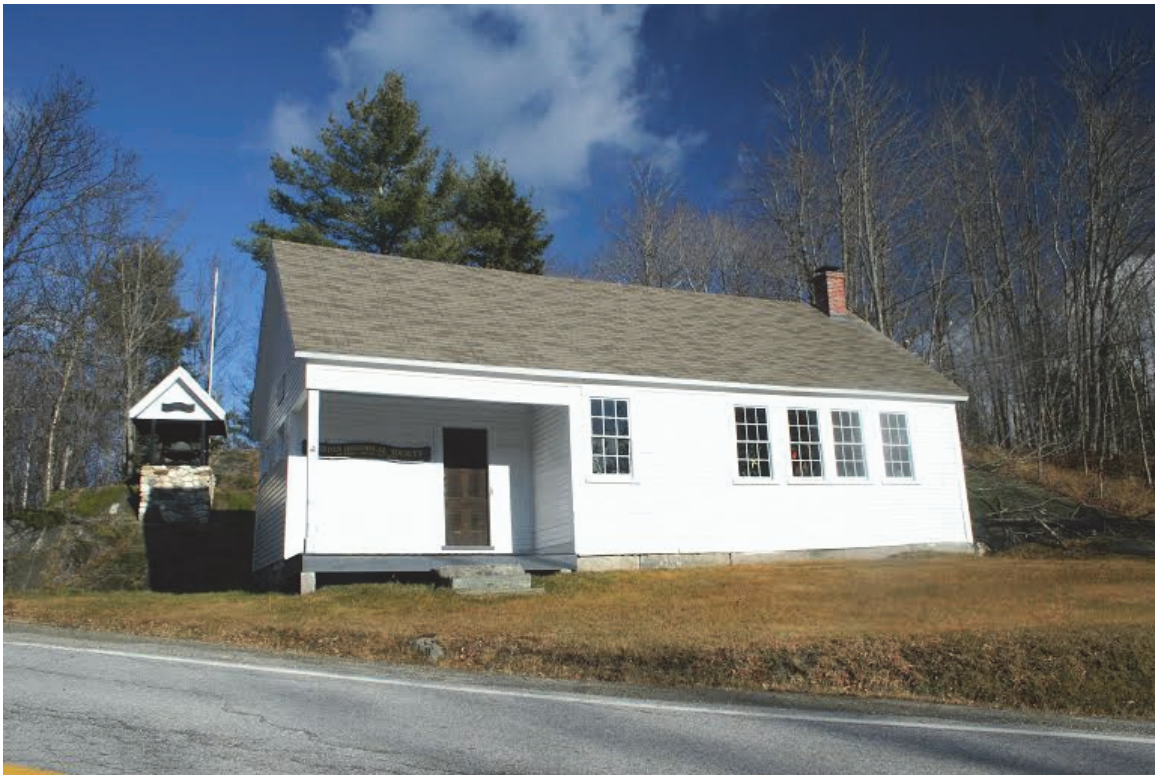

Figure 7. Groton Historical Society Schoolhouse, 2015 (before installation of ramp). Photograph courtesy of Groton Historical Society.

[56] Sherry Nelson (Groton Historical Society), phone call with author, 7 April 2016.

Chapter 2: Outdated or Non-existing Mechanical Systems

The Enfield Center Town House, built in 1843 and later converted into the Montcalm Grange, is open once a year for Enfield's Old Home Day celebration. For one night, people gather under the string lights draped across the beadboard interior, beer in hand, dancing to a country western cover band. The building seems to have everything: ambiance, location, access, and an adoring crowd. But after a few drinks, a certain reality sets in. For all of its amenities, the town house lacks heat and plumbing. Cleaning the hall for dances takes buckets of water from a nearby stream. Without even a portable toilet outside, the only option for restroom seekers is the Enfield Center Union Church across the street, whose congregants make their facilities available.[57] The Enfield town manager is hesitant to put town funds toward updating the building without a specific use in mind, but its re-use was limited when the town sold the surrounding land in the 1970s, restricting parking and a septic system.[58] Other than its one night of dancing, the town house is used for storage.

Outdated or non-existing mechanical systems are a significant impediment to reusing, or even using, old buildings. Fundraising for a septic system or new electrical wiring hardly grabs the attention of donors or taxpayers. Yet, the successful re-use of a building very likely depends on the presence of electricity, running water, and a heating system. Standards of comfort have changed; if a building is to be used for a purpose other than a museum open in the summer months, investments must be made to increase its functionality and energy efficiency. Sensitive installation of mechanical systems is

[57] Meredith Smith (Enfield Selectman and Heritage Commission Chair), email message with author, 5 October 2016.
[58] Meredith Smith, email message with author, 4 October 2016.

expensive and challenging for historic buildings with character-defining features like beadboard, wainscot, plaster interiors, tin ceilings, or stenciling. Before expensive plans to repair or replace certain systems are drawn up, the building should be inspected carefully, because simple fixes can improve the usability of a building. Are the windows operable or painted shut? Are there storm windows, and if so, are the tracks operable? Is the furnace tuned up annually? Is the ventilation blocked by objects (inside) or plant growth (outside)? If an old building is maintained by a rotating group of volunteers, institutional knowledge about that building's quirks can be forgotten.

The National Park Service offers advice for replacing and repairing major systems in historic buildings. Ideally, the existing systems can be repaired and re-used. The NPS recommends keeping any mechanical systems (steam radiators, wood stoves, and switch plates for example) that lend to the character of the building. The alternative (installation of new systems), according to the NPS Bulletin on systems, "can use up to 10% of a building's square footage and 30%–40% of an overall rehabilitation budget."[59] The first lesson, then, is the old adage, "If it ain't broke, don't fix it." Regular maintenance of a building and its mechanical units reduce the need for drastic intervention down the road.

It is also important to avoid modern quick fixes that jeopardize the longer lifespan of the building. "Most mechanical systems require upgrading or replacement within 15-30 years due to wear and tear or the availability of improved technology. Therefore, historic buildings should not be greatly altered or otherwise sacrificed in an effort to meet short-term systems objectives," advises Bulletin 24. A common mistake for stewards of

[59] Sharon C. Park, "Heating, Ventilating, and Cooling Historic Buildings—Problems and Recommended Approaches," (Preservation Brief 24), National Park Service. https://www.nps.gov/tps/how-to-preserve/briefs/24-heat-vent-cool.htm.

historic buildings is to install dropped ceilings that hide new systems – which never fail to collect mold and water stains, and detract from the building's interior architecture.

The NPS recommends six planning steps when retrofitting an older building with new systems. 1) Determine the use of the building, and (like the parking issue), avoid uses that require systems that are incompatible with existing structures; 2) Assemble a team with experience and skills working on systems specifically in older buildings; 3) Perform a conditions assessment of the existing systems, including monitoring the building's humidity, temperature, and presence of harmful substances, like asbestos; 4) Identify spaces within the building that can house pipes, wires, and ductwork without compromising the architecturally-significant spaces – often the closets, crawlspaces, attics, and rear stairwells; 5) Familiarize oneself with state and local building and life safety codes; and 6) Evaluate systems options based on expense, life cycle, space requirements, and fuel availability.[60]

Following the NPS standards is good protocol because of the expense of systems upgrades. It is important, as stewards of historic buildings, to make changes that are additive, rather than subtractive. Installing insulation or plumbing correctly the first time may be costly, but it will save future stewards time and money. Raising money for systems is difficult, period. Imagine the difficulty in fundraising to *fix* a job performed without proper planning and installation! Historical societies and similar stewards of historic buildings recommend paying for these systems by grouping projects into phases. This way, the proceeds from a quilt raffle, for example, are not solely going to plumbing, but to "interior restoration."

[60] Ibid.

In some cases, the return on investment in energy retrofits and systems upgrades can free up money for further upgrades. Larger institutions like colleges use this logic – often called a revolving green fund – to pay for lighting retrofits or insulation projects. The same approach can be applied to historic buildings in small towns, especially when done in a coordinated effort. Already, towns have worked with electrical companies to replace mercury halide street lights with more efficient LEDs.[61] The Island Institute in Maine works with remote coastal communities to improve energy efficiencies in homes and public buildings; projects include installation of interior storm windows, exterior envelope upgrades, and lighting retrofits.[62] Lincolnville, Maine's public library, a former schoolhouse itself, installed a set of roof-mounted solar panels in 2014 that make the one room building net-zero.[63] Historic Harrisville, which manages the National Historic Landmark-designated mill complex in their small town, recently installed three, 350,000 BTU wood pellet boilers in the largest mill thanks to a $150,000 grant from the New Hampshire Public Utilities Commission. The new boilers promise to provide 85-100 percent of the building's heating needs, and already have save the organization $18,000 in fuel costs.[64]

When paid for with grants and rebates, alternative energy sources (wood pellet furnaces, geothermal, solar) may be good options for rural buildings. Towns in New

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[61] Crystal McDonald, "Small Towns Achieve Big Savings with Lighting Upgrades," U.S. Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy, 28 October 2014, http://energy.gov/eere/articles/small-towns-achieve-big-savings-lighting-upgrades.

[62] "Energy," *Island Institute*, 1 May 2016, http://www.islandinstitute.org/program/energy/energy-efficiency.

[63] Fred Greenhalgh, "Lincolnville Library aims to be 'net zero' with solar PV and heat pump combo," 29 August 2014, https://www.revisionenergy.com/lincolnville-library-aims-net-zero-solar-pv-heat-pump-combo/. Net-zero buildings produce as much energy as they consume. The calculations are done on an annual basis, however, meaning that the building uses power from the grid on low-production days, but sells power to the grid on high-production days.

[64] "Pellet Boilers," Historic Harrisville, Accessed 10 May 2016, http://www.historicharrisville.org/pellet-boilers/.

Hampshire, including Grantham, Washington, New London, and Lee, have energy committees with missions to make aging town-owned buildings better performing. By taking small steps to improve overall efficiency, cost savings can compound and encourage further investment. Once a historic building's maintenance and operation is less of a financial burden, there are fewer reasons not to preserve it.

Septic systems are a different story; there is little opportunity for a monetary return on investment. Statewide, the New Hampshire Labor Department works to ensure public buildings comply with codes. Public buildings open more than three hours per day must offer restrooms, handicap accessible entrances, and up-to-code life safety elements. Though smaller towns can claim hardships, in recent years the state has applied increased pressure on the holdouts to modernize their buildings. In Grafton, where the public library lacks restrooms and handicap access, the town received a directive to fix the deficiencies, build anew, or limit the hours of operation.[65] The ultimatum re-energized the library's staff and patrons (who knew first-hand the importance of a bathroom on site) who used the information to their advantage. Citizens formed the Friends of the Grafton Library and explored options to make the building more usable. When neighboring properties declined to sell adjacent land that would have permitted a septic system, expansion, and parking, a generous citizen purchased the last buildable lot on Library Road and donated it to the town. As of May 2016, the Friends group plans to raise the funds necessary to move the building and make it more accessible for all.[66]

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[65] The library trustees and affiliated Friends group plan to move the library and expand. "Friends of the Grafton Library," Accessed 1 May 2016, http://friendsofthegraftonlibrary.org/index.html.
[66] Aimee Caruso, "Grafton Takes Step Toward New Library," *Valley News*, 8 May 2016, http://www.vnews.com/Grafton-N-H--Library-Signs-Deed-For-New-Property-1904180.

Elsewhere, installing bathrooms is a top priority for preservation projects. In Effingham, the former Grange hall now owned by Effingham's Preservation Society, recently installed a bathroom. To save on costs, the building hooked into the existing septic and well at the adjacent historical society building.[67] Lempster also recently installed a bathroom inside their 1794 meetinghouse, in addition to a septic system, well, electrical, and fire suppression system. These expensive, but necessary, updates make possible the building's increased use for town functions.[68] Lempster Meetinghouse's bathroom addition prompted the donation of new stage lighting, further increasing the building's usability.

Once a building has modern electrical systems, interior bathrooms, and/or warm interiors during the winter, people can use and appreciate it more. Investing in upgrading or installing these mechanical systems is less expensive than postponing necessary work, and certainly far more feasible than building new structures. This is especially true when stewards explore grants or rebates, like in Lincolnville or Harrisville. And, as the examples in Grafton and Lempster illustrate, a commitment to ensuring a building's usability by offering basic needs can leverage further investments.

[67] Karen Payne (Effingham Preservation Society), phone call with author, March 20, 2016.
[68] Friends of the Lempster Meetinghouse, 17 September 2013, Accessed 22 March 2016, http://www.lempsternh.org/FLMH/FLMH.html.

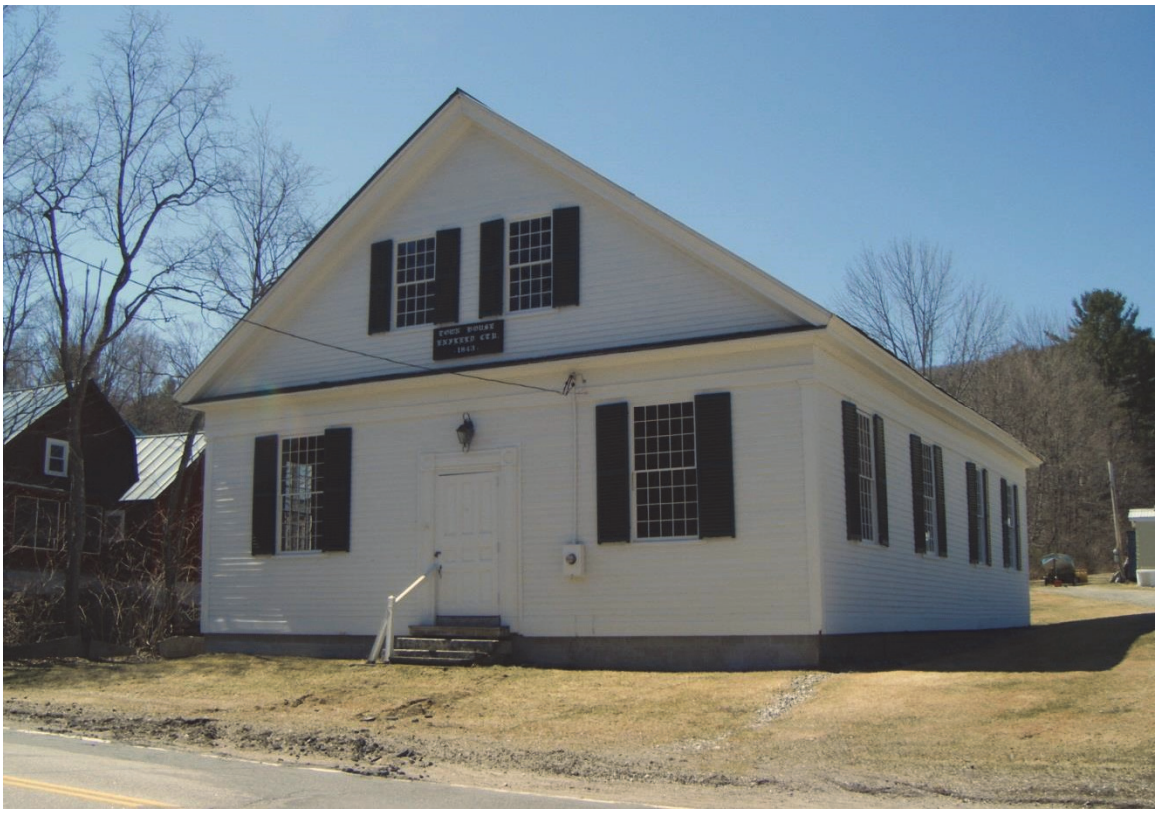

Figure 8. Enfield Center Town House, 2016. Photograph by author.

Figure 9. Lempster Meetinghouse, 2013. Photograph by author.

Chapter 3: Deferred Maintenance

Most public buildings in rural towns face decades of deferred maintenance, making preservation and re-use appear expensive. Frugal towns and historical societies often forgo annual maintenance on their buildings, which is a costly mistake. "Proper maintenance is the most cost effective method of extending the life of a building," according to the National Park Service, a concept familiar to anyone who owns property. "As soon as a building is constructed, restored, or rehabilitated, physical care is needed to slow the natural process of deterioration."[69] The longer that windows and clapboards go without paint, or the longer mortar crumbles, the more expensive a later project becomes, which often becomes an excuse to avoid taking any action at all. Expense is especially an issue when there is no intended use for a building. In towns where annual operating budgets barely pass the million dollar mark, investing money into a building that will only serve as a "community gathering space" is a tough sell.

Regular maintenance of historic buildings does not receive the attention of expensive restoration campaigns, but some nonprofit organizations and town governments have useful maintenance plans worth replicating.[70] Historic New England, which operates five house museums in New Hampshire, created a preservation maintenance fund in 2009 whose sole purpose is to tackle its backlog of deferred

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[69] Sharon C. Park, "Maintaining the Exterior of Small and Medium Size Historic Buildings," (Preservation Brief 47), *National Park Service*, https://www.nps.gov/tps/how-to-preserve/briefs/47-maintaining-exteriors.htm.

[70] The National Park Service recommends maintenance plans that have four components: inspections, work schedules, building records, and reference support materials. Full-scale inspections – defined as crawl spaces to steeples – should be made twice yearly, and at random intervals (when it rains, for example). Work schedules organize routine maintenance into prioritized tasks, though the schedule should be flexible based on a building's needs and location. Those who maintain a building should keep a record of the performed work. This allows for easier identification of patterns (what materials fail, where they fail, etc.) Lastly, organizations should keep reference support materials that explain preferred treatments (oil or latex paint?).

maintenance. In 2015, twenty-three percent of Historic New England's budget was dedicated to maintenance (second to museum operations, at twenty-five percent).[71] Historic New England also offers recommendations on maintenance schedules and inspection tips for old buildings with examples more specific to New England than the National Park Service.[72] Most towns' historic buildings are not maintained to museum-level specifications, but such organizations can offer helpful insights into budgeting and performing regular maintenance.

Towns can budget for routine maintenance several ways. Line items in annual budgets are common, but such an arrangement does not prevent those maintenance funds from being used to cover unexpected costs elsewhere. Some towns may opt to create capital reserve funds instead. Towns normally use capital reserve funds to set aside money for large future purchases, like fire trucks or police cruisers, but a variation of capital reserve funds – called expendable trust funds – can be used for more regular expenditures like maintenance. These pools of money accrue interest and are restricted to their intended purposes, making them good options for towns accustomed to diverting line items in the annual budget.[73]

Maintenance does not have to be expensive. Small towns and historical societies can creatively tackle a building's peeling paint or failing roof, and they often do. At a town meeting in Grafton, voters debated whether or not to install vinyl siding on their

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[71] 2015 Annual Report, *Historic New England*, 27, http://www.historicnewengland.org/about-us/annual-reports.
[72] "Recommended Inspection and Maintenance Schedule," *Historic New England*, Accessed 1May 2016, http://www.historicnewengland.org/preservation/your-older-or-historic-home/recommended-maintenance-schedule.
[73] Barbara Reid, "Reserve Funds, Special Revenue Funds or Revolving Funds: Choosing the Right Tool for the Right Job," *New Hampshire Town and City* (November/December 2005), https://www.nhmunicipal.org/TownAndCity/Article/5.

town hall, a former schoolhouse. Instead, the volunteer fire department offered to paint the clapboards for free.[74] Finding volunteers for routine tasks like painting, cleaning gutters, flushing drains, repointing brick, or removing snow loads from roofs is generally easier than finding volunteers with carpentry skills willing to spend a weekend fixing rotted trim boards. Historical societies that engage in preventative measures often conclude annual spring clean-ups with potlucks and entertainment.

Routine maintenance is equally important when it comes to controlling vegetation. Regular mowing and tree trimming prevent roots from disrupting foundations, stone walls, or septic systems, for example. Keeping the grass mowed also reminds people that old buildings are cared for and respected, a major goal of the Grafton Historical Society. Though the small organization cannot fully restore all of its six buildings, it makes every effort to keep grass trimmed and windows glazed to prevent further deterioration and vandalism.

In previously visited Harrisville, a fund established to celebrate the fortieth anniversary of Historic Harrisville provides the money needed for catching up with deferred maintenance. In the case of Historic Harrisville, which has leased thousands of square feet of rehabilitated mill space since its founding in 1972, maintenance is critical to retaining lessees and recruiting potential tenants. According to the Executive Director, "the funded [maintenance] projects have reduced the number of costly emergencies that take time away from scheduled work," an additional cost savings to the organization's staff of two.[75]

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[74] 1998 Annual Report, Town of Grafton, University of New Hampshire Digital Collection.
[75] Linda Willett, "Executive Director's Report 2015," Historic Harrisville, Accessed 10 May 2016, http://www.historicharrisville.org/.

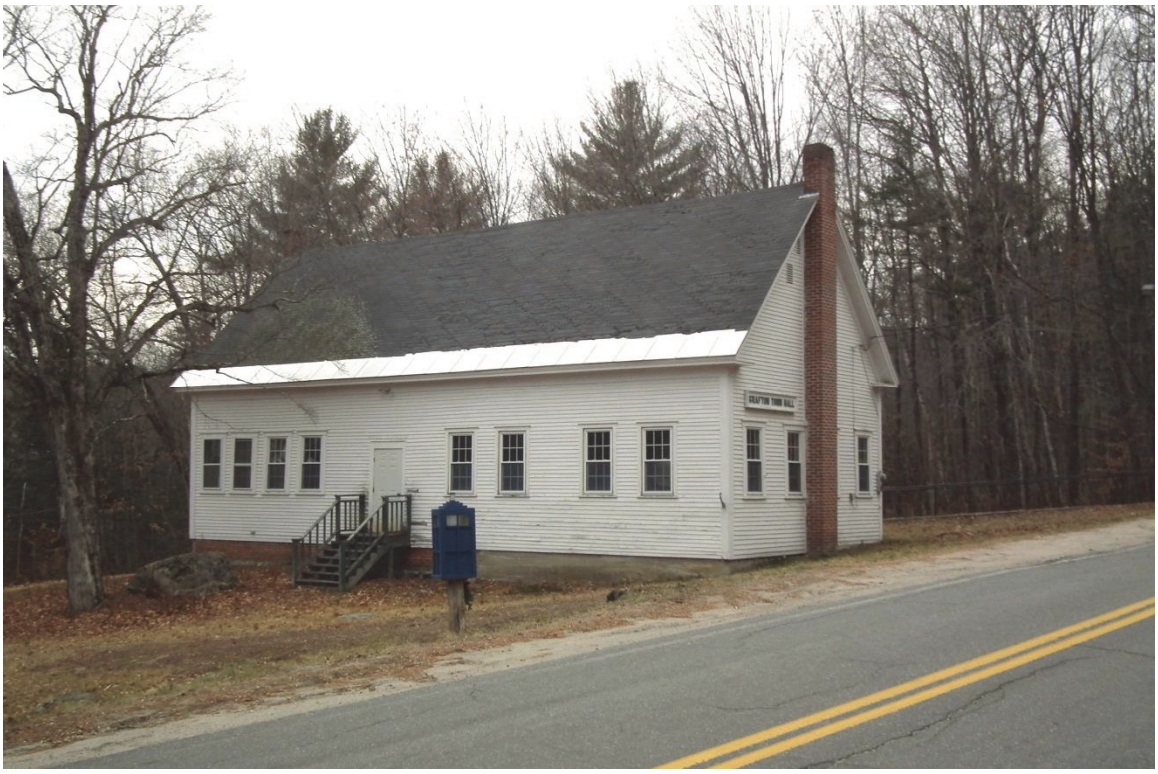

Figure 10. The Grafton Town Hall, 2015. Photograph by author.

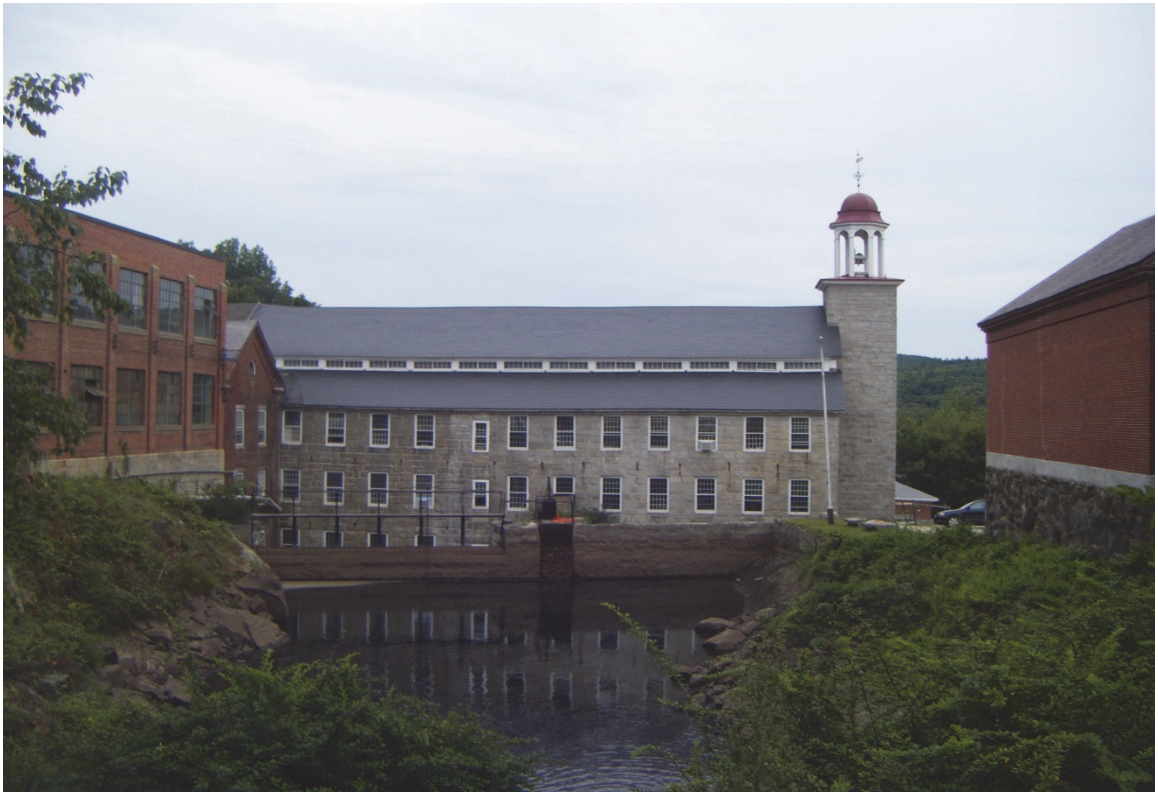

Figure 11. Cheshire Mill #1, Harrisville, 2014. Photograph by author.

Chapter 4: Preserving Character-Defining Features

Character-defining features are the architectural details, massing, form, craftsmanship, and space that give a building or neighborhood its identity. For a Grange hall, this could translate to its beadboard interior, stage, and stage curtain. For a church, it could be the stained glass windows, box pews, steeple, or cut granite foundation. For a railroad freight shed, it could the loading dock, the location next to the tracks, or the large sliding doors.[76] Preservationists look for character-defining features to determine the age of a building, to date alterations, or to argue for a building's historical and architectural significance. For laymen, character-defining features are those details on a building that elicit excitement or call for photographs.

Character-defining features are critical to retain during rehabilitation or preservation because these are the pieces that define the building. Oftentimes, these features suggest the new use for the building. Consider churches. The openness of sanctuaries may not lend itself to house conversions (though many good examples exist), but sanctuaries are great spaces for community halls, theaters, or indoor markets. Steeples are iconic wayfinding tools – their prominence on the landscape is essentially advertising for communities. Consider mills. Though normally simply constructed and austerely ornamented, character-defining features may include its timber frame structure, its raceway, or turbine shed. These features may not render a mill perfect for a daycare center, but they may provide the muses for artists or woodworkers if the building became

[76] Lee H. Nelson, "Architectural Character—Identifying the Visual Aspects of Historic Buildings as an Aid to Preserving their Character," (Preservation Brief 17), National Park Service, https://www.nps.gov/tps/how-to-preserve/briefs/17-architectural-character.htm.

a studio or workshop. Removal of character-defining elements would result in a fundamentally different building.

Preserving character-defining features may be costly, but more often these expenses are due to deferred maintenance and not the intrinsic qualities of the features themselves. Yes, steeples, wood windows, slate roofs, timber frames, and stone foundations require specialized skill sets to maintain, but the materials are often durable and repairable. A slate roof that requires minimal attention over the course of its hundred-year life is actually less expensive than an asphalt roof that requires replacement every twenty-five years. A schoolhouse that needs its windows re-glazed every fifty years is far less expensive than replacing them with new windows whose wood grain is not as dense, or whose panes cannot be replaced when an individual one breaks.

Restoration campaigns for exceptional historic buildings often worry small towns and their historical societies. Recently restored meetinghouses – complex iconic buildings that often include steeples, timber frames, and large wood windows – in the state have topped one million dollars in towns like Newbury and Acworth.[77] Hancock expects its meetinghouse restoration to likewise total one million dollars.[78] These numbers should not dissuade stewards from tackling their own preservation projects. Canaan's meetinghouse receives restoration slowly – a few windows or paint jobs as budgets and volunteer hours permit. This approach allows for the building to remain in use for a popular author reading series, a student art show, and weddings.

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[77] "Frequently Asked Questions," Newbury Center Meetinghouse, Accessed 30 March 2016, http://centermeetinghouse.org/frequently-asked-questions/. Acworth numbers are based on telephone interview with Kathi Bradt, Acworth town clerk and historical society treasurer, 29 March 2016. Of Acworth's million dollar cost, nearly one-quarter involved volunteer labor and donated supplies.
[78] Ella Nilsen, "Plans progress to repair historic Hancock Meetinghouse," *Keene Sentinel*, 19 January 2014, http://www.sentinelsource.com/news/local/plans-progress-to-repair-historic-hancock-meetinghouse/article_e6440e99-e139-53ed-88ec-33ba26313ae5.html.

Figure 12. The interior of Andover's Tucker Mountain Schoolhouse includes character-defining features like plaster walls and ceiling, wrap-around chalk board, and uncomfortable benches. 2009. Photograph by author.

Figure 13. Acworth's Silsby Library includes stained glass, stenciling, and original light fixtures on the interior, 2013. Photograph by author.

Churches and Meetinghouses

The decline of church membership has created a preservation dilemma for many church buildings in New Hampshire. Oftentimes, the white steeples are character-defining features for an entire village, not just the building. Churches hold many values in a community, even for those who are not regular church-goers. These religious, historic, or aesthetic values make churches an obvious building to preserve and they often receive popular support. In the process of reusing a church building, some difficult decisions must be made, though. Removing a church from its religious role in a community can be contentious for some residents who believe the only use for such a building is Sunday worship. This makes the removal of pews, altars, and even ephemeral items like Bibles difficult.[79]

In New Hampshire, church membership has been on the decline for decades. Just twenty percent of New Hampshirites attend church weekly (the second lowest rate in the nation, behind Vermont at seventeen percent).[80] In many towns, congregations of a dozen are responsible for maintaining these large structures; the sheer burden of financial responsibility forces some churches to close. Just across the Connecticut River in Vermont, people in the village of Quechee closed their Community Church due to dwindling members and maintenance expense. Though "members worked to save the building since last March, hoping it could merge with another church, be rented out or even sold and rented on Sundays by parishioners," Christmas Eve service in 2015 was the

[79] This was the case for the East Grafton Union Church, whose members disagree on how best to use the town-owned/historical society managed building.
[80] Frank Newport, "Frequent Church Attendance Highest in Utah, Lowest in Vermont," *Social Issues*, 17 February 2015, http://www.gallup.com/poll/181601/frequent-church-attendance-highest-utah-lowest-vermont.aspx.

last.[81] With church membership not expected to increase, more churches will require new uses in the coming years.

In Danbury, the Baptist and Congregational churches merged in 1953 to become the United Church of Danbury. Services were rotated between the two churches every six months until 1988, when the congregation chose to meet in just one sanctuary year-round. The former Baptist church, built in 1832, was sold to a private owner, who then sold it to the town in 1993. Under the leadership of Leo Zaccaria, and with encouragement from the selectmen, the town received a $350,000 Community Development Block Grant to renovate the building into a community center in 1997.[82] The entire building was re-oriented to face the village, given a new foundation that allowed headspace and natural light for a daycare space, and the interior tin walls and wood floors were preserved.[83] Danbury's Community Center won the New Hampshire Office of State Planning Project of the Year Award in 1997 for repurposing an iconic building for a town that needed a gathering space.[84]

Today, the Danbury Community Center continues to offer much-needed services to residents. Following its completion, thanks to generous individuals, businesses, and charitable foundations, the town report exclaimed that "This has truly been a community effort!" Events at the community center include an after-school daycare program, fitness workouts, the local visiting nurse association's flu shots, support groups for young

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[81] Tim Camerato, "Quechee Community Church to Close Jan. 10," *Valley News*, 31 December 2015. http://www.vnews.com/Archives/2015/12/QuecheeChurchClose-tc-vn-122115.
[82] 1997 Annual Report, Town of Danbury, NH. University of New Hampshire Digital Collections.
[83] Jim Phelps (former Selectman), email message to author, 26 April 2016. The CDBG money hinged on Danbury offering a day care space. The town was charged with meeting the needs of residents in low income brackets.
[84] Amy Shepard and Audrey Pellegrino, 1998 Annual Report, Town of Danbury, University of New Hampshire Digital Collections.

mothers and children, an open AA meeting, children's craft nights, senior potluck luncheons, contra dances, and the popular Winter Carnival week co-hosted by the town's Recreation Committee.[85]

In Wilton Center, an 1860 meetinghouse now hosts Andy's Summer Playhouse. Between 1884, when the town sold the building, and 1985, when Andy's Summer Playhouse purchased the property, various groups used the building: the Grange, Lions Club, and a Waldorf School. Today, the summer theater works with children aged eight to eighteen to produce and perform original and innovative plays.[86]

Churches still in operation can help their bottom line by offering spaces used only once a week to different community groups. This is the mission of Philadelphia-based Partners for Sacred Places, whose mission is "building the capacity of congregations of historic sacred places to better serve their communities as anchor institutions, nurturing transformation, and shaping vibrant, creative communities."[87] Partners for Sacred Places advocated for churches to create partnerships with other churches and with community organizations so that congregations have additional income and buildings receive more use. Rural churches can use this model, too; in Enfield, the Community Lutheran Church rents its basement space to a preschool.[88]

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[85] Ibid.
[86] "History of Andy's," Andy's Summer Playhouse, Accessed 15 February 2016, http://www.andyssummerplayhouse.org/.
[87] "Our Mission," Partners for Sacred Places, Accessed 1 May 2016, http://www.sacredplaces.org/about-us.
[88] "Mascoma Cooperative Preschool," Accessed 1 May 2016, http://www.mascomacooperativepreschool.org/index.html.

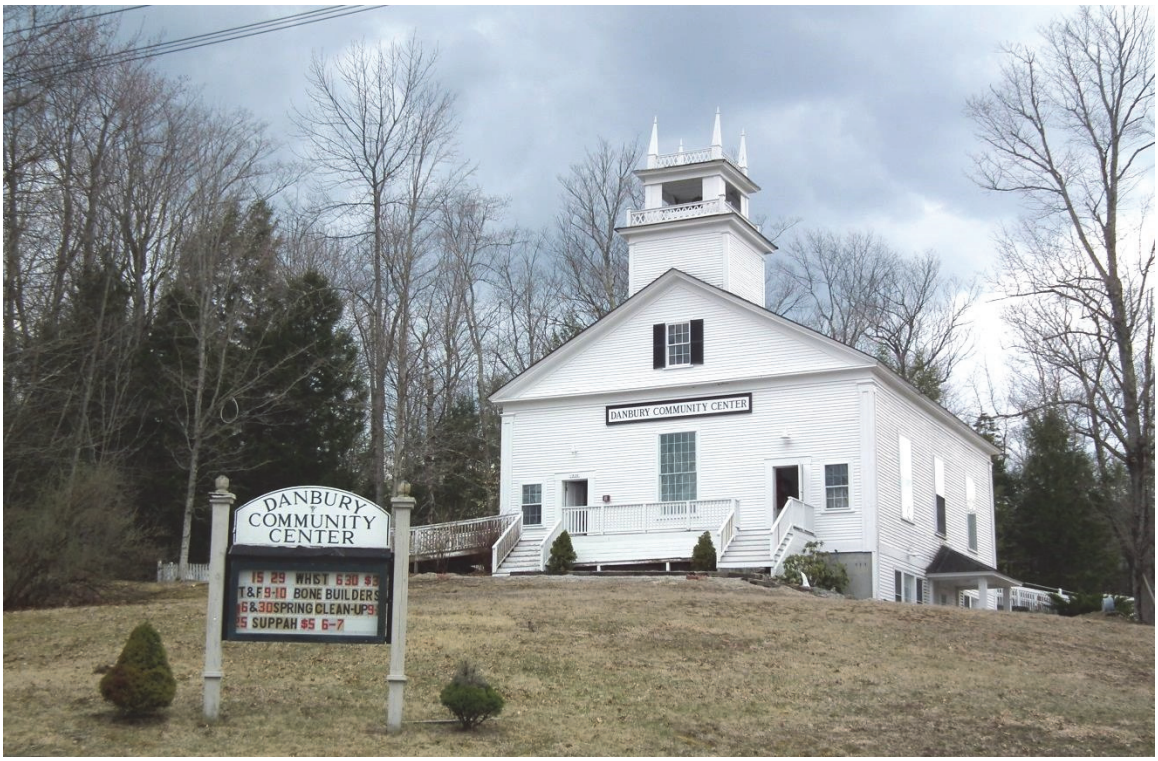

Figure 13. Danbury Community Center, 2016. Photograph by author.

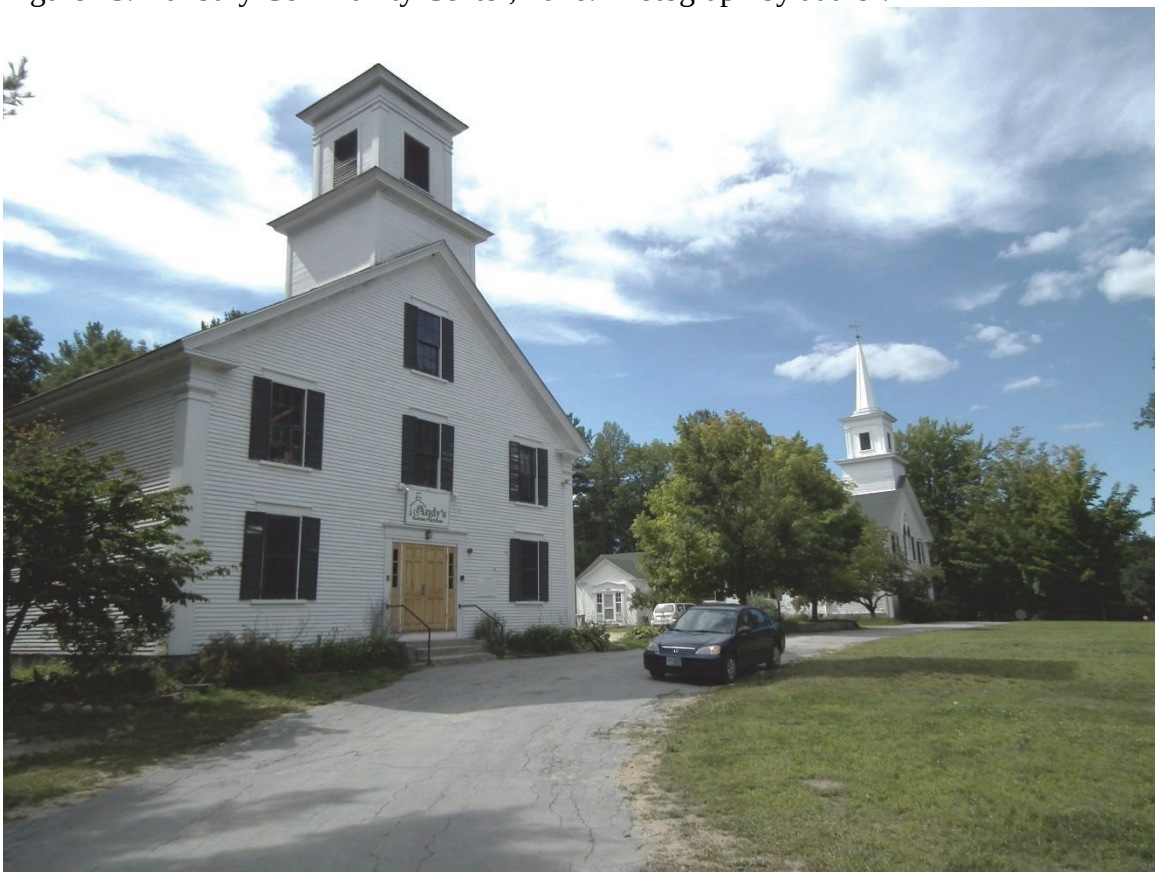
Figure 14. Andy's Summer Playhouse, Wilton, 2015. Photograph by author.

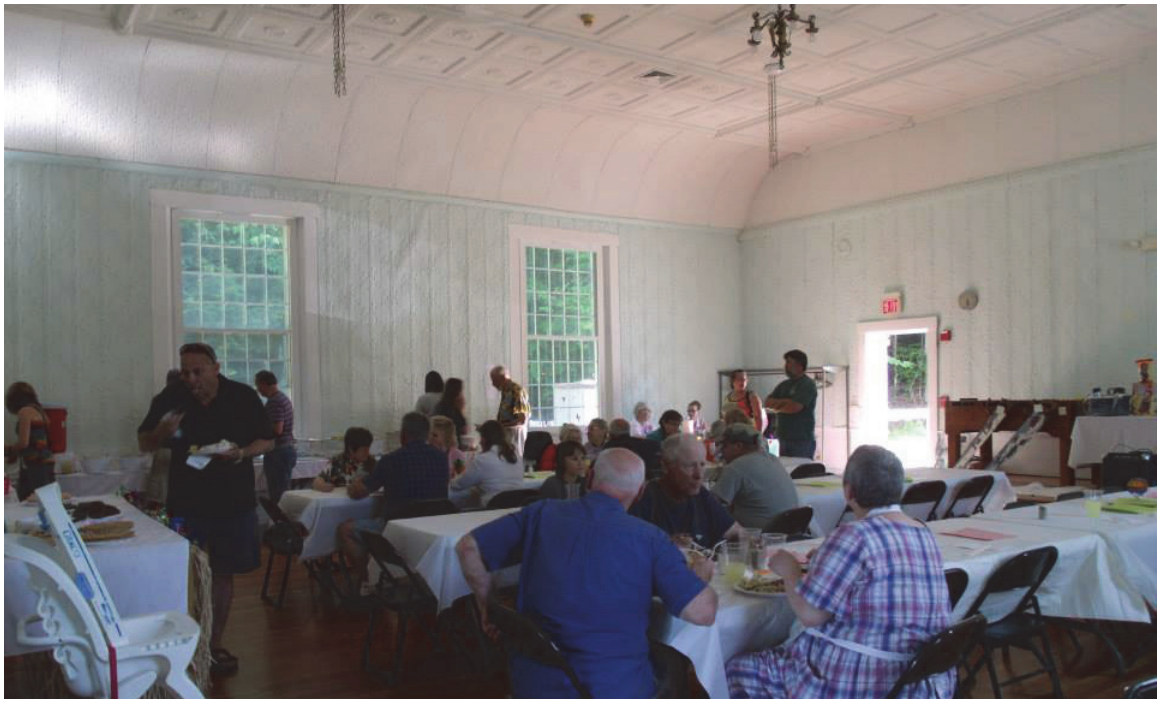

Figure 15. The Danbury Community Center retained the tin walls and ceiling, but the pews were removed by the former church, allowing an open floor plan for town events. 2014. Photograph courtesy of the Danbury Community Center.

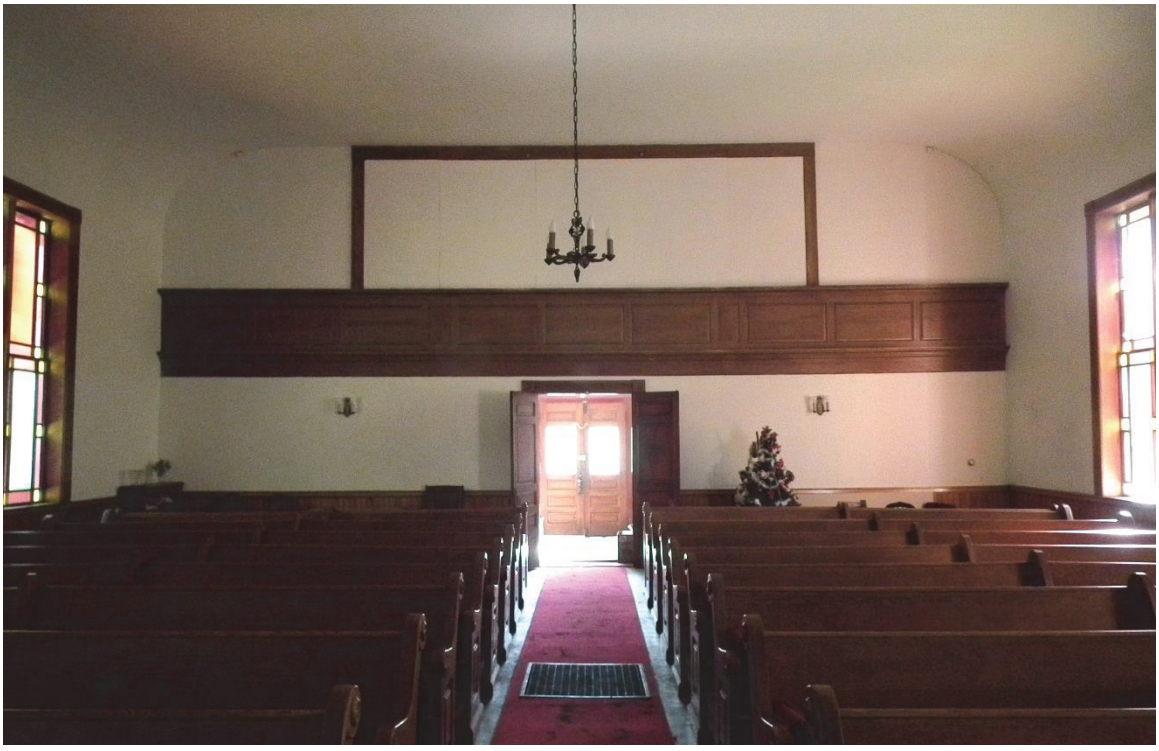

Figure 16. The pews in the East Grafton Union Church (now owned by the Town of Grafton and leased by the Grafton Historical Society) are character-defining features of the sanctuary. 2015. Photograph by author.

Schoolhouses

Schoolhouses were once prevalent on the New Hampshire landscape; even the smallest of towns contained several school districts and schoolhouses so that scattered families' children could walk to class. Today, fewer exist but it is not unusual for five or six of the buildings to remain in a town. The sheer number of extant schoolhouses illustrates their ability to be re-used. Their small foot prints and simple design make them affordable to maintain. Historically, once schoolhouses were closed, they were appropriated by organizations like the Grange or gardening clubs, private schools or the Daughters of American Revolution. Some became farm outbuildings or storage sheds. Temple's extant schoolhouse was an apple shed and Advent Church before the historical society purchased it in 1994.[89] The majority was converted into small homes, where some retained their character-defining features, but many more soon became unrecognizable with additions and unsympathetic alterations.

Due to the abundance of preserved schoolhouses, the transfer of obsolete ones in public ownership to private hands is an acceptable option. This is not to say that the building type is expendable. The schoolhouse's size and ubiquity instead lend the one-room buildings to be used in creative ways.

In Warner, a former 1916 schoolhouse now operates as a popular restaurant called the Schoolhouse Café. Inside, the building's origins are unmistakable: wood floors, chalk boards, and beadboard wainscot peek out from assorted tables and chairs.[90] In Campton, The Little Red Schoolhouse offers locals and White Mountain tourists seafood, ice

[89] Phil Lauriot (Temple Historical Society President), phone conversation with author, 28 April 2016.
[90] Catherine Smart, "School House still feeding its community," *Boston Globe*, 11 June 2013. https://www.bostonglobe.com/lifestyle/food-dining/2013/06/11/one-room-new-hampshire-school-becomes-popular-restaurant/PLoEZCrfd6A0O28Ky0PpyN/story.html.

cream, and local gifts during the summer and autumn. For the owners, the schoolhouse's characteristic features – wood windows, clapboards, original slate board – are an important part of the marketing, and so its character-defining features remained.[91] In Canaan, a schoolhouse now serves as a 4-H clubhouse, offering after-school programs for area children and a popular chicken pie supper in November. Dorchester uses one of its former schoolhouses as its town offices, as does Benton.

Some schoolhouses retain their original purpose: to educate. In Croydon and Landaff (and until recently, Alexandria), kindergarten through the third grade students attend the schoolhouses, which in Croydon's case has been in operation since 1794.[92] The Canterbury Historical Society prides itself on working with elementary school teachers in town to ensure every student experiences a classroom environment from the nineteenth century in the society-owned one room schoolhouse. Teachers and society members collaborate to create lesson plans and introduce students to historic games. The long-running program has received two national awards.[93]

Granges

Rows of tables and a hodge-podge collection of chairs seat dozens of people, mostly dressed in flannel, at the Blazing Star Grange in Danbury. The Grange hosts several annual suppers in the beadboarded basement of their hall, and have done so since

[91] "The Little Red Schoolhouse," Accessed 1 May 2016, http://www.littleredschoolhousenh.com/home.html.
[92] Madison Kramer, "One-Room School Houses Still in Operation in NH," *New Hampshire Magazine*, September 2013, http://www.nhmagazine.com/September-2013/One-Room-School-Houses-Still-in-Operation-in-NH/.
[93] "Programs and Projects," Canterbury Historical Society, Accessed 1 May 2016, http://www.canterbury-nh.org/historical-society/pages/programs-projects. Musterfield Farm in Sutton does a similar program with its town's students.

before the old timers in the room were children. Conversations wax and wane between dishes of rolls, ham, mustard, pearl onions, and beets. The Grangers serving the meals squeeze through the narrow aisles and take orders for coffee and pie – the real draw. After dinner, a bluegrass band and auction provide more hours of entertainment.

The Blazing Star Grange, once the norm for rural towns in America, is now an anomaly. Though there are several Grange chapters and Grange halls left in the state, few are bustling with life like Danbury. In fact, the more recent trend in New Hampshire is for the remaining Grangers (there must be seven to make a quorum) to surrender their charter. Former Grange halls dot the landscape, and while some have found new uses, a great deal remain in preservation limbo, or in the case of Alstead's Prentice Hill Grange, have become recent victims of demolition.

The Grange movement started in 1867, and at its peak, New Hampshire had 320 branches. Several towns had multiple Granges – Haverhill boasted nine. Nationally, Grangers, officially known as Patrons of Husbandry, lobbied for bills that favored farmers (including free rural mail delivery), women's suffrage, and checked the power of railroad companies. Locally, Grangers gathered to celebrate and commiserate. Known for their secret rituals and hierarchies as well as their progressive policies, the Grange fostered a sense of belonging for members.[94]

Most Granges built or renovated existing buildings to serve as their hall when the chapters were first founded. In this respect, Grangers were early preservationists; schoolhouses, meetinghouses, and churches were among the obsolete buildings that were retrofitted to fill this new need. Grange halls share similar character-defining features.

[94] Steve Taylor (former NH Agricultural Commissioner), phone call with author, 2 March 2016.

Typically, the single large room interiors boasted varnished beadboard (walls and ceiling) and included a stage with a stage curtain. Many included kitchens and dining halls for town suppers. With the decline of agriculture in the 1900s, many Granges started to lose membership and struggled to keep their charters.[95] Today, approximately 67 remain in New Hampshire and few are vibrant. Even fewer include Grangers who actually farm.[96] In 2013, the New Hampshire Preservation Alliance listed Grange halls throughout the state to their annual "Seven to Save" list, an attempt to shed light on the problem.[97]

The good news is that struggling Granges can reinvent themselves to remain relevant social organizations in rural towns. With special permission from the State Grange, three Granges have reactivated their charters. The catch? "Young people don't want the rigmarole of secret rituals," Steve Taylor, the former state agricultural commissioner says. The new Granges forgo the traditional ceremonies and instead focus on the original, purist intent: to promote agriculture and strengthen community. In Landaff, the Grange has maintained its place in the community by offering regular and popular events; the Grange is seen as the lifeblood in a community with less than 500 people. In addition to their suppers, Danbury's Grange also has popular showings of silent films accompanied by a pianist. In Northfield, the Grangers shifted focus to become more of a motorcycle touring group.[98]

In Maine, some Granges in coastal towns have seen a rebirth, thanks to younger farmers using the organization to aid other young farmers. By building commercial

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[95] H. A. Taylor, *Grange Halls in Washington State: a Critical Investigation of a Vernacular Building Type*, (dissertation, University of Washington, 2013).
[96] Steve Taylor, phone call with author, 2 March 2016.
[97] "Seven to Save," New Hampshire Preservation Alliance, Accessed 10 May 2016, http://www.nhpreservation.org/news-a-events/signature-events/seven-to-save.html.
[98] Maggie Stier (New Hampshire Preservation Alliance), phone call with author, 31 March 2016.

kitchens and bulk grain storage, the Grange in Blue Hill regained its place in the community.[99] In Montville, the town returned the Union Harvest Grange hall to the revived Grange in 2013. The decision was "Fueled by a relatively young group of residents with a passion to preserve the values of rural living," who host movie nights and promote local agriculture.[100] Grange halls will not need to be re-used should the Patrons of Husbandry exist as strong community organizations.

More good news and hope for the Grange comes from the agricultural sector. In the past decade, the number of farms in New Hampshire has increased by thirty percent. This new generation of farmers operates smaller farms that generate less income than before, but they are savvier marketers than previous generations. Agricultural census data proves this shift in marketing: in 2012 (the most recent data), New Hampshire ranked first in the nation for percentage of direct sales. Nearly one-third of farms reported involvement in direct sales, and those farms garnered an average of $15,075 from direct sales annually (tenth in the nation). The state ranks third in the nation in the "Locavore Index," a metric that includes the number of farmer's markets, community-supported agriculture shares (CSAs), and farm-to-school programs.[101] According the NH Department of Agriculture, there are about sixty-six farmer's markets in the state, meaning a little less than one-third of towns offer some sort of market.[102] This small-

[99] Betsy Garrold, "The Grange Revival in Maine," Winter 2014-15, *Maine Organic Farmer and Gardener*, http://www.mofga.org/Publications/MaineOrganicFarmerGardener/Winter20142015/GrangeRevival/tabid/2888/Default.aspx.
[100] "Grange Hall Returned," Union Harvest Grange, 26 October 2013, Accessed 10 May 2016, https://unionharvestgrange.wordpress.com/2013/10/26/grange-building-returned/.
[101] "More Ag Census Data Released," New Hampshire Department of Agriculture, Markets & Food, 8 May 2014, http://newhampshirefarms.net/commissioner/more-ag-census-data-released.html.
[102] 2016 Farmers' Market Directory, NH Department of Agriculture, Markets, and Food. Danbury's Grange hosts one of these farmer's markets.

scale agricultural trend, albeit still young, could greatly benefit rural communities if nurtured and supported.[103]

Grange halls that are not likely to see the Grangers return can be re-used. The Hiram R. Roberts Grange in Rollinsford was purchased by a theater troupe from the nearby city of Dover. The new home for the Garrison Players uses the former stage to present a regular slate of performances in a unique environment. Rollinsford's location – near the larger cities of Dover, Rochester, and Somersworth – is key to the theater's financial success. In Canaan, the former Indian River Grange hall now serves as a senior center and food pantry. The kitchen now bustles with cooks who make meals for congregate dinners and social events for senior citizens. A bus service collects seniors at their door of their homes from five towns for the dinners and events.[104] This compatible use fulfills a need for the greater Canaan area and preserves the building, whose second floor includes a stage and curtain. Though not rural according to this paper's parameters, in Durham, developers converted the former Grange hall into apartments that include two, two bedroom workforce housing units.[105]

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[103] Steve Taylor, himself a dairy farmer in Plainfield, cautions that large farms are still a dying breed. He jokes that the new demographic in farming is comprised of "trustafarians." The test will be to see if the younger generation of farmers farms for life. Fifty years after the USDA's Rural Life Study in Landaff, sociologists revisited the town and discovered that, despite the continued decline of family farms, thanks to Northern New England's strong local government, it remained a stable community. In 1942, researchers noted 35 operating dairies. By 1988, that number dropped to two. Today, Landaff has at least one dairy farm which has entered into the niche organic dairy and cheese market.

[104] "Mascoma Area Senior Center," Grafton County Senior Citizens Council, Accessed 11 February 2016, http://www.canaannh.org/senior_center/index.html.

[105] Workforce housing is defined as housing affordable for a four-person household making 100% of the area's median income, or 60% for three-person family renters. According to NH RSA 674:58-61, passed in 2008, towns with land use ordinances are required to "provide reasonable and realistic opportunities for the development of workforce housing."

Figure 17. Prentice Hill Grange, Alstead, 2013. Since demolished. Photograph by author.

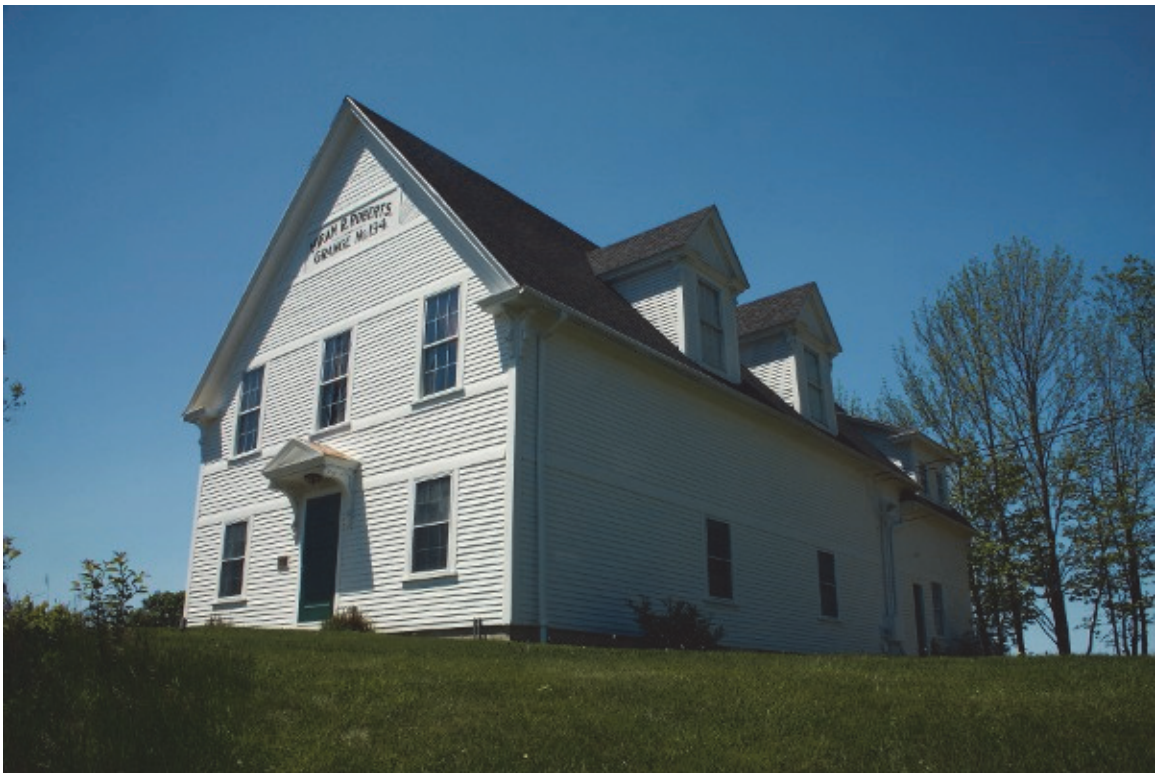

Figure 18. Hiram Roberts Grange, Rollinsford (Garrison Players Arts Center). Courtesy photograph.

Mills

One of two lone vestiges of East Grafton's industrial heritage, the carding mill stands sandwiched between Mill Brook and the former Grafton Turnpike. Built in 1823 and donated to the historical society in 1994, the mill was once part of a string of similar sized industries along Mill Brook – including a cider mill, coffin mill, saw mill, bobbin mill, and harness shop. Vestiges of its mill dam and mill race exist beneath thick vegetation that volunteers slowly cut back. Due to its lack of machinery, the historical society is amenable to finding a non-museum use for the building. An annual Race to Save the Mill funnels approximately one thousand dollars into its preservation each year, but, more importantly, attracts a young audience that normally does not attend historical society events.[106]

The carding mill's restoration is made possible by dedicated volunteers and creative fundraising solutions. Without the capital to purchase the large amount of lumber needed to replace rotted posts, beams, and sills, the historical society solicited neighbors for whole trees – not in short supply in Grafton. Society members then spent a weekend sawing the trees into the necessary lumber with the help of a volunteer sawyer and his portable sawmill. In total, volunteers sawed more than $12,000 worth of lumber. Though the re-use strategy is not finalized, the historical society hopes emphasize the character-defining features of the space – its timber frame, turbine shed, and location along Mill Brook in its new life.[107] One option is to ride the momentum of the local agriculture movement and partner with nearby apple orchards to develop a cider mill. Other options

[106] Andrew Cushing, "More Carding Mill Progress," *Grafton Historical Society* (blog), 17 November 2015, http://www.graftonhistoricalsocietynh.org/2015/11/17/more-carding-mill-progress/.
[107] Andrew Cushing, "Work Weekends Planned for the Carding Mill," *Grafton Historical Society* (blog), 31 October 2013, http://www.graftonhistoricalsocietynh.org/2012/10/31/work-weekend-planned-for-the-carding-mill/.

include using the space for artist studios. Its scenic setting along Mill Brook provides opportunity for artistic muses and Instagrammers alike.

A recently completed mill rehabilitation project in Freedom, Maine drew substantial praise in preservation circles. The former grist mill, built in 1834, underwent extensive work by various crews of preservation craftsmen before it opened in 2014. From the beginning, the private owner's mission was multi-pronged. "It seemed important to not only preserve a beautiful, historic structure, but also to preserve an important element of the history and culture of the town and its surrounding landscape; and, perhaps, to help revitalize the economic base of Freedom," wrote Tony Grossi, the owner. With the installation of hydro power, the building generates 70,000 kWh annually, enough to provide electricity to the private school and small restaurant now located on site. The mill's rehabilitation can be followed through detailed blog posts and a short documentary – marketing techniques that certainly led to the mill's broad appeal.[108]

Preserving character-defining features is best seen as an opportunity to re-use a building by saving its parts that help tell historical narratives years from now. The retention of tin ceilings, wide-plank floorboards, or corbelled chimneys of historic buildings adds richness and authenticity to the built environment – without them, gaps in building archaeology would exist. Stewards and the public can learn to see these features as equally important once they learn about *why* they are worth saving. This is where support comes into play.

[108] Tony Grossi, "Vision and Use," The Mill at Freedom Falls, Accessed 1 May 2016, http://www.millatfreedomfalls.com/visionuse.html.

Figure 18. Prentice Hill Grange, Alstead, 2013. Since demolished. Photograph by author.

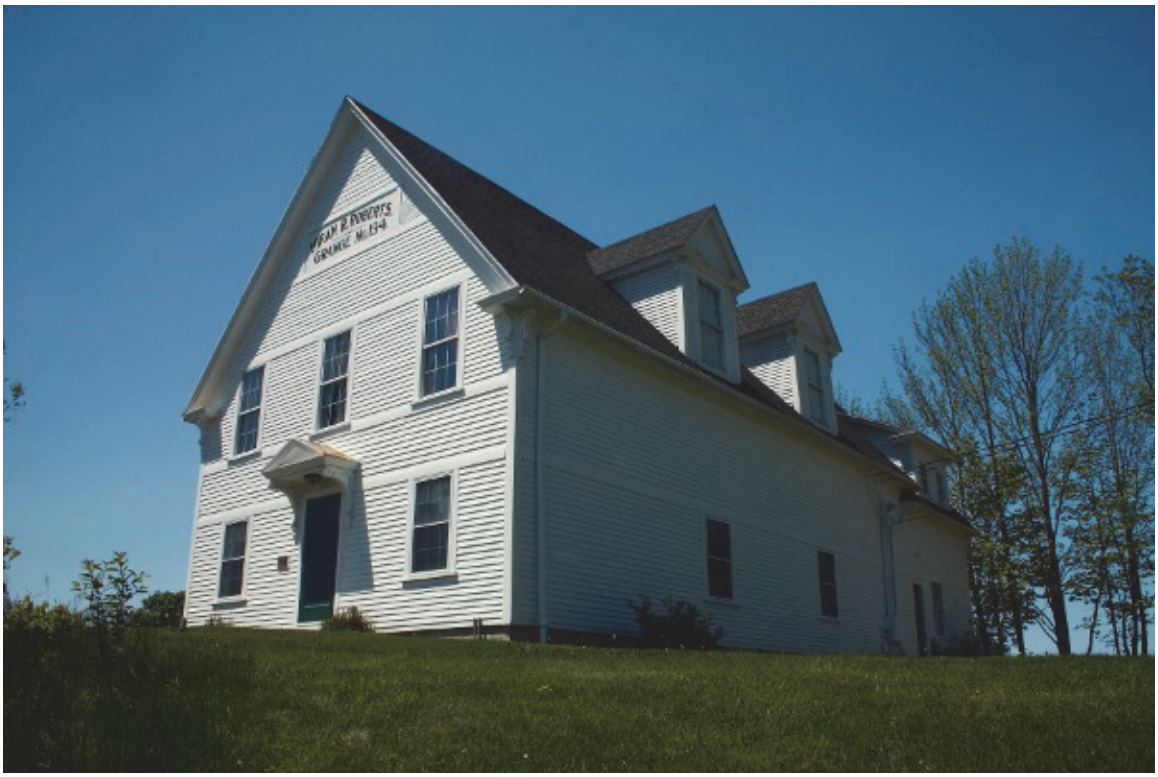

Figure 19. Hiram Roberts Grange, Rollinsford (Garrison Players Arts Center). Courtesy photograph.

Chapter 5: Support and Stewardship

People make preservation happen. Sometimes, a small town may not have enough people to accomplish complicated projects, though, and outside support may be needed. Or sometimes, the stewards of a property simply need additional resources to make their preservation project better. Elderly volunteers comprise the bulk of historical societies in the state. Grant applications, project management, and documentation are complicated and time-consuming tasks for those who are unfamiliar with preservation jargon or certain computer software. Local government officials are largely volunteers, too. As preservation grant money grows increasingly competitive and scarce, rural towns lose out. Those who work in state government or in statewide nonprofits also share limited resources, and are not always able to provide small towns with the help they need. As a result, the small towns seeing the most preservation activity are towns where individual champions reside and where support networks exist; these factors are more important than money. When communities back preservation initiatives, volunteer effort and modest monetary contributions can leverage incredible outcomes.

Historical Societies

Historical societies have the power to be movers and shakers when it comes to preservation. These organizations, typically 501(c)3-designated, operate with a board and bylaws – some more formally than others, and most charge nominal membership dues. Common officers include a president, vice president, secretary, and treasurer; other positions may include curator, historian, genealogist, or membership director. Some historical societies trace their origins to the mid-twentieth century, but a great number

were founded in the 1990s.[109] For young organizations, historical societies have been remarkably successful acquiring properties, collecting artifacts, and hosting community events. Due to their nonprofit status, historical societies can be nimble players in preservation; they can purchase property, receive special grants, and gifts to them are tax-deductible. Combined with a passionate board and the necessary resources, historical societies can be effective agents of change in a small town.

Heritage Commissions

Heritage commissions can be thought of as conservation commissions for historic assets. Voters in each town decide the powers of each heritage commission (to the extent of the enabling legislation), but most commissions can purchase property, hold preservation easements, oversee historic district overlays, contribute to the community's master plan, and raise and appropriate town funds for heritage projects. Since the passage of the enabling legislation in 1992, more than 100 communities in New Hampshire have created heritage commissions, each one comprised of three to seven members.[110] Heritage commissions are most effective when their vision is shared with the selectboard – the town's chief executive officers. Local governments that are sympathetic to preservation and open to creative solutions for the town's historic building stock create an environment where projects like Danbury's Community Center or Acworth's many preservation projects happen.

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[109] "Directory," Association of New Hampshire Historical Societies (disbanded), website available through Internet Archive's Wayback Machine, https://web.archive.org/web/20150511224346/http://www.historicalsocietiesnh.org/diralph.htm.
[110] "Heritage Commissions for New Hampshire Communities," New Hampshire Division of Historical Resources, https://www.nh.gov/nhdhr/publications/technical_assistance.htm.

New Hampshire Division of Historical Resources (NHDHR)

In New Hampshire, state preservation dollars are directed toward buildings eligible or listed to the New Hampshire or National Register of Historic Places. While private owners are seldom eligible for these dollars, and a property on the register does not automatically receive funding, its listing is an important first step.[111] The NHDHR also holds preservation easements, distributes money to Certified Local Governments (CLGs), approves historic tax credits, and disseminates grant funds from the Moose Plate program.

Unlike its Northern New England neighbors, New Hampshire does not offer state historic tax credits. There are other incentives, however. RSA 79E, which must be implemented by each municipality, is a temporary tax relief program that allows developers to reduce property taxes on a downtown building once it is restored. Similar to RSA 79D, which offers tax abatements to barn owners, 79E is relatively unknown, as illustrated in a recent report by Plymouth State University historic preservation students.[112]

Federal historic tax credits are an option for rehabilitating rural buildings, but two main problems arise with tax credits in small towns. First, the paperwork associated with receiving the twenty percent tax credit skews adaptive re-use toward large scale, costly projects, like mills and schools. According to data compiled by Peter Michaud, NHDHR's tax incentive coordinator, the average tax credit project in the state costs $8.5

[111] In New York State, homeowners with properties listed to the State or National Historic Register are eligible for a 20% state tax credit, assuming the houses meet certain qualifications, including the house being located in a Census-designated tract with an area median income at or below the state average. See "New York State Historic Homeownership Rehabilitation Tax Credit," New York Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation, Accessed 10 May 2016, http://nysparks.com/shpo/tax-credit-programs/.
[112] Drew Bedard, Martha Cummings, Alison Keay, and Joanna Snyder, "A Tool for Your Town," Plymouth State University, 2014, https://www.nh.gov/nhdhr/.../**79e**_psu_report.pdf/.

million and nearly all projects occurred in mill towns or cities. Second, nonprofit owners are not eligible for the tax credit because they are tax exempt. Nonprofit owners that wish to use the tax credit must form a partnership (LLC) and "sell" their credits. Michaud has found such an arrangement has a $2 million threshold, meaning that unless a building's rehabilitation costs more than $2 million, few investors find the sale of credits worthwhile.[113]

Plan NH

Plan NH is a statewide organization that offers design services in the form of community charrettes. These charrettes, offered several times each year cost communities upwards of $5,000, but the services may be well worth it for a small town overwhelmed with options. For several days, Plan NH's members, comprised of architects, landscape architects, highway engineers, historic preservationists, and community leaders, meet with townspeople to tackle a specific challenge. The resulting plans and designs are then available to guide towns as they apply for funding to tackle solutions identified in the charrettes. To date, fifty-seven communities in the state have benefitted from Plan NH's charrettes.[114]

New Hampshire Preservation Alliance

The New Hampshire Preservation Alliance, the sole statewide preservation advocacy group, "strengthens communities and stimulates local economies by

[113] Peter Michaud, email message to and telephone with author, 27 April 2016.
[114] "Community Planning and Design Charrette Program," Plan NH, Accessed 1 May 2016, http://plannh.org/why-does-plan-nh-do-this.

encouraging the protection and revival of historic buildings and places."[115] Though limited by a small staff, the private nonprofit is an effective resource for any community member looking to save buildings. The organization offers consultations, a clearinghouse of preservation professionals, small grant awards (mostly for planning purposes), workshops and field trips, and advocates for preservation policies in Concord.

The most effective support comes from the community. An historic building's preservation in a small town is the cumulative effort of volunteer carpenters, excavators, cooks, quilters, gardeners, artists, and roofers, just to name a few. Historical societies, town committees, and similar organizations that strive to make their preservation projects engaging and whose deliverables are relevant and exciting succeed. Ms. Bradt, of Acworth, raised hundreds of thousands of dollars from her town of 900. Her advice is to make the preservation project personal and to treat people with respect. Fundraising dinners in Acworth worked to offer unique menu items, nice centerpieces, and emphasized the community aspect over the fundraising goal. Communication was also key; the historical society kept all donors and community members abreast of milestones and upcoming work, and avoided asking for money all of the time. "Professional fundraisers didn't get small towns," Ms. Bradt says when the historical society consulted a few.[116] Some fundraisers will fail, but the persistent stewards will try again until the community responds favorably. In this sense, it pays to know your community well.[117]

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[115] "Who We Are," New Hampshire Preservation Alliance, Accessed 1 May 2016, http://www.nhpreservation.org/about-us.html.
[116] Kathi Bradt (Acworth Historical Society), phone call with author, 16 March 2016.
[117] The Grafton Historical Society tried raffling several different items for years. While jewelry and quilts failed, cords of wood and hours of free excavating proved popular.

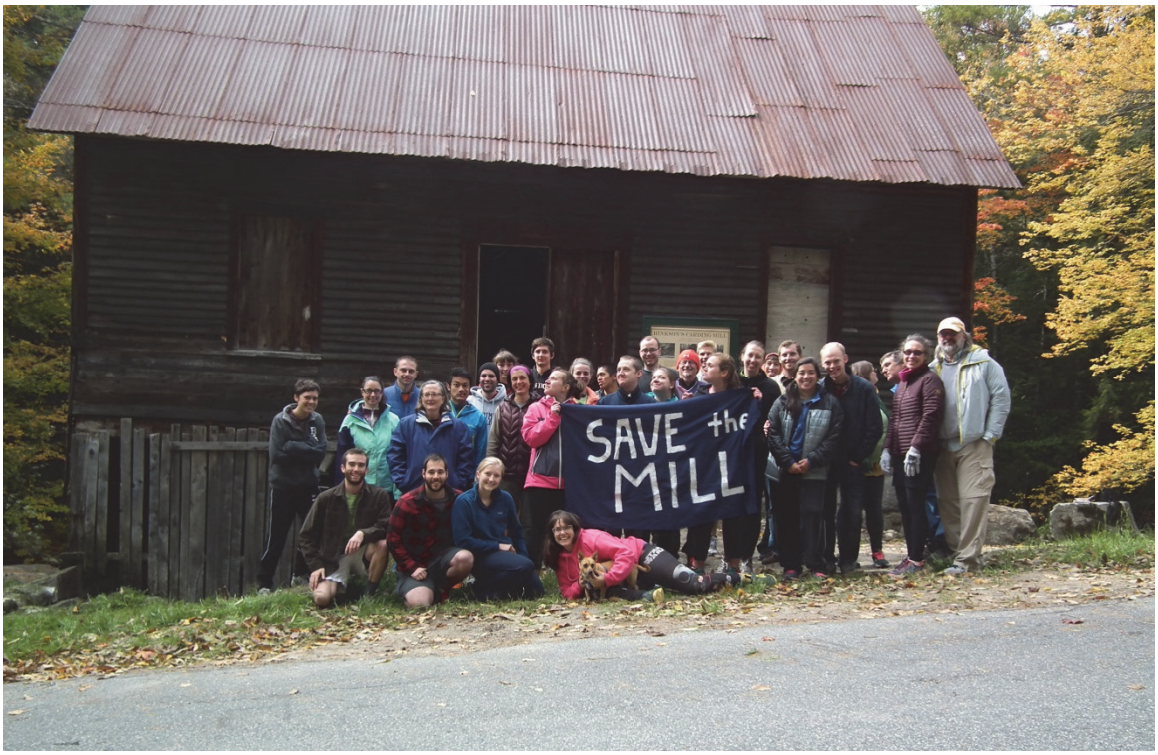

Figure 20. Grafton Historical Society's Race to Save the Mill welcomes a far younger crowd than most preservation fundraisers, 2015. Photograph by author.

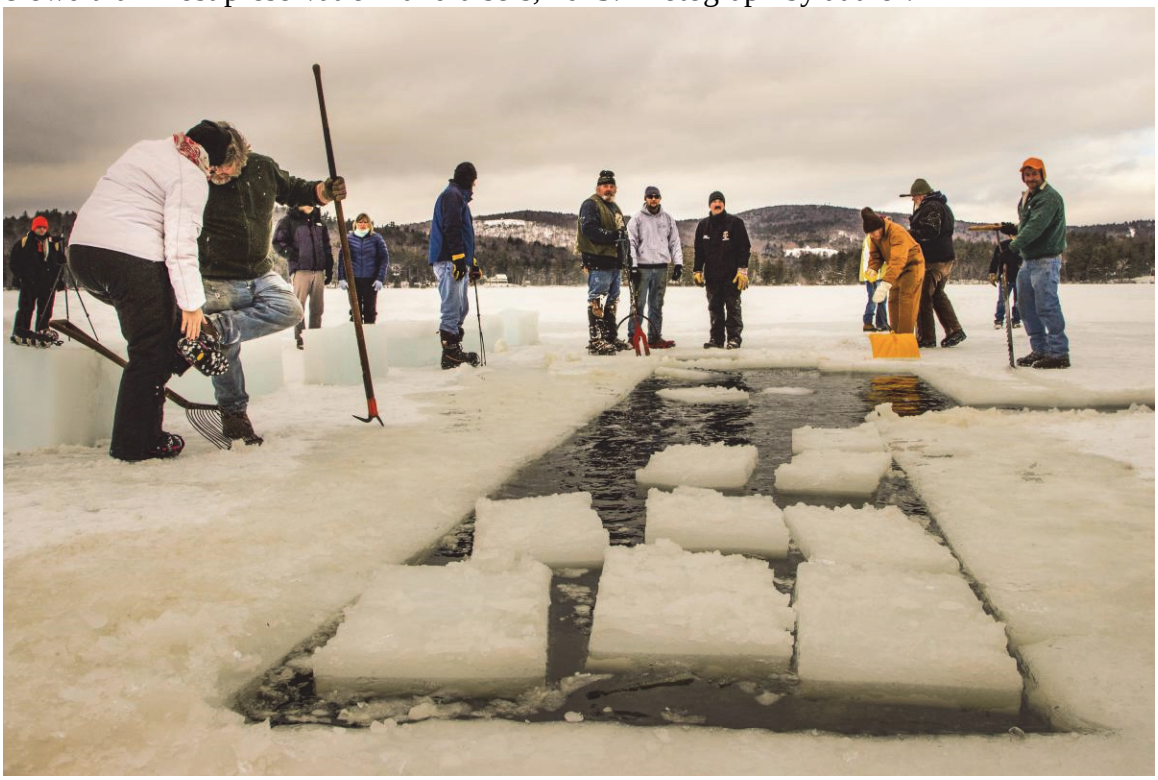
Figure 21. Musterfield Farm's Ice Day includes ice harvesting, antique cars turned into snowmobiles, and a pancake breakfast sponsored by the Historical Society. Photograph courtesy of Musterfield Farm.

Conclusion

Happily, the schoolhouse problem is not a problem without solutions. It is an opportunity for stewards of historic assets in rural towns to assess their community's needs and rally support to preserve these obsolete buildings for better uses. The temptation for historical societies and preservation-minded organizations to hoard historic properties stems from, in part, the perception that old buildings are unwanted for anything but museums. This is not the case. Old buildings need champions with vision who can increase their usability and return them to the community.

One option for returning an historic building to the community – an option that New Hampshire does not yet have – is a revolving fund. There are two main varieties of such funds: *Acquisition funds* purchase at-risk properties, renovate them, sell them (oftentimes with easements), and then reinvest the proceeds of the sale into the pot of money for future projects. *Loan funds* award low-interest loans to parties who then make payments back into the fund pool.[118] J. Myrick Howard, of Preservation North Carolina (PNC), wrote the book on revolving funds in *Buying Time for Heritage* (2007). PNC uses its acquisition fund, or as they call it, an Endangered Properties Program, somewhat differently. It operates as "an animal shelter for endangered buildings and sites," in Howard's language.[119] PNC acquires buildings that are unwanted by the traditional real estate market. Properties that are vacant, damaged by fire, inexpensive, or muddled from years of renovations require specific buyers – and sellers. Because the PNC is a nonprofit, they are comfortable holding onto properties longer, holding easements on

[118] Olivia Mitchell, *An Evaluation of Historic Preservation Revolving Loan Funds, and Recommendations for the Establishment of Future Programs*. (Masters Thesis, University of Pennsylvania, 2011), 7-8.
[119] J. Myrick Howard, *Buying Time for Preservation: How to Save an Endangered Historic Property* (Raleigh, NC: Preservation North Carolina, 2007), 9.

character-defining features, and educating about tax credits. In over thirty years, PNC has saved 700 buildings and leveraged over $350 million in private investment.[120]

Preservation easements are also an option, though the practice is still nascent in New Hampshire. Through an easement, character-defining features of a property are "sold" to an outside party (for instance, the New Hampshire Preservation Alliance or Division of Historical Resources) that is then responsible for monitoring the preservation of those identified character-defining features. Easements do cost money – legal and stewardship fees are either donated by the easement seller (and the seller receives tax benefits) or fundraised by the buyer.[121] Preservation easements can scare potential buyers – even if the deed language meshes with potential homebuyers' ethics. Also, there are not many organizations clamoring to hold preservation easements due to their cost, which could be prohibitive should they encounter future legal battles (especially in the world of private ownership).

Another option is for historical societies to retain their properties, but lease them. Such an arrangement adds complexity to volunteer officers and boards, but the revenue from rent can help pay for property taxes (properties are no longer exempt once income is derived from them), insurance, and maintenance. Though not rural or amateur in its operation, Strawbery Banke in Portsmouth, New Hampshire renovated ten of its

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[120] "Mission/History," Preservation North Carolina, Accessed 10 May 2016, https://www.presnc.org/about/missionhistory/.

[121] Peter Michaud, "About Preservation Easements," New Hampshire Division of Historical Resources, https://www.nh.gov/nhdhr/programs/easements_about.htm. The IRS has recently tightened its deduction policies surrounding easements and donations, after years of suspected abuse from donors. Values of donations are the responsibility of the owner, not the buyer. Owners, appraisers, and the IRS must agree on value before the donation of the easement or property. See Howard, *Buying Time for Heritage*, 28-29; Richard Rubin, "IRS Cracks Down on Breaks Tied to Land of Rich Americans," *Bloomberg Business*, November 22, 2013, http://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2013-11-06/irs-cracks-down-on-breaks-in-land-of-rich-americans.

underused and derelict properties into offices and apartments. Called the Heritage House Program, the renovated buildings provide the museum with increased cash flow and return some vibrancy to an otherwise sleepy corner of the city.[122] Blessed by prime location in downtown Freeport, Maine's shopping mecca, the Freeport Historical Society leases its barn to a donut shop. The proceeds help pay for the complex's utilities and invite visitors to take a break from consumerism.[123]

Reuse strategies also need to take into account who the audience is, or where the support lays. Northern New Englanders are the oldest in the nation, with a median age over forty-one and a family unit of only two and one-half. The ripple effects of the "silver tsunami" are far-reaching; shrinking and aging family units need smaller homes, specialized services for senior citizens, and fewer institutions geared toward younger families, such as schools. In fact, the decline in school enrollment in New Hampshire due to the state's low birth rate (9.4 per 1,000, the lowest in America) and lessened in-migration (between 2000 and 2010, more people between the ages of 15 and 44 left the state than entered it) affects rural communities greatly. From its peak in 1995 at 215,000 public school students, the numbers in 2013 stood at 185,000 – a fourteen percent decrease despite the state's increasing population.[124]

An aging population is an economic and social problem for rural communities. It makes most fiscal sense to encourage families to settle in towns, which contrasts with what many towns do to attract retirees (property tax abatements for elderly and approval

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[122] "Heritage House Program," Strawbery Banke Museum, Accessed 6 May 2016, http://www.strawberybanke.org/houses/heritage-house-program.cfm.
[123] James Myall (former Director, Freeport Historical Society), interview with author, 4 January 2016.
[124] "The 'New Normal': Grim picture painted of future school enrollment in Moultonborough," *Laconia Daily Sun*, 11 June 2015, http://www.laconiadailysun.com/newsx/local-news/86652-moultonborough-school-board-strategic-plan.

of age-restricted housing developments). According to the New Hampshire Center for Public Policy Center, "property-tax policies and housing developments that increasingly favor seniors over younger residents and working families may actually accelerate the graying of New Hampshire." In 2004, close to $20 million in property taxes were shifted from seniors to other tax payers – a number that was expected to increase around ten percent annually.[125]

New Hampshire's rural communities also have poverty problems. In the Granite State, the poverty rate in rural communities can be triple the state average of 8.7%.[126] With personal annual incomes sometimes half or greater of that found in suburban or urban towns, and ninety percent of persistent poverty located in rural counties, there is a clear need for services and solutions. An especially pernicious concern in small towns is the number of seniors living in poverty. Statewide, fourteen percent of seniors fall below the poverty threshold, a problem for elderly homeowners who must pay property taxes on limited fixed incomes – hence the shifting of property taxes scenario described above.[127]

Lack of affordable housing further impacts those in poverty. The US Census reveals that New Hampshirites face housing difficulties, especially for the 29% of the population who rent. Statewide, average rent for a two bedroom apartment is $1,157 – a great expense for those already in poverty. With a vacancy rate of 2.2% (over 4% is

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[125] "Shifting the Load: The Potential Impact of Property-Tax Relief for New Hampshire's Seniors," New Hampshire Center for Public Policy Studies, 1 February 2005, http://www.nhpolicy.org/report/shifting-the-load-the-potential-impact-of-property-tax-relief-for-new-hampshireamp39s-seniors.
[126] Federal Reserve Bank of Boston, "New England Community Outlook Survey Report," January 2014, https://www.bostonfed.org/commdev/community-outlook-survey/2014/jan-2014/new-englands-rural-poor.htm.
[127] Juliette Cubanski, Giselle Casillas, and Anthony Damico, "Poverty Among Seniors: An Updated Analysis of National and State Level Poverty Rates Under the Official and Supplemental Poverty Measures," Kaiser Family Foundation, 10 June 2015, http://kff.org/medicare/issue-brief/poverty-among-seniors-an-updated-analysis-of-national-and-state-level-poverty-rates-under-the-official-and-supplemental-poverty-measures/.

considered a renter's market), choices are limited for rural renters. According to the *New Hampshire Business Review*, "A renter would have to earn 124 percent of the median income, or over $46,000 a year, to be able to afford the statewide median rent of a typical two-bedroom apartment with utilities."[128]

These statistics alone suggest that reusing obsolete buildings in small towns is not only a great opportunity, but a great necessity. With a community's demographics and needs in mind, larger buildings could be restored and rented as workforce housing, affordable housing, senior housing, or as offices that support those populations. A study commissioned by New Hampshire Housing in 2014 found that homeownership rates are declining, available housing is misaligned with today's market, and demand for one or two bedroom units is projected to increase. These findings suggest a demand for affordable apartments in even the smallest of towns. The report recommends adjusting zoning to allow more multi-family housing or housing with smaller footprints in order to house those most in need of alternative living options.[129] And while the report acknowledges that "Creating a fertile environment for rehabilitation of existing stock could be an important part of the solution," it falsely claims that rehabilitation is more expensive than new construction.[130] Clearly, there is room for preservationists to join the conversation about affordable housing and offer their services.

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[128] "NH rents continue to climb: 2015 rental cost survey shows another year of low vacancy rates," 26 June 2015, http://www.nhbr.com/July-10-2015/NH-rents-continue-to-climb/.
[129] "Big Houses, Small Households: Perceptions, Preferences and Assessment," New Hampshire Center for Public Policy Studies, 2014, http://www.nhhfa.org/housing-data-needs.cfm.
[130] Studies that show rehabilitation as more expensive than new construction are often specious. For income-producing properties listed to the National Register of Historic Places, historic tax credits help offset the costs associated with rehabilitating older structures. See Donovan Rypkema, "The Economics of Rehabilitation," *Preservation Information* (National Trust for Historic Preservation, 1997).

Something that government can do (and is working on) to spur economic development in small towns is to increase access to high speed internet and cell phone service. These services allow rural towns to be competitive and are considered necessary, especially for younger generations and businesses. Much like the Rural Electrification Act of 1936, remote areas need government assistance to attain them. Local government officials and business leaders in rural regions of New Hampshire where broadband and improved cell phone service has been introduced found that the services benefitted residents and tourists – especially in emergency situations. In Coos County, New Hampshire's northernmost and remotest county, the public-private partnership that brought these services is part of a plan to attract new businesses where paper mills and manufacturing plants once employed thousands. [131]

These services can help rural areas attract more affluent residents, who may find the locations worth the drive if reliable telecommuting were an option. Nationwide, telecommuting is increasingly common, with a 2015 Gallup survey showing thirty-seven percent of Americans having telecommuted at least once.[132] Though the practice is still rare, it is an option for some companies. Currently, about six percent of New Hampshirites telecommute, ranking it sixth highest in the nation (Montana and Vermont are tied for first at just over seven percent). With increased internet services to more rural towns, the trend may continue to increase.[133]

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[131] Chris Jensen, "Far North County To Get More Cell Coverage, High-speed Internet," New Hampshire Public Radio, 2 April 2015, http://nhpr.org/post/far-north-county-get-more-cell-coverage-high-speed-internet.
[132] Jeffrey M. Jones, "In U.S., Telecommuting for Work Climbs to 37%," Gallup, 19 August, 2015, http://www.gallup.com/poll/184649/telecommuting-work-climbs.aspx.
[133] Matthew Kosinski, "Top Ten States for Telecommuting," Recruiter, 11 November 2015, https://www.recruiter.com/i/the-top-10-states-for-telecommuters/.

If the end of the schoolhouse museum is near, then there must be alternative options for their re-use and those re-uses must be viable. The historic building stock in rural New Hampshire will continue to be obsolete or vacant unless creativity prevails. We can hope that agriculture returns or young families move to small towns, that farming sustains the need for active Granges, or that the industry keeps more dollars locally. We can hope that general stores will continue to find lucrative methods of operation. We can assume that, like Rural Electrification of the past, high speed internet and cell phone service access will reach all corners of America. These aspirations require the demands of citizens, the advocacy of nonprofit agencies, and the action of government. Preservation has the power to be seen as an agent of positive change, not as an embalming process, if the field can activate and shift its focus to helping people *in* historic buildings.

Based on conversations with preservationists and stewards of historic properties, it is clear that there are many good things happening in New Hampshire when it comes to saving places that matter. It is also clear that many good examples of re-use strategies and incentives exist outside the state's borders. The following recommendations are offered as a starting point for struggling stewards to consider alternatives to the schoolhouse museum:

1. Open the lines of communication between the historical society members, town officials, and local organizations. Clarify which organization is best suited to steward the historic assets in town. Use available data to determine community needs and decide if those needs are being met. Are there buildings owned by the town or historical society that could be better used? With which buildings are members comfortable parting?

2. Embrace outside help. Call the Preservation Alliance, the Division of Historical Resources, or friends in neighboring towns that have heritage commissions (if your town lacks one). What resources do they offer that your town should implement? What groundwork needs to be laid before further work is done? Does a building need to be nominated to a historic register, or is a historic structures report needed?

3. If your town does not have one, create a heritage commission. New committees can attract new people who become the next generation of leaders. If a town's historical society's mission is more related to education and curation, a heritage commission can champion the preservation and re-use of obsolete historic buildings.

4. Consider creative solutions to solving preservation problems. Like the many historical societies mentioned throughout this study, take risks. Try leasing spaces or attaining preservation easements and selling properties. Like Grafton's historical society, rely on resources that residents do have (trees and portable saw mills versus money). Could tradesmen and women receive property tax reductions in return for labor at town- or society-owned properties?

5. Establish maintenance funds in annual town and organization budgets or create dedicated reserve funds for public and historic assets. Regular, routine maintenance saves money and avoids preservation dilemmas down the road.

6. For statewide nonprofits and government agencies, evaluate grants and materials. Are they accessible to rural communities and elderly volunteers who run those organizations? Is there a need for simpler and smaller grants that award money for capital projects in addition to producing planning documents? If certain communities are absent from the preservation conversation, how can they be included? Incentivize creative re-uses of

small towns' historic assets by teaching stewards how to think outside the box with workshops that focus on writing leases, securing easements, and managing tenants.

7. Revitalize the New Hampshire Association of Historical Societies, and encourage historical societies to share curatorial knowledge and collections databases (a good model for this organization exists in Maine, called the Maine Memory Network). This network could also sponsor a statewide clearinghouse for historical societies to post requests for proposals or leasing opportunities regarding obsolete buildings, in the same vein as Preservation North Carolina.

Preservation in rural communities requires partnerships, passionate champions, creativity, and greater recognition. With 80% of Americans now living in urban areas (62% in New Hampshire), fewer and fewer people have a connection to rural populations and places.[134] Preservationists must join the conversation with rural policy makers; otherwise, rural places will continue to lack the resources they need to compete. Historical societies and like-minded organizations face stiff odds when it comes to restoring the obsolete buildings that define the New Hampshire landscape. Preservation scholar Daniel MacGilvray urged those in the preservation world to think carefully about the motivations behind restoring buildings. "People are more important than buildings, roads, or anything else for that matter," he wrote. "Think of people first as you make your plans."[135] Thinking about people and community needs may not be in a historical society's bailiwick; after all, members join historical societies or heritage commissions

[134] "Urban Percentage of the Population for States, Historical," Iowa State University, Accessed 6 May 2016, http://www.icip.iastate.edu/tables/population/urban-pct-states.
[135] Daniel F. MacGilvray, *Adaptive Re-use: Issues and Case Studies in Building Preservation*, Richard L. Austin, ed. (New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold Company, 1988), 17.

with expectations of sharing history with peers and future generations, not analyzing demographic data or managing building leases.

Ignoring the broader needs of a community while sitting on potentially transformative real estate makes little sense when there are obvious and pressing issues facing New Hampshirites. A church or schoolhouse that is freshly painted, but otherwise empty, is not a good use of a resource. Converting an historic resource into a more useable space is in everyone's best interest – a new use spreads the maintenance responsibilities to more parties, engages new audiences with history, fills a community need, and provides the previous stewards time and money to offer their preservation services elsewhere.

In harsher words, the old guard of New Hampshire's antiquities must release their firm grip on historic buildings. For decades now, historical societies have managed to amass great quantities of buildings under visions of miniature historical villages or a network of museums. But these ideas, as noble and forward thinking as they were at one time, are no longer viable or feasible. Nor are the buildings serving their original purpose: to be used. Rural towns brim with potential, and these obsolete buildings offer opportunities for us to think about how to keep rural communities desirable and vibrant. The buildings' new lives do not have to be exciting or particularly unique. The idea is to re-use the building, not invent an entirely new need. If that new use is only an office, a residence, or a different community purpose, that is still a victory for the stewards and the building. We must change the rhetoric surrounding historic and obsolete buildings. Once we see them as the valuable community assets they are, schoolhouses in rural communities will no longer be a problem.

Appendix: List of New Hampshire Towns, Historical Societies, and Heritage Commissions

Town	Population (2010)	Historical Society?	Museum?	Heritage Commission?	Buildings/Notes
Acworth	891	y	n	n	South Acworth Store; Grange Hall
Albany	735	y	y	n	Located in town hall
Alexandria	1,613	y	y	n	Tucker House
Allenstown	4,322	y	n	n	
Alstead	1,937	y	y	n	Maybelle H. Still Memorial Building (formerly Universalist Church)
Alton	5,250	y	y	n	Exhibits in Library
Amherst	11,201	y	y	Historic District Commission	Chapel and "Wigwam" (former chapel)
Andover	2,371	y	y	n	Depot; Freight Shed; General Store
Antrim	2,637	y	n	Historic District Commission	
Ashland	2,076	y	y	Heritage Commission	Depot; Whipple House; Glidden Toy Museum
Atkinson	6,751	y	y	n	Kimball House
Auburn	4,953	y	y	Historic District Commission	House
Barnstead	4,593	y	n	Historic District Commission	Jail; rotating library exhibits
Barrington	8,576	y	y	n	Chapel
Bartlett	2,788	y	n	n	Bartlett Roundhouse Preservation Society
Bath	1,077	y	y	n	Raymond Burton Museum
Bedford	21,203	y	y	Historic District Commission	Kendall Shop Museum; Schoolhouse
Belmont	7,356	y	y	Heritage Commission	Province Road Meetinghouse
Bennington	1,476	y	y	n	Pearl Walker Hall
Benton	364	n	n	n	
Berlin	10,051	y	y	n	Moffett House; Brown Company Barns
Bethlehem	2,526	y	y	n	

Boscawen	3,965	y	y	Heritage Commission	Academy
Bow	7,519	n	n	Heritage Commission	
Bradford	1,650	y	y	n	Schoolhouse; Tin Shop; former Post Office
Brentwood	4,486	y	y	n	
Bridgewater	1,083	y	y	n	Schoolhouse
Bristol	3,054	y	y	n	Fire House
Brookfield	712	y	n	Heritage Commission	Covered by Wakefield
Brookline	4,991	y	y	n	House with recent barn addition
Campton	3,333	y	y	n	Town House (and attached grange); shed
Canaan	3,909	y	y	Historic District Commission	Academy
Candia	3,909	y	y	Heritage Commission	schoolhouse
Canterbury	2,352	y	y	Historic District Commission	Schoolhouse; Elkins Memorial Building; Elizabeth Houser Museum
Carroll	763	y	n	n	Twin Mountain Historical Society
Center Harbor	1,096	y	y	Heritage Commission; Historic District Commission	Schoolhouse
Charlestown	5,114	y	y	Heritage Commission	Schoolhouse (archives in town hall)
Chatham	337	y	y	n	
Chester	4,768	y	y	Heritage Commission	Stevens' Memorial Hall
Chesterfield	3,604	y	y	Historic District Commission	
Chichester	2,523	y	y	Heritage Commission	Fire House
Claremont	13,355	y	y	Historic District Commission	House Museum
Clarksville	265	n	n	n	
Colebrook	2,301	y	y	n	Colebrook also home to the Poore Family Farm Museum
Columbia	757	n	n	n	
Concord	42,695	y	y	Heritage Commission	29 School Street

Concord - Penacook		y	y		Rolfe Farm (houses and barn)
Conway	10,115	y	y	n	Eastman Lord House; Salyards Center for the Arts
Cornish	1,640	y	y	Historic District Commission	
Croydon	764	y	y	n	
Dalton	979	y	y	n	
Danbury	1,164	y	y	n	Schoolhouse
Danville	4,387	y	y	Heritage Commission	Hawke Meetinghouse
Deerfield	4,280	y	y	Heritage Commission	Town Hall
Deering	1,912	n	n	Heritage Commission	
Derry	33,109	n	y	Heritage Commission	Adams Memorial Building
Dorchester	355	y	y	Historic District Commission/ Heritage Commission	Schoolhouse
Dover	30,665	y	y	Heritage Commission; Historic District Commission	Woodman House; Damm Garrison; Hale House; Keefe House
Dublin	1,597	y	y	n	Schoolhouse (archives in town hall)
Dummer	304	y	y	n	Exhibits in library
Dunbarton	2,758	y	y	n	Schoolhouse; Cobbler Shop; Blacksmith Shop; Fundraising for cape house
Durham	14,638	y	y	Historic District/Heritage Commission	
East Kingston	2,357	n	n	Historic District Commission	
Easton	254	n	n	n	
Eaton	393	n	n	n	
Effingham	1,465	y	y	Historic District Commission	Normal School; Museum in former store/photography studio; 4 other nonprofit-owned buildings by separate nonprofits
Ellsworth	83	n	n	n	

Enfield	4,582	y	y	Historic District Commission; Heritage Commission	Lockehaven School; Enfield Center School/Academy
Epping	6,411	y	y	Historic District Commission	House
Epsom	4,566	y	y	Historic District Commission	Exhibits in library
Errol	291	y	y	Heritage Commission	"Lock-up"
Exeter	14,306	y	y	Historic District Commission	
Farmington	6,786	y	y	n	Exhibits in library
Fitzwilliam	2,396	y	y	Historict District Commission	House
Francestown	1,562	y	y	Heritage Commission	Academy
Franconia	1,104	y	y	n	Heritage Museum (1878 Farmhouse)
Franklin	8,477	y	y	Heritage Commission	House in Webster Complex
Freedom	1,489	y	y	Heritage Commission	Allard House and Barn
Fremont	4,283	y	y	n	
Gilford	7,126	y	y	Historic District Commission; Heritage Commission	Mt. Belknap Grange/Store; Union Meetinghouse; Benjamin Rowe House
Gilmanton	3,777	y	y	Historic District Commission	Academy
Gilsum	813	y	y	n	Town House; Blacksmith Shop
Goffstown	17,651	y	y	Historic District Commission	General Store; Schoolhouse
Gorham	2,848	y	y	n	Depot
Goshen	810	y	n	n	
Grafton	1,340	y	y	n	Museum; Schoolhouse; Tramp House; Church; Parsonage; Carding Mill
Grantham	2,985	y	y	n	Space in Town Hall
Greenfield	1,749	y	y	n	Barn; Museum Building

Greenland	3,549	n	n	n	
Greenville	2,105	y	n	n	
Groton	593	y	y	n	Schoolhouse
Hampstead	8,523	y	y	Historic District/Heritage Commission	Former Library
Hampton	15,430	y	y	Heritage Commission	Tuck Museum campus (farmhouse, fire house, schoolhouse, barn, beach cottage)
Hampton Falls	2,236	y	y	Heritage Commission	Schoolhouse; Former Library
Hancock	1,654	y	y	Historic District Commission	House (owned since 1903)
Hanover	11,260	y	y	n	Webster Cottage Museum; Tunis Schoolhouse (privately owned)
Harrisville	961	n	n	Historic District Commission	Historic Harrisville works to preserve town's historic assets
Hart's Location	41	n	n	n	
Haverhill	4,697	y	y	Heritage Commission	Ladd Street School
Hebron	602	y	n	Heritage Commission; Historic District Commission	Exhibits in Library
Henniker	4,836	y	y	Historic District Commission	
Hill	1,089	y	y	n	Hill Center Meetinghouse
Hillsborough	6,011	y	y	Historic District Commission	Hillsboro Heritage Museum (Fire House); Hillsboro Historical Society operates the Franklin Pierce Homestead
Hinsdale	4,046	y	y	n	Ebenezer Hinsdale House
Holderness	2,108	y	y	n	North Holderness Baptist Church (relocated in 1994)
Hollis	7,684	y	y	Historic District Commission; Heritage Commission	Fire House; Wheeler House; Schoolhouse (operated as separate museum)
Hooksett	13,451	y	y	Heritage Commission	Former Library; Robie's Store owned by separate preservation nonprofit

Hopkinton	5,589	y	y	n	William H. Long Memorial Building
Hudson	24,467	y	y	n	Hills House
Jackson	816	y	y	n	Former Town Hall
Jaffrey	5,457	y	y	Historic District Commission	Schoolhouse; Hearse House (to be reconstructed)
Jefferson	1,107	y	y	n	Church
Keene	23,409	y	y	Heritage Commission	Cheshire County Historical Society; Wyman Tavern; Ball Mansion
Kensington	2,124	y	y	n	Schoolhouse
Kingston	6,025	y	y	Heritage Commission; Historic District Commission	Church; Depot
Laconia	15,951	y	y	Heritage Commission	Exhibits in Library; Lake Winnipesaukee Museum in Wiers Beach
Lancaster	3,507	y	y	n	Wilder Holton House Museum
Landaff	415	y	n	n	Covered by Lisbon
Langdon	688	n	n	Heritage Commission	
Lebanon	13,151	y	y	Historic Commission; Historic District/Heritage Commission	Marion J. Carter Homestead
Lee	4,330	y	y	Historic Commission; Heritage Commission	Museum behind town hall
Lempster	1,154	y	y	n	Meetinghouse
Lincoln	1,662	y	y	n	Upper Pemigewasset Historical Society
Lisbon	1,595	y	y	n	Exhibits in Library
Litchfield	8,271	y	y	n	Old Town Hall
Littleton	5,928	y	y	n	Basement of Historic Opera House/Town Building
Londonderry	24,129	y	y	Heritage Commission	Morrison House Museum; Blacksmith Shop; Parmenter Barn; Rev. Morrison House (to be rebuilt)
Loudon	5,317	y	y	n	Museum in Town Hall

Lyman	533	y	n	n	Covered by Lisbon
Lyme	1,716	y	y	Heritage Commission	Academy
Lyndeborough	1,683	y	n	Heritage Commission	
Madbury	1,771	y	y	Historic District Commission	Exhibits in Library
Madison	2,502	y	y	n	
Manchester	109,565	y	y	Heritage Commission	Millyard Museum
Marlborough	2,603	y	y	Heritage Commission	Exhibits in Library
Marlow	742	y	y	Historic District Commission	Chapel
Mason	1,382	y	n	Historic District Commission	
Meredith	6,241	y	y	n	Main Street Museum; Pottle Meetinghouse
Merrimack	25,494	y	y	Heritage Commission	Schoolhouse
Middleton	1,783	n	n	Heritage Commission	
Milan	1,337	n	n	n	Covered by Berlin and Coos County Historical Society
Milford	15,115	y	y	Heritage Commission	Carey House Museum
Milton	4,598	y	y	n	(Also, NH Farm Museum)
Monroe	788	y	y	n	Grange Hall (society on hiatus for lack of members)
Mont Vernon	2,409	y	y	Historic District Commission	2nd Floor of Town Hall
Moultonborough	4,044	y	y	Heritage Commission	Lamprey House
Nashua	86,494	y	y	Historic District Commission	Florence H. Speare Memorial Museum; Abbot-Spalding House
Nelson	729	y	n	n	Covered by Cheshire County Historical Society
New Boston	5,321	y	y	n	Wason Memorial Building
New Castle	968	y	y	Historic District Commission	Former Library
New Durham	2,638	y	n	n	
New Hampton	2,165	y	y	Heritage	Meetinghouse/Chapel

				Commission	
New Ipswich	5,099	y	y	Heritage Commission	Brick Schoolhouse
New London	4,397	y	y	n	Campus (16 buildings)
Newbury	2,072	y	y	n	Sherman Hall; Center Meetinghouse is a separate nonprofit
Newfields	1,680	n	n	n	Recently disbanded
Newington	753	y	y	Historic District Commission	Parsonage
Newmarket	8,936	y	y	Heritage Commission	Schoolhouse
Newport	6,507	y	y	Historic District/Heritage Commission	Nettleton House; DAR operates the Little Red Schoolhouse museum
Newton	4,603	y	y	n	Schoolhouse
North Hampton	4,301	y	y	Heritage Commission	Exhibits in Library
Northfield	4,829	y	n	n	
Northumberland	2,288	y	y	n	Old Meetinghouse
Northwood	4,241	y	y	n	Exhibits in Library
Nottingham	4,785	y	y	n	Patuccoway Grange Hall; Van Dame School; Square Schoolhouse
Orange	331	n	n	n	
Orford	1,237	y	n	Historic District Commission	
Ossipee	4,345	y	y	n	Courthouse; Grant Museum
Pelham	12,897	y	y	n	Former Library; Sturrus Art Gallery (Former Church)
Pembroke	7,115	y	y	n	Schoolhouse
Peterborough	6,284	y	y	Heritage Commission	Monadnock Center for History and Culture
Piermont	790	y	y	n	Exhibits in Library
Pittsburg	869	y	y	n	Old Town Hall
Pittsfield	4,106	y	y	n	
Plainfield	2,364	y	y	n	Clubhouse (1910)
Plaistow	7,609	y	y	n	
Plymouth	6,990	y	y	n	Courthouse
Portsmouth	21,233	y	y	Historic District Commission	John Paul Jones House
Randolph	310	n	n	n	

Raymond	10,138	y	y	Historic District Commission	Depot and related railroad buildings; Schoolhouse
Richmond	1,155	y	n	Heritage Commission	Covered by Cheshire County Historical Society
Rindge	6,014	y	y	n	Freeborn Stearns House
Rochester	29,752	y	y	Historic District Commission	
Rollinsford	2,527	y	y	Historical Committee	Paul Wentworth House
Roxbury	229	n	n	n	
Rumney	1,480	y	y	n	Old Town Hall
Rye	5,298	y	y	Heritage Commission; Historic District Commission	
Salem	28,776	y	y	Historic District Commission	Meetinghouse; Schoolhouse; Memorial Library; Museum (Town Hall)
Salisbury	1,382	y	y	n	Hearse House; Meetinghouse
Sanbornton	2,966	y	y	Historic District Commission	Lane Tavern
Sandown	5,986	y	y	n	Depot; Meetinghouse
Sandwich	1,326	y	y	Historic District Commission	Grange Hall; Marston House; Schoolhouse; Quinby Barn
Seabrook	8,693	y	y	n	Meetinghouse; Exhibits in Town Hall
Sharon	352	n	n	n	
Shelburne	372	n	y	Heritage Commission	Peabody Farm Museum
Somersworth	11,766	y	y	Historic District Commission	Museum in City Hall
South Hampton	814	n	n	Historic District Commission	
Springfield	1,311	y	y	n	Schoolhouse
Stark	556	n	n	n	
Stewartstown	1,004	n	n	n	
Stoddard	1,232	y	y	n	
Strafford	3,991	y	y	n	Austin Hall
Stratford	746	y	y	n	Church
Stratham	7,255	y	y	Heritage	Wiggin Library Building

				Commission	
Sugar Hill	563	y	y	n	
Sullivan	677	n	y	n	Exhibits in Library
Sunapee	3,365	y	y	n	Flander's Stable
Surry	732	y	n	n	Covered by Cheshire County Historical Society
Sutton	1,837	y	y	n	Cressey House; Schoolhouse; Meetinghouse; Old Store Museum; Musterfield Farm is a separate nonprofit museum
Swanzey	7,230	y	y	n	
Tamworth	2,856	y	y	n	Hall-Dyer House; Remick Country Doctor Museum is a separate nonprofit
Temple	1,366	y	y	Historic District Commission	Schoolhouse; Temple Glassworks
Thornton	2,490	y	y	n	Old Town Hall
Tilton	3,567	n	n	n	
Troy	2,145	y	y	Heritage Commission	Kimball Hall
Tuftonboro	2,387	y	y	n	Schoolhouse; Barn
Unity	1,671	y	y	n	2nd Floor of Town Offices (Former Tavern)
Wakefield	5,078	y	y	Heritage Commission	School (Heritage Commission has Grange Hall; Spinney Meetinghouse; Depot)
Walpole	3,734	y	y	Historic District Commission	Academy
Warner	2,833	y	y	n	Upton-Chandler House; Lower Meetinghouse; Main Street House Museum
Warren	904	y	y	n	Museum Building
Washington	1,123	y	y	n	Schoolhouse; Museum; Barn
Waterville Valley	247	n	n	n	
Weare	8,785	y	y	Heritage Commission	Stone Memorial Building
Webster	1,872	y	y	n	Meetinghouse; Fire House
Wentworth	911	y	y	n	Depot
Westmoreland	1,874	y	y	Historic District Commission	Schoolhouse; Park Hill Meetinghouse
Whitefield	2,306	y	y	Heritage Commission	Basement of Bank of America Building
Wilmot	1,358	y	y	n	Exhibits in Town Offices

Wilton	3,677	y	y	Heritage Commission	Exhibits in Library
Winchester	4,341	y	y	Historic District Commission	Sheridan House Museum
Windham	13,592	y	y	Historic District Commission; Heritage Commission	Armstrong Building
Windsor	224	n	n	n	
Wolfeboro	6,269	y	y	Historic District Commission; Heritage Commission	Clark House; Fire House; Barn; Schoolhouse
Woodstock	1,374	y	n	n	Covered by Upper Pemigewasset Historical Society

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