

New Town Hall Policies Enacted by the Select Board

November 14, 2023

To ensure that the building remains a vibrant community center for education, enrichment and general enjoyment, and that its historic, functional and financial values are protected on behalf of all Temple residents, new policies have been adopted. It was noted this year during the annual monitoring of the Town Hall that many items have just appeared in several of the rooms. There was also a discussion on what could be hung on the walls. No one room belongs to any one committee or organization. There is no suggestion that any of the items presently located in the second floor Annex storage room or meeting room be removed, however, if you wish to add additional items or replace an item, approval should be sought first.

POLICY: Storage of items

Requests for storage space of any items in the Town Hall, including all Annex rooms should be sent for review to the TTHAC. The TTHAC will then bring their recommendation to the Select Board for a final decision.

Factors to be considered:

- Official Town Committees will be given preferential consideration.
- Is this a request from a Town Committee?
- Is this committee a Quasi Municipal Organization?
- Is this item important to the history of Temple?
- Will this item or items reduce much needed space for Town Committees?
- Do these items to be stored represent the Town and its sense of community spirit?

POLICY: Hanging and suspending any art work, plaques, memorabilia and all decorative materials

Any request to hang or suspend any art work, plaques, memorabilia and all decorative materials on the walls of all rooms in the Annex and the Temple Town Hall should be sent for review to the TTHAC. The TTHAC will then bring their recommendation to the Select Board for a final decision.

Factors to be considered:

- Is this item important to the history of Temple?
- Does it represent the Town and its sense of community spirit?
- Is it a Town Hall historic item with donor acknowledgement?
- Given the extraordinary number of individuals who have given so much to this Town, acknowledging the service of individuals is discouraged.

A Bit of the History of our Town Hall

The Temple Town Hall and its sister structure, the Congregational Church of Temple, both built in 1842 and both emblematic of the provincial Greek Revival style so popular in the early 19th century, give the center of Temple village its distinctive appearance and form its “heart”. The Temple Town Hall was originally built as a Union meeting house, predominantly by and for the use of local Universalists. With the help of James Garvin, State Architectural Historian, in June 2007, the Temple Town Hall was found to be significant under National Register Criteria A and C, and has been listed on both the State and National Registers of Historic Places.¹

The paragraphs below were extracted from the NHDHR Individual Inventory Form, prepared by James Garvin, to help remind us of the sense of importance of the Temple Town Hall:

“As the Greek Revival style supplanted the Federal, the pedimented meeting house design grew ever more popular. Many such structures were built by various sects during the 1830s and later, becoming almost a standard design for small or medium-sized meeting houses across New Hampshire. The design was adapted to smaller meeting houses having only a small gallery above their front entries, and to larger buildings having galleries that also extend along both side walls of the building, with a second tier of windows at the gallery level.

The Temple Town Hall served as the seat of local government in the town of Temple (incorporated 1768) from 1889 until a municipal building, constructed in the 1980s, supplanted many of the functions of the old building. Since the new municipal building was completed, the old Town Hall has been used mostly for social functions, and continues to serve those purposes in the community.

The auditorium retains several features that date from construction of the building in 1842, including its 16-over-16 window sashes and fluted window casings with square corner blocks. Other details were added as the room was adapted for use as an auditorium and social space. The wainscoting is composed of vertical, beaded boards laid edge-to-edge. The proscenium of the stage has flat side and top casings. The upper corners of the stage opening are defined by

¹ Credit to Richard Monahan, AIA (Deceased)

heavy band-sawn brackets of the type that were used to support exterior doorway hoods in the late nineteenth century. The wall piers are articulated by applied moldings that appear to date from 1909 and were added to provide the appearance of panels to otherwise flat wall surfaces between each window.”

From 2003 to 2009, with grants and funds raised by the Friends of Temple Town Hall, the Town added the Annex (2008) and then proceeded to renovate and restore the original portion ensuring this building would retain its historic character and remain the center of Town activities. The Friends of Temple Town Hall, a 501c3, disbanded in 2010 and became an official town committee, the Temple Town Hall Advisory Committee.