

Temple Town Hall

~ 1842 ~

Temple, NH



Temple Town Hall

History:

The Temple Town Hall was constructed in 1842 as Union Hall, primarily to serve a congregation of Universalists who had previously shared the use of Temple's meeting house with the local Congregationalists, occupying the pulpit one quarter of the time, or one Sunday each month. Both the Congregationalists and the Universalists abandoned the early meeting house in 1842, and both sects simultaneously built similar church structures facing Temple's common, where the old meeting house had been sited.

Its architecture is emblematic of the provincial Greek revival style so popular in the early 19th century and gives the center of Temple village its distinctive appearance. The structure's facade has been altered little throughout the years and exhibits features characteristic to this type of church built during the period from about 1820 to 1850 in New Hampshire. The interior retains its original spatial plan, including the large auditorium and gallery above the entry area.

Union Hall, as it was originally named, was little used during the 1850s - 1860s. In 1875 the remaining members of the Union Society sold the building to Thomas Dugan, a charter member of Miller Grange, for \$292.00. In turn, Thomas Dugan sold the building to a stock company formed by grange members. The Grange, or Patrons of Husbandry, was likewise a powerful social movement. One purpose of the fraternal order was to promote the economic interests of farmers, who were suffering from declining influence as manufacturing and mercantile interests grew predominant in the monetary and political life of the United States. A second purpose was to promote education, fellowship, and socialization among rural people, who often suffered from isolation and social sterility. The Miller Grange used the hall for their own gatherings, eventually renting it to the town for their meetings. The Miller Grange flourished in the years immediately following its founding, and appears to have carried out the most significant change to the original structure, i.e. the addition of a rear extension within the main hall, which provided a stage and antechambers for dramatic presentations. Following a decline in membership during the 1880s, the Miller Grange sold Union Hall to the Town of Temple for \$1,000 in 1889, to be used as its Town Hall.

The Temple Town Hall was utilized for municipal office space and to hold its Town Meetings until about 1990, when a new Municipal Building was constructed at 423 Route 45. Since then, it has been used primarily to host town forums and a variety of social functions, continuing its long history of serving as the heartbeat of this rural community. *

Rehabilitation Time frame & Cost:

In 2003, a small but tenacious group formed the Friends of Temple Town Hall, their mission being to restore the Town Hall. The important role that the Town Hall plays in the life of the village was clearly recognized by the townspeople, as demonstrated by their enthusiastic response to the rehabilitation project. With the assistance of grants from HUD, LCHIP, and the NH Conservation License Plate Program, Town funds, proceeds from numerous fundraising events, and the generous donations from many individuals and Town organizations, \$800,000 was raised over the course of the next six years. Only \$60,000 of the funding was raised through Town taxes! The Temple Town Hall rehabilitation was completed in June 2009.

Preserving History/Improving Function:

Construction of the Town Hall Annex, Phase I of the project, was completed in 2007. It houses all the new mechanics for the entire facility, a new kitchen, meeting rooms, and two new restrooms.

Following completion of the Annex, restoration of the historic main hall was painstakingly undertaken. An example of a historically significant feature uncovered and restored during the process is the building's original wide plank wainscoting, now visible in the main entry and the newly installed handicap-accessible restroom. The original gallery above the main hall, enclosed by partitions during the mid-20th century, was also re-opened and restored. Accessed by its original staircase, the gallery now once again provides additional seating. The hall's original windows, with their original glass panes, were carefully removed and restored, and the stage facilities were updated to expand their functionality.

Temple's Perspective:

Understanding the crucial role that New England town halls and meeting houses play in the preservation and ongoing revitalization of sustainable small-town communities today, the people of Temple are proud to have preserved their own Town Hall. In joining its lengthy list of preceding stewards, the Friends of Temple Town Hall, now a Town Committee known as the Temple Town Hall Advisory Committee is pleased to have also contributed to ensuring the Temple Town Hall remains historically preserved and vibrant for future generations.

The Temple Town Hall Advisory Committee:

The primary purpose of this committee is to assist in monitoring the use and condition of this building, advising the Select Board on any issues arising that might impact the Town Hall's functionality or appearance. This will 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. Additionally, this will assist the Town in fulfilling its obligation to preserve the Town Hall in the same structural condition and state of repair as when its rehabilitation was completed, in accordance with but not limited to the term of the Stewardship Agreement that exists between the Town of Temple and the Land and Community Heritage Investment Program (LCHIP). Extending beyond the LCHIP agreement timeframe, the existence of this advisory committee will ensure that the same spirit of Town Hall stewardship is carried forth, and that the preservation of this building continues in perpetuity.

** Historical information: National Register of Historic Places Registration Form completed by James Garvin, Architectural Historian, New Hampshire Division of Historical Resources*

Photos credits: Jim Thomas, Ron Pulos, and David Repak

Temple Town Hall

Constructed 1842

Rehabilitated 2009

Friends of Temple Town Hall Board of Directors

George L. Andersen
Richard A. Benotti
Sandra F. Benotti
Honey C. Hastings
Richard V. Keuper
Constance C. Kieley
Anne D. Lunt
Susan Q. Pierce

Ronald A. Pulos
Ann L. Repak
David N. Repak
Martha M. Scott
James A. Thomas
Sydney P. Thomas
J. Walter Young

William N. Banks, Honorary
Tedd Petro, Board of Selectmen Liaison

Architect: Richard M. Monahan, Jr. AIA Architects
Contractor: Ingram Construction Corporation

This Town Hall is hereby dedicated to its many past caretakers, and to the countless public-spirited individuals, groups, and businesses that believed in a vision and contributed to its historic rehabilitation in 2009. Together, all have ensured that this center of community life shall endure for future generations.

It is gratefully acknowledged that this property has been protected with assistance from the following Federal, State, and Town organizations:

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
Economic Development Initiative Special Projects Grant Program

New Hampshire Division of Historical Resources
Conservation License Plate Grant Program

New Hampshire Land and Community Heritage Investment Program

Temple Historical Society

Temple Band

Temple Drama Club

Village Green Committee

"Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much."

— Helen Keller —

Temple Town Hall

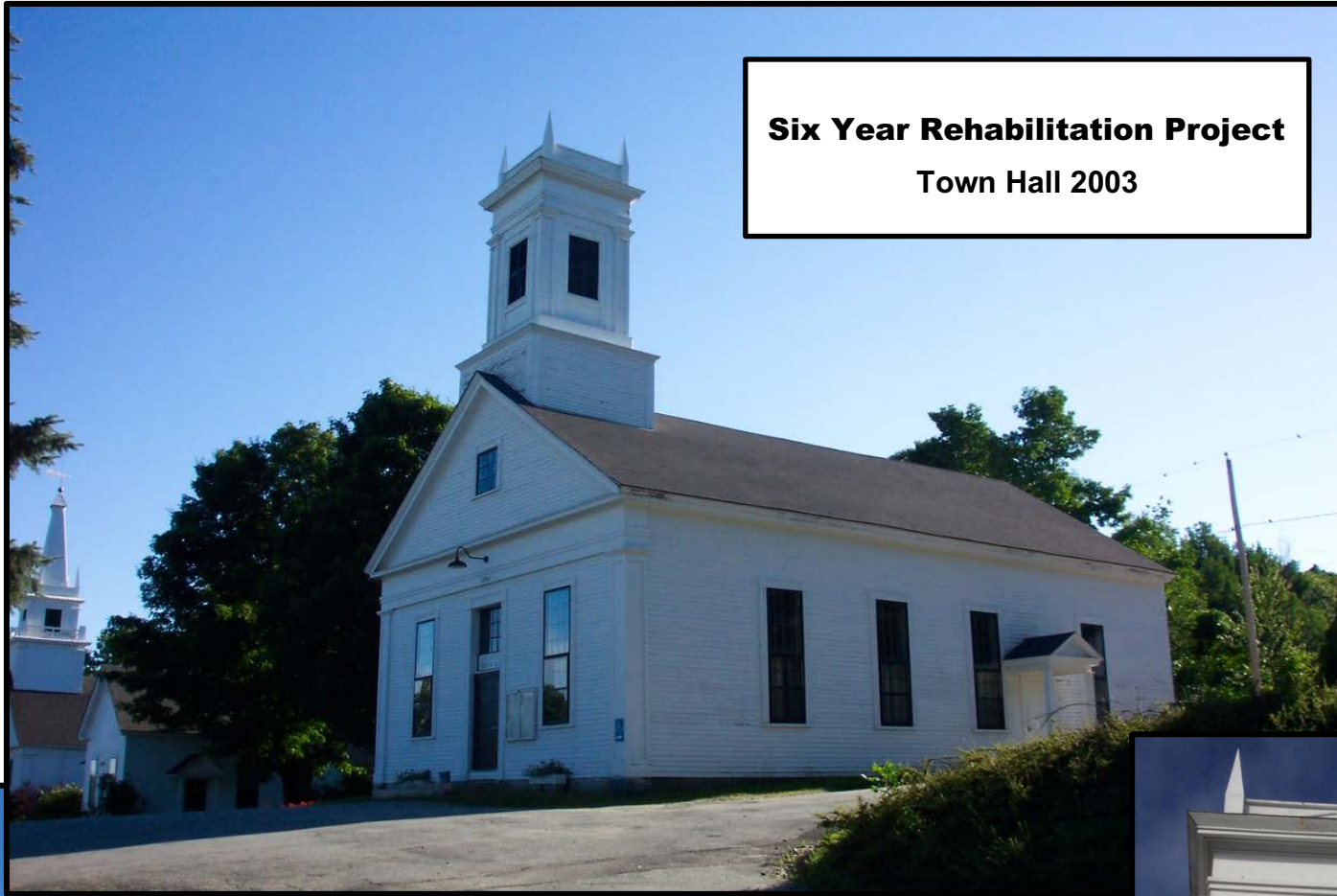
NH Register of Historic Places: April 30, 2007

National Register of Historic Places: May 02, 2007



Historic Temple Town Hall
~ Built 1842 ~
~ Restoration/Rehabilitation Completed 2009 ~
&
Newer Rear Annex
~ Construction Completed 2007 ~





Six Year Rehabilitation Project
Town Hall 2003



**The work began with
the addition of the
Annex and
rehabilitating the
cupola**





**Rot and necessary repairs
were extensive on the exterior**



Chipping paint and many repairs



Before

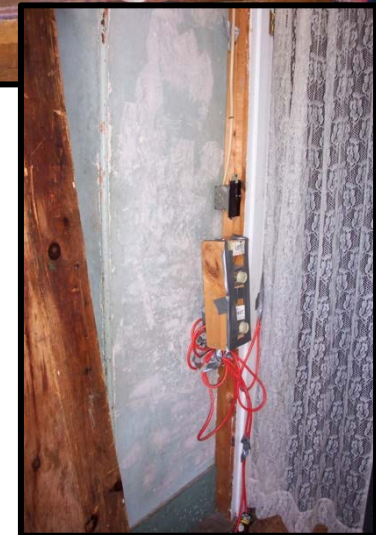
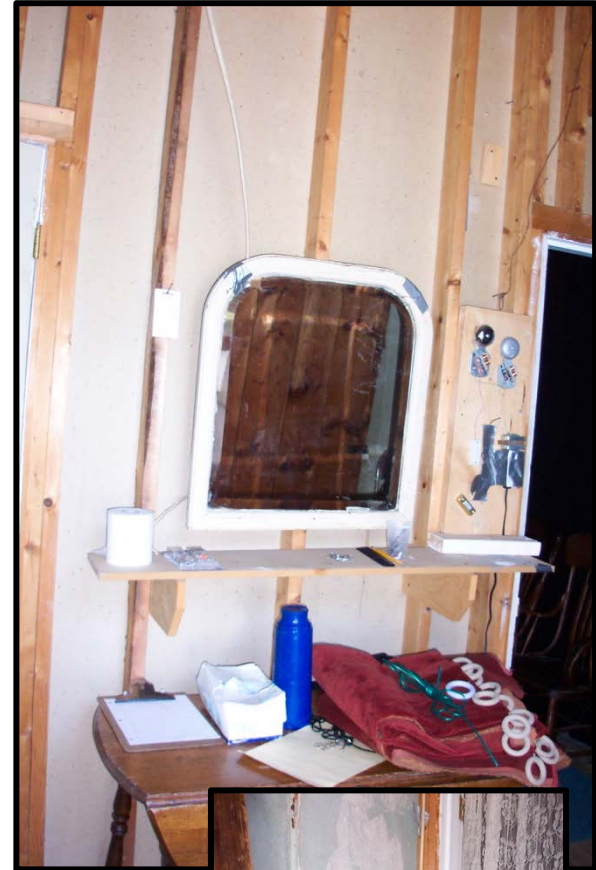


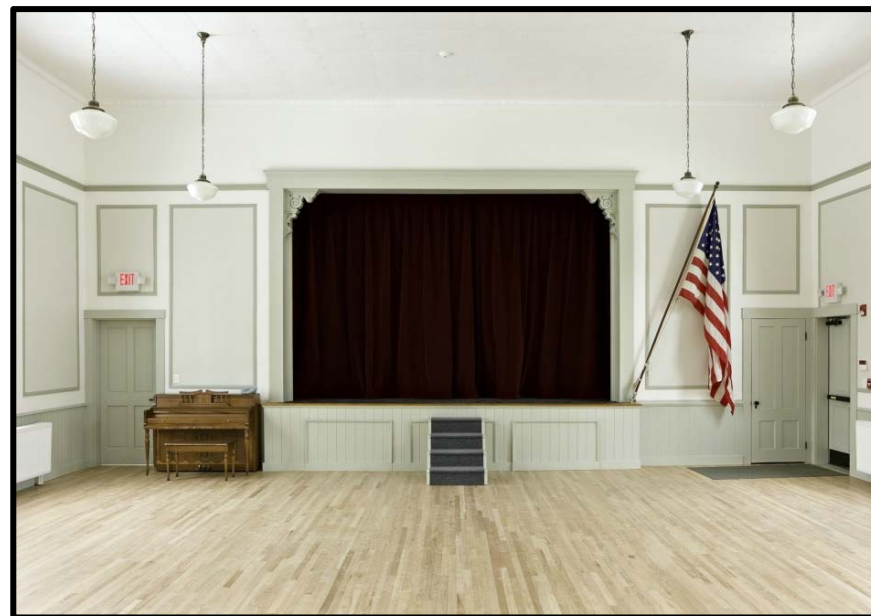
After





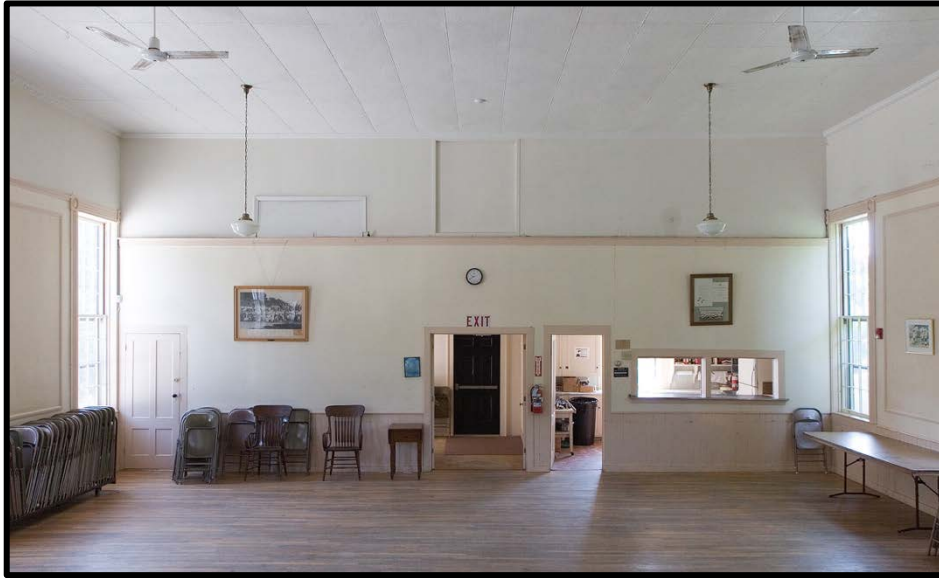
The work behind the stage was also extensive. Unsafe wiring and lots of empty beer cans!





**West Wall and Stage
Before & After**





**East Wall & Gallery
Before and After**





Jade Mortimer, window restoration expert, at work on Main Hall windows.

The Friends of Temple Town Hall hired, Jade Mortimer, Heartwood Building and Restoration of Hawley, Mass. to complete the restoration of the twelve historic windows with the prior seal of approval of the NH Division of Historical Resources.

The window restoration involved repairing the damaged rails and muntins, replacing 55 panes of chipped or broken glass with antique glass, painting the windows, and repairing the existing counterweight system of opening and closing the windows.

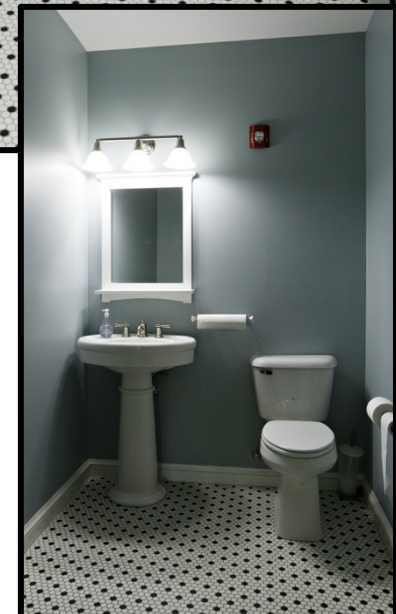
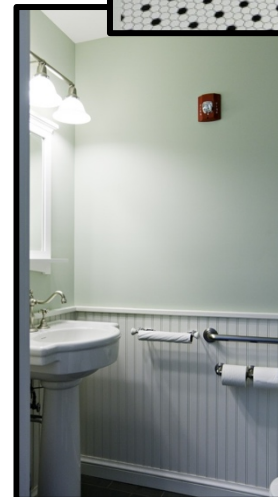


Descending from the Gallery, the split lathes were framed to show the original construction

**Old 1950's kitchen in Main Hall was replaced
with a new functional kitchen in the Annex**



Bathrooms
New ADA compliant bathroom off
Main Hall Foyer
2 new bathrooms on 1st and 2nd floors of
the Annex were also added





Foyer Before and After
Single front entrance door replaced
with the original style
double doors.



Before



After



New England town halls play a crucial role in the preservation and the revitalization of sustainable communities today. Those who built villages like Temple understood the importance to the social fabric of town halls and meetinghouses and libraries, and how architecture helps to foster participation and community.



For more than 175 years Temple's Town Hall, erected in 1842, and its setting in the village landscape have been the heartbeat of our village. The restoration and ongoing stewardship of the Town Hall allows us to continue to gather here to vote, attend plays, take part in meetings and forums, weddings, receptions, and potluck dinners.