

INDIVIDUAL INVENTORY FORM

NHDHR INVENTORY # FRE0008

Name, Location, Ownership

- 1. Historic name Roller Shed
- 2. District or area Schoolhouse Hill (local)
- 3. Street and number Old Portland Road
- 4. City or town Freedom
- 5. County Carroll
- 6. Current owner Town of Freedom

Function or Use

- 7. Current use(s) Transportation: road-related
- 8. Historic use(s) Transportation: road-related

Architectural Information

- 9. Style none
- 10. Architect/builder: G. Philbrick, Frank Towle (road agents)
- 11. Source Town reports
- 12. Construction date 1901 (before)
- 13. Source Town Reports
- 14. Alterations, with dates roof (1920s?), fenestration changes, addition of siren (1940s)
- 15. Moved? no yes date: _____

Exterior Features

- 16. Foundation stone (piers)
- 17. Cladding vertical board
- 18. Roof material metal
- 19. Chimney material concrete block
- 20. Type of roof gable
- 21. Chimney location removed
- 22. Number of stories 1
- 23. Entry location façade center
- 24. Windows none
Replacement? no yes date: _____

Site Features

- 25. Setting rural village
- 26. Outbuildings none
- 27. Landscape features mature trees, fence posts



- 35. Photo #1 Direction: E
- 36. Date 3/2012
- 37. Reference #: _____

- 28. Acreage .5
- 29. Tax map/parcel # 52A- Lot 17
- 30. UTM reference 19 E336341 N4852951
- 31. USGS quadrangle and scale Freedom, 1:24000

Form prepared by

- 32. Name Gale Morris, Peg Scully, Alan Fall
- 33. Organization Freedom Heritage Commission
- 34. Date of survey March 2012/June 2012

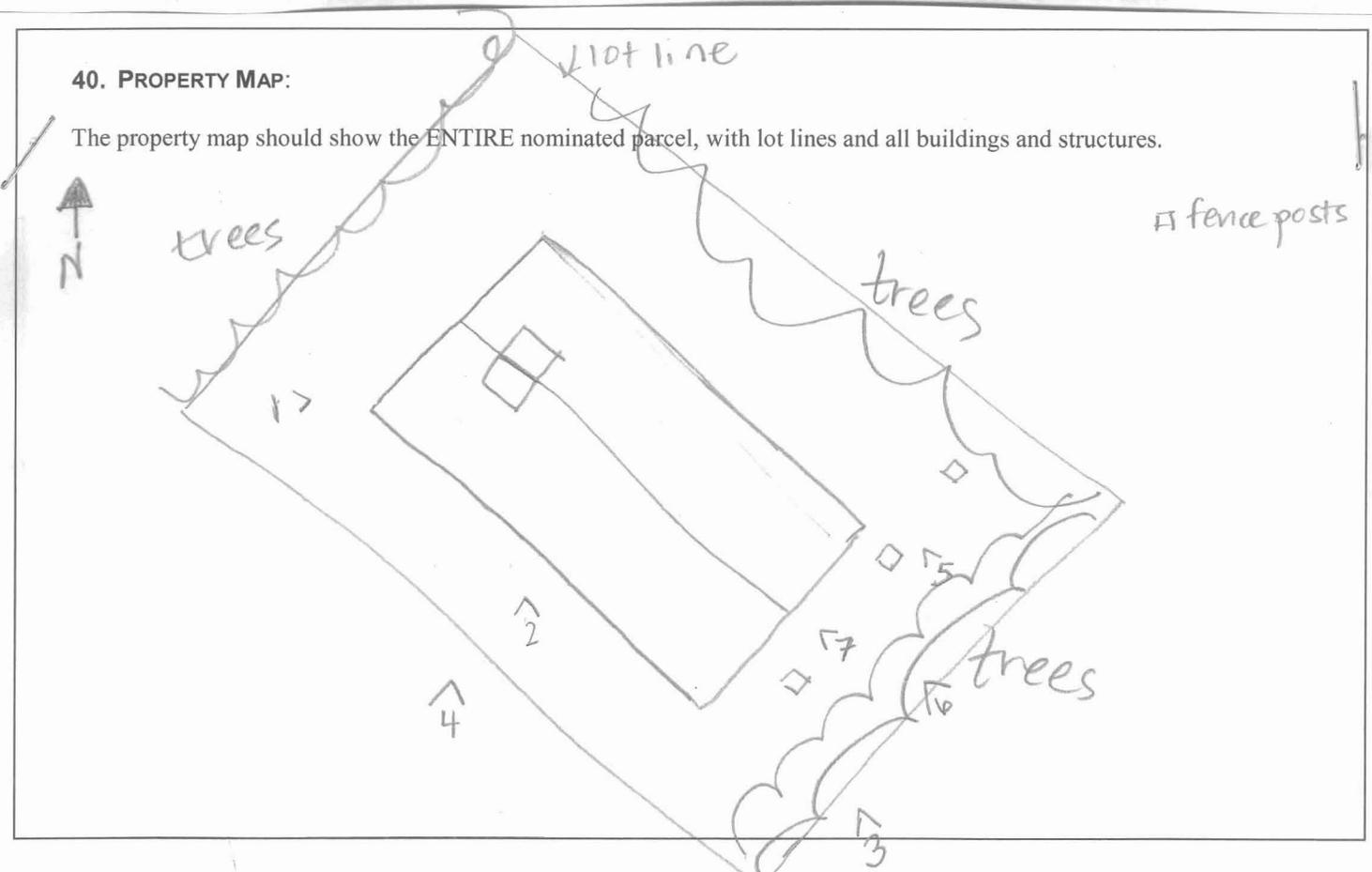
39. LOCATION MAP:

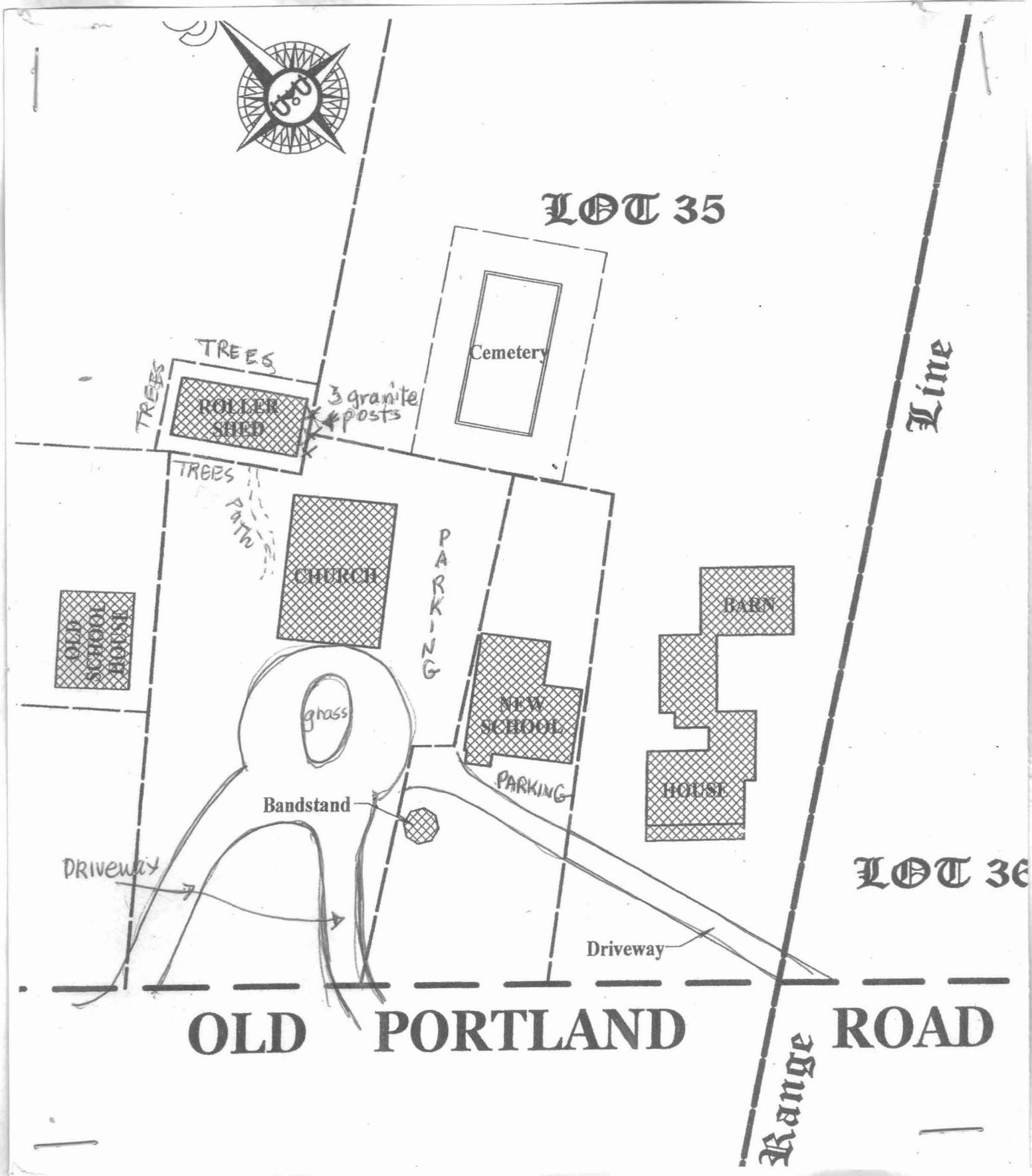
The location map should



40. PROPERTY MAP:

The property map should show the ENTIRE nominated parcel, with lot lines and all buildings and structures.





41. Historical Background and Role in the Town or City's Development:

Once part of Effingham, New Hampshire, Freedom incorporated as a town in 1832. Schoolhouse Hill is the center of Freedom village, a hill rising from Old Portland Road and containing a capsule history of the town of Freedom around the turn of the 20th century. Atop it sit six buildings and a cemetery that have changed only in the details since about 1901; these include two schools (one now a dwelling, one now the town offices), a church (now the Masonic Hall), a bandstand, a private home, and the roller shed that is the subject of this document. The buildings range in date from 1802 to 1901, and assumed their current configuration by the latter date. This historic cluster of buildings represents the heart of early Freedom's religious, social, educational, fraternal and governmental activities. The curved driveway leading to the buildings on the hill has been paved since the 1920s.

Each of the six buildings and the land upon which they were built on Schoolhouse Hill are interrelated in town history. From the original parcel of 45 acres, owned first by Thomas Andrews and conveyed to Amos Towle, Sr. and Amos Towle, Jr. (as early as 1826 and certainly by 1830) and then on to Towle descendants or to the town of Effingham (then in 1831 North Effingham, then in 1832 Freedom), the various tax properties evolved by 1902 to their current configuration.

Practically hidden behind the Masonic Hall, the enormous Roller Shed still stands, used only for storage, but still alive with history. Built by 1901, the roller shed provided the town road department with important storage for road clearing and maintenance equipment in a central village location. Prior to the construction of this facility, various residents in town were paid for storage of one or more pieces of road equipment on their own private properties. This was the way things were done in the rural regions of New Hampshire. Town reports show that the town had several districts, each with "highway surveyors" and workman, as well as equipment that was stored by paying private landowners in the area. There was one overall town Road Agent who worked with supervisory agents in each district. In 1900/01, this was George Philbrick; he was followed by Frank Towle, and these two men are credited with most likely being the overseers of the design and construction of the roller shed. It is likely that construction was done by members of the highway crews that served the central village district.

The major roads in town that served the central village were (and still are) Moulton Road, Andrews Hill Road (now Cushing Corner Road), Maple Street (now Old Portland Road), Scarboro Road, Main Street/Maple Street (now Elm Street), Porter Road (chartered in 1804 as the "Great Ossipee Turnpike", now Route 25, and which ran right through the center of Freedom until 1939), Eaton Road (now Route 153, which was the first road built beyond packed dirt, according to early town history), Mason's Road (now Village Road), Nason Road, and Swazey Pond Road (now Loon Lake Road). Freedom's roads covered many surface miles (a town report

from 1989 lists over 66 miles). The need for a public site for storage for machinery used in the village itself and the interconnecting main roadways became evident by the late 1890s.

This coincides with the nationally-prominent Good Roads Movement. The movement targeted journalists, farmers, politicians and engineers to help build national momentum to improve the quality of road systems, in part to make commerce easier and more profitable. New Hampshire had local proponents, the most prominent perhaps being *Plymouth Record* publisher and editor Thomas J. Walker. In 1897, the New Hampshire Board of Agriculture was holding Good Roads institutes aimed at selectboards and road agents to deal with roads built in conditions described as "frozen and covered with snow for much of the year, the earth turned in the spring to mud so deep as to halt all travel for weeks" (Garvin and Garvin, 38). Freedom's roads were surveyed and maintained and improved on a consistent basis as shown in annual Town Reports and the Town Clerk's Records, though no specific reference to the Good Roads Movement has been identified (other than town reports of 1903-08 wherein the town transacted business with the "Good Roads Machine Company," paying for the company's repairs on the road machine. As the population grew and more roads were built, the various road crews in town were kept busy in all seasons (not just snow and mud months) with maintenance and repair

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of the roadways. Surfacing/compaction of Freedom's many dirt roads occurred gradually, as budget and work conditions allowed. Town Meeting items on the warrants show Freedom spent money on maintenance and purchases of equipment, including snow rollers, a road machine, a grader (that replaced the earlier road machine), snow fences, snow plows to replace the rollers, and York rakes with the various attachments for use in the off-winter times.

The Good Roads Movement worked to educate the entire country on the necessity for and rewards from the development of better road systems; the road agents and highway crews of Freedom worked towards the improvement and maintenance of town roads that covered challenging and disparate rural terrain. They understood compaction and paving over the years, and they addressed local needs to update old dirt roads, keep them cleared and repaired. The Roller Shed provided a central place for keeping equipment and materials needed in the work of road improvements.

The hub of Freedom Village life was kept in motion throughout the year with help from the snow roller, road machine, grader, plow and York rake (used in summer and fall, with attachments for moving through smaller loose stones and road rubble to smooth and clear, as well as other jobs on dry roads such as leaf clearing) that were housed in Freedom's only roller shed.

The building was in continuous use until 1978, when the Highway Department facility funding for a building on Loon Lake Road was voted on in town meeting. After that, various town groups used the Roller Shed for storage purposes. The church stored heavy folding tables and some chairs; the Old Home Week Committee stored tents and tables and signs; the Historical Society stored certain larger pieces that would come to no harm in the unheated shed; the cemetery committees put pieces of iron fencing that needed replacement here to avoid the metal being stolen; the town used it to store various items not in use all year round, such as holiday decorations, flags and bunting, etc.

42. Applicable NHDHR Historic Contexts:

- 82. Pre-automobile land travel, 1630-1920
- 88. Automobile highways and culture, 1900-present
- 103. Local government, 1630-present

43. Architectural Description and Comparative Evaluation:

The town of Freedom is located between the Lakes Region and the White Mountains in eastern New Hampshire. The roller shed sits atop Schoolhouse Hill at the center of Freedom Village off Old Portland Road. At the top of the looping paved drive, the Masonic Hall sits, with the roller shed behind it, northwest. The Schoolhouse (now Town Offices) is to the southeast of the Masonic Hall, with the bandstand directly to the southwest of that building. At the east edge of the hill is a private home, the house of Amos Towle, Jr. who owned the land on which most of the later buildings were constructed; he built the 1830 church (now the Masonic Hall) and was an influential man in village life. At the west end of the hill is the first schoolhouse, now also a private residence.

The roller shed stands amongst mature trees, barely visible from Old Portland Road. Along the eastern side, three granite fence posts remain from a boundary fence that would have delineated the town's roller shed property from the privately owned 1830 church (now Masonic Hall) property directly to the east. The roller shed is the only utilitarian structure on Schoolhouse Hill, serving the practical functions of town government.

In Town Reports of 1900 and 1901 the town meeting voted to build a shed on Schoolhouse Hill to house the snow rollers. The roller shed is a one story, pole-framed building set on sunken stone pier style foundation with vertical board wooden siding and a steeply pitched gable roof designed to accommodate the road machinery and equipment for maintenance and repair used in the first part of the 20th century: the snow roller, road machine, snow fences, grader, York rake, various tools for upkeep, chains and parts, and later, the snow plow. The plan is one unpartitioned space accessed by two sets of double doors, one on the south facade that was set on rollers and one taller, hinged set on the west facade. Windows were added to the south-facing

doors at some point. On the north wall, east end exterior, a cinder block chimney was constructed for heating purposes although no specific date nor expenditure was identified. A thimble is still visible on the interior. The chimney only extends about half the height of the building at this time. It seems likely that the chimney and windows were added at the same time, providing light and heat to road crewmen working on the equipment stored in the shed.

Town Reports from 1910 – 1930 mention small, occasional, payments to local blacksmiths for general hardware and these may have been replacements for the original pieces of hinges, nails, bolts, and handles used on the doors.

From Town of Freedom Annual Reports, it shows changes made during the 1920s:

- 1923-24, Fiscal Year ending 1/31/24
- p. 4 Article #11 To raise money to repair the roof of the Roller Shed
 - p. 9 Detail #27: maintenance expense for repairing Roller Shed \$163.65
 - p.23 Detail#29: Town raised \$150 for roofing of Roller Shed, nails, "express" roofing materials
 - p. 23 Detail#32: Town raised \$200 for Road Machine/Shed and paid North East Metal Co. \$198.25

- 1925-26, Fiscal Year ending 1/31/26
- p.3 Article#8 To determine sum Town will vote "to raise to put sills under the roller house"

Town Reports for ensuing years 1927-28 up until 1950 list sundry repair work done by highway/road crews under authority of the various road agents. It is assumed that much work was done when the budget could bear it, rather than by specific appropriation.

Two layers of a type of roofing tar paper material was applied at some point over the four exterior sides, but the majority of this has been removed by time and weather. Sometime in the post WW II years, a military surplus siren was mounted on the western end of the pitched rooftop. It is possible this was put up after the great fires of 1947. The firehouse for Freedom at that time was located to the south and west of the foot of Schoolhouse Hill, near the millpond. Although the village had telephones by then, this siren would have provided a more comprehensive and quick general warning system to the village, both responders and villagers; people recall the siren going off at various times of their childhoods, and some state that it was heard during mid 20th century hurricanes or micro bursts. The siren does not work now.

The interior of the building is an uninterrupted rectangular space with dirt floor. There are various old pieces of wire fencing, empty buckets, pieces of wrought iron decorative fencing from the nearby Towle Cemetery housed within. The old stove is gone, but the thimble out to the cinder block chimney remains.

44. National or State Register Criteria Statement of Significance:

The collection of buildings and structures on Schoolhouse Hill made up the heart of Freedom Village in its early history of religious, social, educational, fraternal, and governmental activities, and it remains the center of village activities. The roller shed contributes to this history as a built example of the importance of good roads to a small town. The roller shed served to house the town's machinery and equipment for the ongoing building, care, clearing and maintenance of the village road system that made all the vital community activities of daily living possible. The development of efficient transportation pathways within and out of town made for a better economy and thus a better way of life in this rural area.

Many New England towns no longer have original roller sheds, their use being outmoded by modern highway department depots and complexes. This Freedom structure that still stands on the western side of Schoolhouse Hill, in its unchanged footprint, played a significant role in the essential area of transportation.

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The Roller Shed protected and made more accessible the machinery needed to keep the central major roads of this village open in all seasons. Farmers, loggers, the small businesses that depended on stocking stores or shipping goods, the traffic of tourists in and out of town, the travel to and from homes, church, town meetings, school, and public assemblies all required good, passable, clear roadways. Having the Roller Shed on Schoolhouse Hill helped the hard working highway crews of the various decades do their work in timely fashion for over three quarters of a century.

45. Period of Significance: 1901 – 1962 (50 year cut-off)

46. Statement of Integrity:

The Roller Shed remains **located** on the same site as when built in 1900/01. It is on the north west side, set back from the crest line, of Schoolhouse Hill in Freedom Village on Old Portland Road. Its placement amongst a stand of mature trees at the rear of the steep hillside makes it barely visible from the busy road below.

Its **design** was typical of the early 20th century rural agrarian community's attempt to provide simple, durable functionality with local materials for the housing of equipment and machinery needed in a central location in the village. This enormous "shed" was known as "the roller shed" in Freedom. In other communities it might have been called the roller barn, for the architecture is the rectangular pole building common to many of the large local barns

The Roller Shed sits on the north west corner of Schoolhouse Hill, behind and to the west of the 1830 Church/Masonic Hall. It is surrounded by mature trees, and, in its **setting**, faces to the south overlooking Old Portland Road, a scenic residential area of Freedom Village. Three granite fence posts remain along the eastern side to evidence what once served as boundary line between this town owned property and the private land owned by the 1830 Church (now the Masons' Carroll Lodge #57). The Roller Shed remains an unobtrusive structure mostly concealed by hardwood and evergreen trees.

In the first few years of the 20th century, such a storage facility was built from local **materials**. Hardwood posts and wooden boards for siding were set on a typical stone pier foundation. Wood planking covered the original pitched roof top which was overlaid with metal in the 1920s within the historic period. These materials remain intact today.

Workmanship on the Roller Shed was the simple durable construction by local men who were the road crew of the time. They were men of Freedom who had other jobs in town, whether as farmers or field hands, builders, general laborers, small seasonal business clerks, etc. In this time in a small village people assumed several working roles in town to make such a community function. Therefore, these men were knowledgeable in the building trade, able to help erect, maintain, fix homes, outbuildings, barns and other structures. A concern was identified in the need for a storage building for the road equipment and crew of the village, and the Road Agent and his men came up with a solution that took care of that basic improvement to the services they provided the community. The Roller Shed still stands and, although it is in need of repair, is a tribute to the strong enduring quality of the original simple construction work on a plain functional building.

The Roller Shed is a result of the pragmatic, realistic vision of early road agents and their crews. They built their storage facility to serve specific purpose. It is emblematic of a time in our country's history that depended upon and valued self-reliance; when independent-minded people pulled together to solve community problems or needs, spending minimal amounts of money but getting the job done. The roller shed facilitated more efficient and economic treatment of central Freedom's roads in all seasons: winter snow, spring mud, summer vegetation, and autumn leaf fall, not to mention year round storms that might bring down branches and trees. It retains integrity of **feeling** and **association**.

47. Boundary Discussion:

The historic boundary associated with the Roller Shed is shown on the printed visuals of the land parcels and tax map boundaries of Schoolhouse Hill from 1802 to the current year of 2012. The Roller Shed footprint has not changed since its construction by 1902, when it was surveyed and sold to the town by Elias Irving Towle.

48. Bibliography and/or References:

Bickford, Gail. Freedom Crossroads. Freedom Press Associates, Freedom, New Hampshire, 1989.

Britannica Online. The Good Roads Movement (U.S.History). Accessed 15 June 2012 at [www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/238740/Good Roads Movement](http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/238740/Good_Roads_Movement)

Carroll County Registry of Deeds

Chapman, Dorothy Peck. 125 Years of Freedom, 1832-1957. Old Home Week Association, Freedom, New Hampshire, 1957.

Effingham and North Effingham (now Freedom) early road survey maps and reports. Freedom Historical Society.

Foord, Carol C. and Jones, Sheila T. Ossipee Riverlands. Arcadia Publishing, Charleston, South Carolina, 2000.

Freedom district road survey maps and reports, Freedom Historical Society.

Freedom Town Annual Reports, 1893-2011.

Garvin, Donna-Belle and James L. Garvin. On the Road North of Boston: New Hampshire Taverns and Turnpikes. 1700-1900. Hanover: University Press of New England, 1988.

Google Satellite maps of Freedom, New Hampshire, accessed June 2012.

National Archives website, From Records of the Bureau of Public Roads, Record Group 30, "1892-1972", accessed June 10, 2012.

Merrill, Georgia Drew, History of Carroll County, New Hampshire, W. A. Ferguson & Co., Boston, Massachusetts, 1889.

Weingroff, Richard F. Good Roads Everywhere: Charles Henry Davis and the National Highways Association. USDOT, Federal Highway Administration, 2011. Accessed online June 15, 2012.

Works, Nelson, "Freedom Village Historical Walkabout", Freedom Historical Society, Freedom, New Hampshire, 1987.

Surveyor's Evaluation:

NR listed: individual _____
within district _____

Integrity: yes _____
no _____

NR eligible: individual _____
within district _____
not eligible _____
more info needed _____

NR Criteria: A _____
B _____
C _____
D _____
E _____

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Map Resources:

The Old Maps of Carroll County, New Hampshire in 1892, a collection of cadastral map reproductions, Saco Valley Printing, Fryeburg, Maine, 1982.

Town of Effingham, Survey Map of 1805, copy owned by Alan Fall of Freedom, New Hampshire.

Town of Freedom, New Hampshire Master Plan, 1987.

Town of Freedom Village Water Precinct Plan maps of 1913, copy from the Freedom Historical Society and enlarged print in Freedom Town Hall.

Town of Freedom, Survey Map of 1860, copy owned by Alan Fall of Freedom, New Hampshire, and print owned by Freedom Historical Society.

Town of Freedom, Survey Map of 1892, copy owned by Alan Fall of Freedom, New Hampshire.

White Mountain Survey Company Map of 1978, a private firm's map of Freedom, New Hampshire, accessed by Alan Fall.

Memoirs of residents:

Freedom natives, and family recollections, both oral and written, from the family representatives or from the records of the Freedom Historical Society.

Brooks, Dorothy L. Interview by Gale Morris, April 2012. Not recorded.

Burroughs, Bonnie Brooks. Interview by Gale Morris, April 2012. Not recorded.

Fall, Alan. Interview by Gale Morris, February 2012. Not recorded.

Giles, Linnie Watson. Interview by Alan Fall, March 2012. Not recorded.

Hormell, Velma Watson Fall. Interview by Alan Fall, March 2012. Not recorded.

Mitchell, Donald. Written memoir 2007. Original paper at Freedom Historical Society.

PHOTO LOG

I, the undersigned, confirm that the photos in this inventory form have not been digitally manipulated and that they conform to the standards set forth in the NHDHR Photo Policy.

These photos were printed at the following commercial printer OR were printed using the following printer, ink, and paper:

HP PRINTER, BLACK INK CARTRIDGE & PHOTO PAPER
The negatives or digital files are housed at/with: Freedom Historical Society

SIGNED: Peg Kelly, Gale M. Morris

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Date photos taken: 3/2012

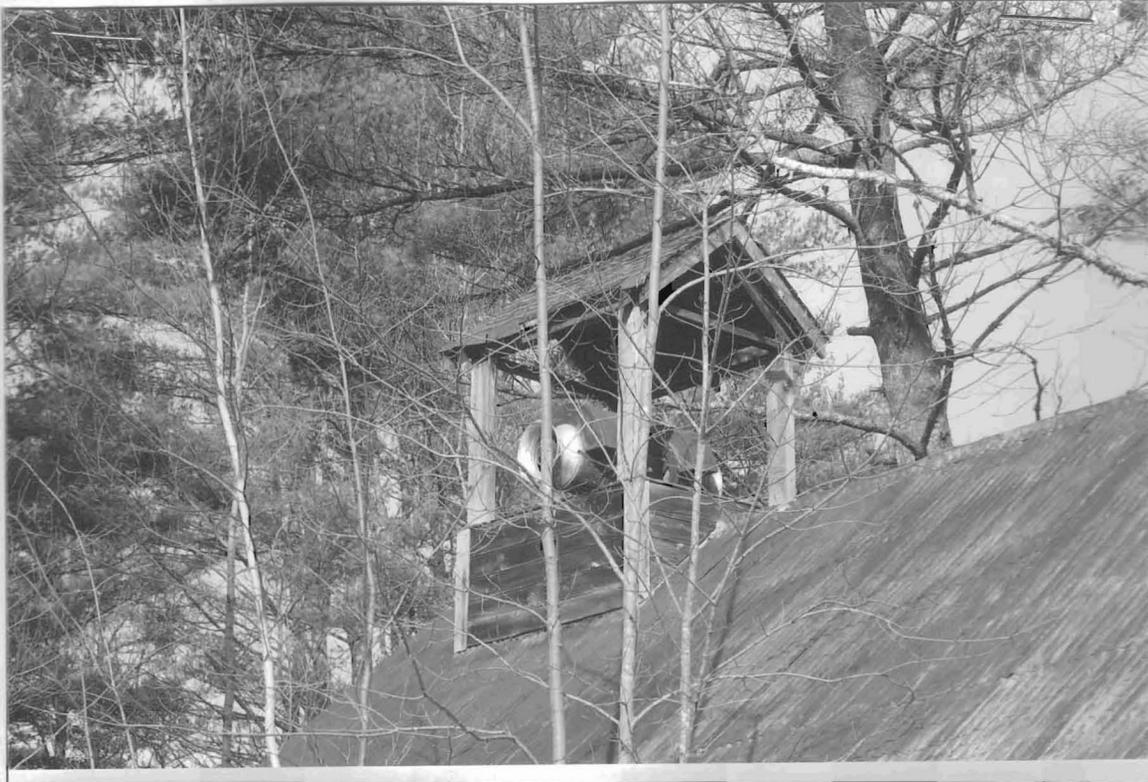


Photo # 2 Description: roller shed siren
Roll and Frame # OR Digital file name:

Direction: NW



Photo # 3 Description: roller shed east side
Roll and Frame # OR Digital file name:

Direction: NW

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Date photos taken: 3/2012



Photo # 4 Description: roller shed main facade
Roll and Frame # OR Digital file name:

Direction: N



Photo # 5 Description: roller shed northeast side
Roll and Frame # OR Digital file name: P6080134bw.jpg

Direction: NW

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Date photos taken: 5/2012



Photo # 6 Description: roller shed southeast side with granite fence post
Roll and Frame # OR Digital file name: P6080133bw.jpg Direction: NW



Photo # 7 Description: roller shed southeast side with granite fence posts
Roll and Frame # OR Digital file name: P6080132bw.jpg Direction: NW

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Date photos taken:



Photo # 8 Description: 1930s photo of Freedom snow roller Direction:
Roll and Frame # OR Digital file name: Freedom Historical Society, Allard House Museum



Photo # 9 Description: 1931 aerial by Lt. Theodore Baker. Roller shed at lower left
Roll and Frame # OR Digital file name: Direction:

APPENDIX

Donald Mitchell, recollections written in 2007 and presented to the Freedom Historical Society:

"As a youth in grammar school, I enjoyed walking behind the old snow roller as it crushed and packed a new snow. Some of the larger snow rollers had a wheel diameter of up to eight feet. A unit of this size was usually pulled by a team of six horses, and occasionally oxen were used. This was hard work for the animals having to wallow through a depth of twenty inches or more of snow, and pulling an item weighing up to two thousand pounds. After pulling the snow roller for several miles the drivers would stop at some farmer's barn and exchange the tired team for fresh animals. This was, of course, all pre-arranged. Later in the week the rested animals would be returned to their respective homes.

The snow compacted would be firm and hard. I can even now hear the creak, creak as the wood slats compacted the snow. There always would be two men perched on a bench well up above those big wheels. 'Boy, what a wonderful job!' I thought. 'King for a day.' Actually it was a tough, hard job and took sturdy men to handle the teams and brave the cold.

This period that I speak of would be about 1926-28. The compressed snow was great for sleighs, sleds, and vehicles with runners. But when Spring came the roads were a holy mess of melting snow, slush, and horse and cattle droppings. Many times the fields bordering the roads would be nearly bare while the roads were still almost impassable. I remember my family telling about walking on stone walls bordering the highway to get to town meeting. Thus, the schools closing for mud season.

But the mode of transportation was changing. The automobile was coming into being, and was showing up in cities and occasionally in the country. People were experimenting with removing the snow from the roadways. One method was to tie or chain a log to the back of a horse-drawn sled at an angle so the snow would be pushed to the ditch bordering the highway. This method was slow and unable to handle a big storm.

I'm not certain when the first V-plow was invented, but in about 1928 my dad, Harold Mitchell, made a V-plow of his own design. He constructed this plow out of a 2' oak lumber and used angle iron for runners. It was a very sturdy plow and he attached it to an old model-T truck, probably could plow a six-foot swath. After he proved this plow was practical, the State of New Hampshire hired him to plow storms of 4" or more from Freedom to Mountain View, a distance of some nine miles. By that time I was twelve years of age and would help him load this heavy unit, then haul it to the fountain in Freedom square where we would dump it off, hitch it to the truck and start plowing. I wondered why Dad didn't hitch it on at home, plow down to the village and continue to Mountain View. Dad explained that he was paid only from the square at Freedom, therefore he wasn't plowing 0.9 of a mile for free!

I went up on High Watch farm in Effingham to work for Charles Watts and was surprised to see the plow that Dad had built stored under the barn, apparently still in usable condition. That would be in the year 1940.

What a change in handling snowfall from the period I write about until today, when big elaborate trucks with windshield washers, heaters, radios and telephones are plowing the roads with ease.

Our little model-T truck worked very hard to plow those storms. Dad was very proud that he had installed a Warford transmission, which about doubled the power of the truck to push or pull. One thing about the Warford shift, you had to stop the vehicle to put it in gear. If you were pointed downhill and moving, you had to ride it out.

I recall that back in that period, the snow storms were heavier than we get today. How I would have loved to have a truck such as plows our highways today!"