

# Historic Building Conditions Assessment Report



Abbott/Laurel Schoolhouse  
7 Shepard Street, Milford, NH



May 2023

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## Introduction

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*Photo 1: Abbott/Laurel Schoolhouse, front entrance, west elevation*

The Abbott/Laurel Schoolhouse, built ca. 1862, was one of Milford's eight town district schools laid out in 1846. This building replaced a ca. 1830s building and was originally located on what is now Ponemah Hill Road. It was moved to Shephard Street in 1898. At that time a basement was added, and the lower foundation was constructed with granite from the nearby quarry. The schoolhouse has been used as the meeting place for the local Boy Scout Troop since 1952, just after it ceased being used as the last active one-room schoolhouse in Milford. In 1984, a small rear addition was constructed. The building is generally used for regular Scout meetings throughout the year except for the winter due to an insufficient heating system.

Preservation Company, in collaboration with volunteers from the Town of Milford, has prepared this historic building conditions assessment for the Abbott/Laurel Schoolhouse. The purpose of this report is to give an overall summary of the existing condition of the property and make recommendations for future treatments and maintenance. Having a comprehensive plan and maintenance schedule will ensure that the building remains in usable condition for many more years.

The Town of Milford, coordinated by Katherine Kokko, received a New Hampshire Preservation Alliance (NHPA) grant through LCHIP funds in 2022 for the purposes of this report. Nicole

Flynn, NHPA former field services representative, visited the site in December 2021.<sup>1</sup> The Milford Heritage Commission, led by David Palance, documented the building through an NHDHR Individual Inventory Form, and it was listed in the NH State Register of Historic Places in 2022. The resource is significant for *both its association with the education of Milford’s children as well as its association with a long-standing community/social organization*. It is also the sole remaining example of a one-room schoolhouse in Milford.

Reagan Ruedig of Preservation Company visited the site in September 2022, and Reagan Ruedig and Kristen Powell collaborated on writing this report. Sources consulted for documentation include town and state histories, town annual reports, local newspapers, deeds, genealogical and tax records, and previous documentation through EMMIT.

The Town of Milford owns the Schoolhouse and the adjacent Shepard Park. Volunteers have and continue to maintain the building with funding by donation. The Scout Troop that uses the building does periodic maintenance on the interior. The town offered a window restoration workshop with volunteer opportunity for the community in the fall of 2021, working with Winn Mountain Restoration. In July 2022, concrete steps were replaced with salvaged, local granite. The town has recently applied for funding through a 1772 Foundation grant administered by the NH Preservation Alliance. The building is overseen by the Milford Heritage Commission. It is in continuous use by the Scouts, with no current plan for expanded use until the town can address deferred maintenance on the building.

Recommendations for any repairs and maintenance follow the National Park Service’s guidelines and the Secretary of the Interior’s *Standards for Historic Rehabilitation*. The links to find specific Preservation Briefs are included with the recommendations at the end of this report.

**Location Map**

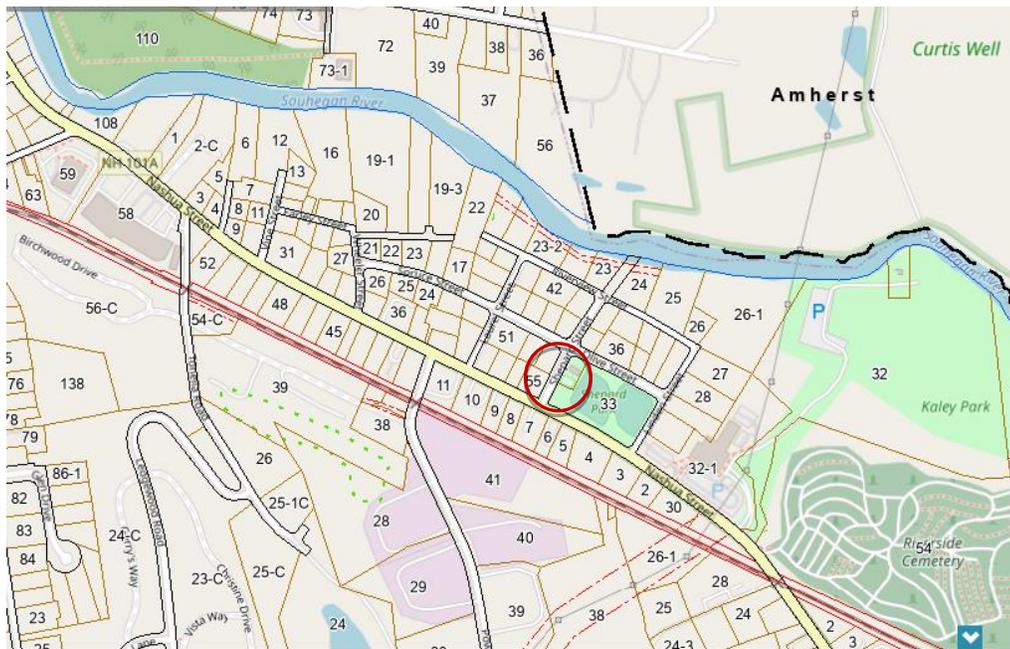


Figure 1: Schoolhouse next to Shepard Park (© OpenStreetMap Contributors)

<sup>1</sup> Some photographs from Flynn’s visit are used in this report and are credited in the captions.

## History and Development of the Property<sup>2</sup>

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### *Description and Setting Overview*



*Photo 2: Schoolhouse and Playground at Shepard Park*

The ca. 1862 Abbott/Laurel Schoolhouse at 7 Shepard Street is owned by the Town of Milford and is rented to the American Legion Post 23 for use by Boy Scout Troop 4. Located about a mile from downtown Milford, it sits on a level 0.22-acre parcel in a residential neighborhood. The building abuts the northwestern corner of the adjacent 2.3-acre Shepard Park. The park includes a baseball diamond and playground and is adorned with bushes and sparse hardwood trees. There is no designated parking for the building, only street parking on the extended shoulder of the roads. The park's south side abuts heavily travelled Nashua Street with mixed use residential and small commercial buildings. Shepard Park is nestled between the Souhegan River to the north and Nashua Street to the south, with the railroad tracks just beyond to the south. Overall, the schoolhouse is located on the eastern side of town and was historically referred to as the East Milford School.

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<sup>2</sup> Some information contained in this section is summarized from the Individual Inventory Form (MIL0066) completed by David Palance.



Figure 2: Google Earth satellite imagery (dated June 2022) of the school, with the playground to the south and the ballfield and associated buildings to the east.

## ***History and Development***

### **Milford's Early Education and the Abbott School, 1794-1862**

The town of Milford was incorporated in 1794. Shortly after, the town's first schoolhouse was built west of Shepherd's Bridge on the town common.<sup>3</sup> Milford also had two short-lived private schools in the 1830s and 1840s, Milford Academy and a female Seminary School.<sup>4</sup>

The Abbott homestead farm was settled by Isaac Abbott (1732-1833) in 1778.<sup>5</sup> His residence was at the intersection of the current Emerson and Ponemah Hill roads. The first Abbott Schoolhouse was built before 1830 on the east side of Ponemah Hill Road, about a quarter mile north of the homestead. In 1854 the land was owned by his grandsons, Harvey Abbott (1801-1863) and Franklin Abbott (1807-1889).<sup>6</sup>

In 1846, Milford town historian David Goodwin laid out eight town school districts. Seven original schoolhouses were centralized in rural farming areas where about twenty-five families were raising children.<sup>7</sup> Most, if not all, were one-room elementary grade schoolhouses. In 1853, Milford constructed a new two-story brick schoolhouse on School Street near the town center in District No. 1. This replaced an overcrowded 1837 building and provided the first high school

<sup>3</sup> (Ramsdell and Colburn 1901, 74)

<sup>4</sup> (Ibid.)

<sup>5</sup> (Ibid., 559,561)

<sup>6</sup> (Woodford 1854)

<sup>7</sup> (Goodwin 1846, 65)

for the town on the second floor.<sup>8</sup> It remained a school until 1929 and is the oldest extant schoolhouse in Milford.<sup>9</sup>

### **Milford's Education and the Abbott School, 1862-1898**

In 1862 the second iteration of the Abbott School replaced the original building as the schoolhouse in District No. 6.<sup>10</sup> The schoolhouse was likely built by the landowner, Franklin Isaac Abbott (1833-1908), great-grandson of Isaac Abbott.<sup>11</sup> By the early 1870s Milford had thirteen schools, including three primary grade schools, two grammar schools, seven mixed grades, and one high school. In 1871 the town adopted the New Hampshire statute to become a single school district. By doing so, terms and grades were made equal across the districts. Milford schools now had three terms of twelve weeks for a total of thirty-six weeks of school per year.<sup>12</sup> Centennial High School was constructed on Elm Street in 1894.

### **Milford's Immigrant Influx, Railroad, and Granite Quarries, 1850-1908**

The population of Milford increased by over 70 percent from 1850-1890. The Wilton Railroad came from Nashua in 1850 and had a significant impact on the development of the town, particularly downtown. A second rail line was established in 1894, operated by the Fitchburg Railroad. By 1896 four trains a day went in and out of Milford, with Boston & Maine leasing or taking over portions of both lines.<sup>13</sup>

Around this time, granite quarrying began to flourish as a leading industry in Milford. The town became known as the "Granite Town" in the Granite State. The railroad provided efficient transportation of freight from the fifteen quarries in town. The railroad also supported nearly a dozen granite cutting sheds.<sup>14</sup> Several of the quarry stone carvers learned the stone cutting trade in Italy. Many immigrant families came to work in the quarries, contributing to the local population increase.<sup>15</sup> The Tonella King Quarry, Young & Sons Quarry, and the Hayden Quarry were all supported by the locals of East Milford in the boom of 1900-1908.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> (Mausolf 1994)

<sup>9</sup> (Preservation Company 2009)

<sup>10</sup> (Hunter 1973, 27)

<sup>11</sup> (Goodwin 1846, 65)

<sup>12</sup> (Fogg 1874, 258)

<sup>13</sup> (Preservation Company 2009)

<sup>14</sup> (Wright 1979, 206)

<sup>15</sup> (The Granite Industry 2022)

<sup>16</sup> (Wright 1979, 205)



Figure 3: 1854 map depicting District No. 6 Schoolhouse. H. & F. Abbott residence to the south and railroad to the north<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> (Woodford 1854)

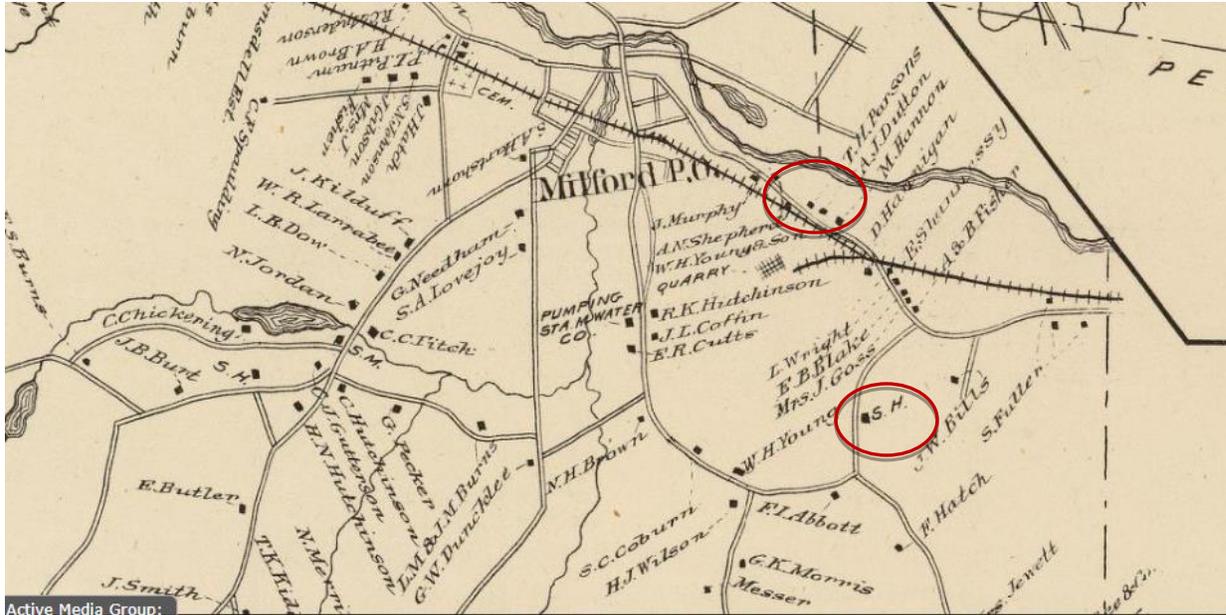


Figure 4: By 1892, the land was owned by Franklin Isaac Abbott. The schoolhouse would be moved six years later just north of the Young & Son Quarry and railroad track to the land of Andrew Shepard.<sup>18</sup>

### Milford's Continued Education and The Laurel/East Milford School, 1898-1951

During the Civil War, farming in the area decreased due to men going off to serve. The reduction of farm families in the south of District No. 6, coupled with the demand to educate immigrant families in East Milford, likely drove the decision to move the schoolhouse.<sup>19</sup> The quarry workers' population was centered in the northern section of District No. 6.

The Abbott School was moved from its original site on Ponemah Hill about three-quarters of a mile north to where it is today on Shepard Street in 1898. In 1899 an adjacent piece of land was donated for a park by Andrew Shepard, who requested that it be named after his great-grandfather, John. John Shepard built Milford's first saw and grist mill in 1791.<sup>20</sup> It is likely that the land of the Medical Center, Riverside Cemetery, and Shepard's Park were all owned by Andrew Shepard. This area was also known as the Laurel neighborhood, and the building was referred to as the Laurel School in the 1898 town report.

An expenditure list to move and establish the school was included in the 1898 town report. David Stevens moved the building at a cost of \$250. Other expenses included site grading, fencing, masonry, furniture, painting, and wallpaper.<sup>21</sup> It is likely that the interior layout of the building was updated at that time with the construction of a stove chimney rather than an earlier large, central chimney, the opening of which still exists in the floor framing (Photo 3, below). It is also possible that some of the finishes were updated with the relocation of the building or soon thereafter, such as the addition of 4-over-4 window sash, the 3" wood flooring, and the beaded wood paneling in the lobby and main room.

<sup>18</sup> (Hurd 1892)

<sup>19</sup> (Hunter 1973, 27)

<sup>20</sup> (Shepard Park 2022)

<sup>21</sup> (Town of Milford, Annual Report 1899, 87)



*Photo 3: Evidence of an early central chimney in the floor framing, with the existing stove chimney behind*

When the building was moved, it was set upon a lower scrap granite foundation, with a full-height basement. This necessitated the construction of a stairwell in the northwest corner. There is some exposed circular mill-cut lath behind the plaster in this stairwell. Floor joists are on 22" centers of fully dimensioned 2" x 4"s, which is evidence of late nineteenth or early twentieth century construction.

LAUREL SCHOOL.	
W. L. Winslow, mason work,	\$38 16
Chandler Adjusting Chair and Desk Co.,	107 40
Mrs. Edw. Conley, cleaning,	2 50
Mrs. W. E. Murphy, "	50
Emerson & Son, furniture,	18 01
J. A. Mixer, painting,	78 73
E. M. Parker, teaming,	2 51
David Stevens, moving building,	250 00
E. J. Parker, lumber, labor, etc.,	86 39
F. W. Farnsworth, barrel,	80
A. N. Shepard, building fence, etc.,	50 00
" " labor,	1 00
A. J. Hutchinson, wall paper,	2 20
J. B. Burt, foundation and grading,	204 00
Milford Water Works, connecting,	48 88
Junkins & Hazeltine, setting batters, etc.,	2 75
A. J. Fisher, gravel,	50
	\$894 33

Figure 5: Expenditure list to move and establish the Laurel Schoolhouse<sup>22</sup>

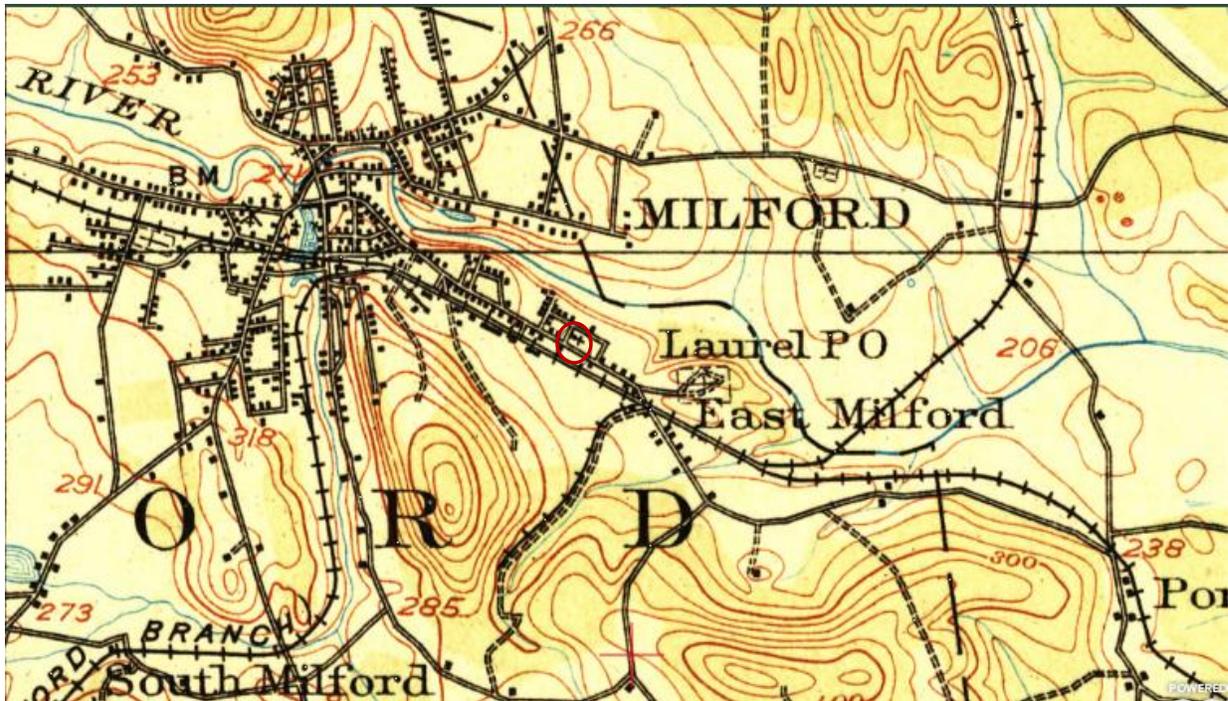


Figure 6: 1906 map showing the Schoolhouse in its current location<sup>23</sup>

Enrollment at the Laurel school in 1913 was thirty-five students with three primary grades.<sup>24</sup> At some point in the first half of the twentieth century, the windows on the southern wall were blocked in from the exterior, and a continuous blackboard was installed on the interior of the

<sup>22</sup> (Town of Milford, Annual Report 1899)

<sup>23</sup> (Milford 1906)

<sup>24</sup> (Town of Milford, Annual Report 1914, 117)

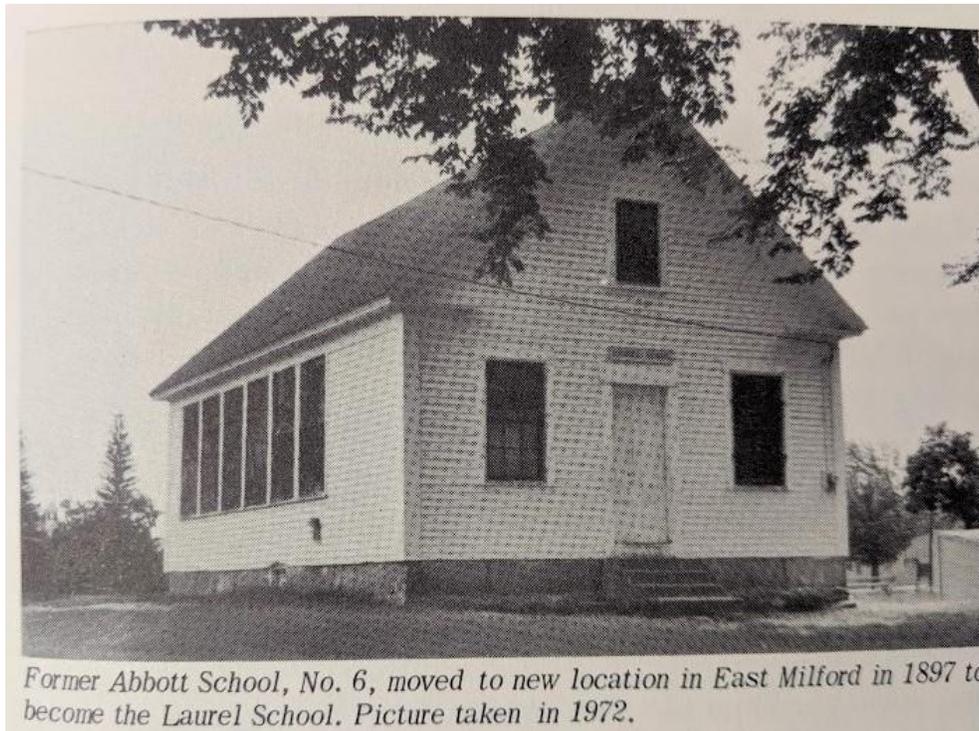
south and east walls. Two bathrooms, accessible from the exterior, were located in the southwest corner.

In 1915 the first ball field was constructed in the park.<sup>25</sup> By 1950 a softball diamond was added, but school enrollment was down to sixteen students.<sup>26</sup> The building was known as the Laurel School until 1951 when it retired as the last active one-room schoolhouse in Milford. A new area school was constructed on West Street in 1961, and Junior High School students from Amherst were now admitted to Milford Schools.

### **The Scout House, 1952-Present**

Milford's Boy Scout Troop #4 was founded in 1917 and is the oldest Troop in New Hampshire. Since then, it has had five charter organizations, twenty-seven Scoutmasters, and thirty-seven Eagle Scouts.<sup>27</sup> In 1952 the Milford Rotary Club sponsored the Scouts' use of the schoolhouse building. Funds were raised by the Milford Rotary Club through a successful auction to create a modern baseball field. In 1961, the new baseball park was dedicated to Hugo Trentini, a respected community leader and Rotarian.<sup>28</sup>

On the southwest side of the park is a tree planted in memory of Edward Comolli by the Milford Community Athletic Association. Comolli served on the Parks and Playgrounds Advisory Board.



*Figure 7: Historic image of Laurel Schoolhouse in 1972 with original fenestration pattern*

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<sup>25</sup> (Shepard Park 2022)

<sup>26</sup> (Town of Milford, Annual Report 1951, 29)

<sup>27</sup> (Ibid.)

<sup>28</sup> (Trentini Little League Baseball Park @ Shepard Park 2022)

By the late 1970s the town began an ongoing ten-year lease to Milford American Legion on behalf of Milford Scout Troop 4 for the continued use of the Laurel Schoolhouse. A large sign with the Boy Scouts logo is on its southern exterior. The building is now popularly referred to as the “Scout House.”

In 1984 a 12 'x 22' addition was put on the rear (east) elevation to provide an office or meeting room for scout masters as well as better access to the basement. The addition was designed by a local builder Waino Kokko to be constructed by volunteer labor. The floor joists were doubled-up for strength with modern lumber, resulting in 10" spacing. A poured concrete floor was added in the basement, creating more area for storage in the basement (Photo 28). The new attic space above the addition provided more storage as well. Insulation was installed in the entire building: six inches in the ceiling and five inches in the walls.<sup>29</sup> After 1972, the four center windows (out of six) on the north wall were removed and sided over with clapboards on the exterior.

In 2017, local historian Fritz Wetherbee filmed a short segment on the Troop in front of the Schoolhouse for their 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary.<sup>30</sup> Today, the park has two baseball diamonds, a seasonal ice-skating rink, a warming hut, and a playground.<sup>31</sup>



An undated photo by Bernice Perry from the Cabinet files shows Stephen Dutton and Eugene LeMay at Shepard Park in Milford, one of the local Rotary Club's many projects.

*Figure 8: Historic image of the Baseball Park with Schoolhouse in background, photo taken between 1961 and 1984, prior to rear expansion of the building<sup>32</sup>*

<sup>29</sup> (American Legion repairs old schoolhouse for Boy Scouts 1986)

<sup>30</sup> (WMUR 2017)

<sup>31</sup> (Shepard Park 2022)

<sup>32</sup> (Trentini Little League Baseball Park @ Shepard Park 2022)



Figure 9: Troop 4 with the Schoolhouse in the background at their 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2017<sup>33</sup>



Photo 4: Rear addition, built 1984

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<sup>33</sup> (Troop 4 2020)

## Physical Description<sup>34</sup>

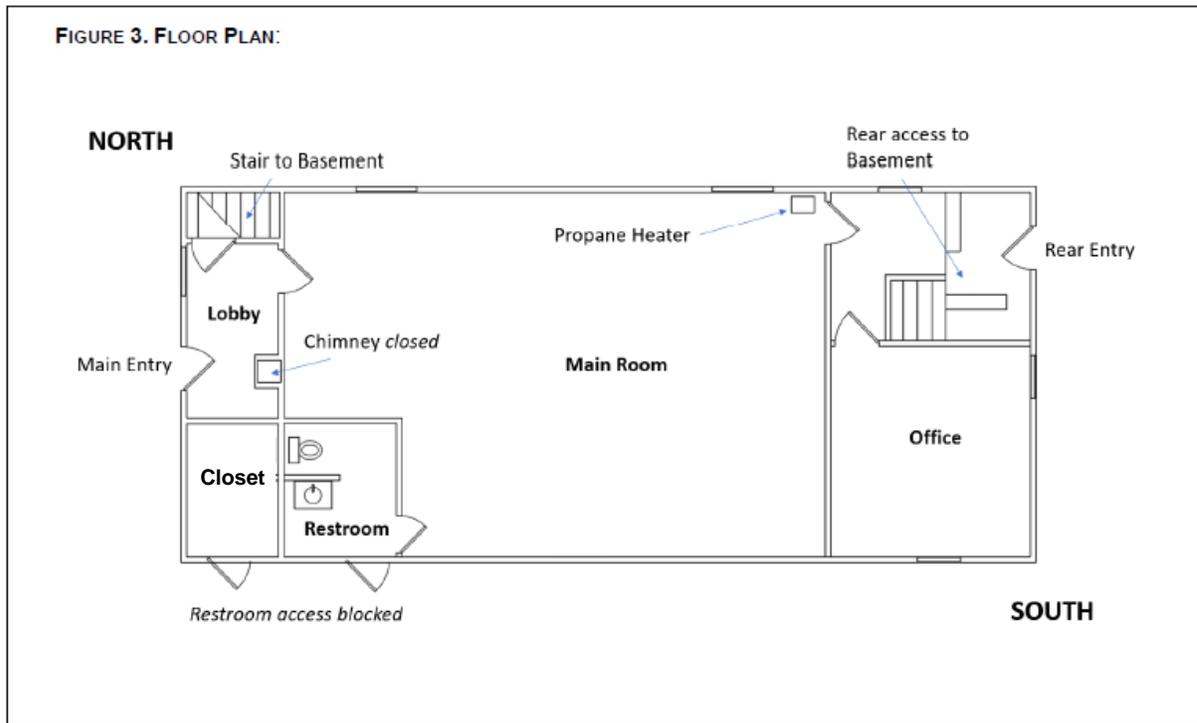


Figure 10: Current Floorplan<sup>35</sup>

The Abbott/Laurel Schoolhouse is a 1½-story, gabled, wood-framed building, sheathed in wood clapboards. The building represents a typical New England, plainly detailed, one-room schoolhouse. The front-gabled building has banks of windows on the side elevations, a central entry door flanked by windows on the façade, and a small, later, one-room addition on the rear.

The construction of the 1862 wood-framed building was originally 36' x 22' with one large room. The framing posts measure 9" x 9" and the beams 6" x 6" to support an open concept on the interior, without the need for internal walls for structural support. The room was heated by a centrally located wood or coal stove, based on evidence of a central chimney opening in the floor joists, now infilled. There was likely a single floor with a low ceiling and an attic space to accommodate the high-pitched roof. The low ceilings and open concept provided a space that was easily heated and served the utility of having multiple grades served by a single teacher or schoolmaster.

The foundation, frame, walls, and general form are typical of nineteenth century construction. Multiple updates, likely recycled materials from the earlier pre-1830 building, are evident. One example of this would be hand-hewn beams, left uncut on three sides (Photo 27, Page 29).

<sup>34</sup> Most information contained in this section is summarized from the individual inventory form (MIL0066) and from site visit notes.

<sup>35</sup> (Palance 2022)

## Exterior



*Photo 5: The roof is asphalt shingled with an interior chimney and plumbing vent in the southwest corner.*

The building is oriented with its gable-end façade facing west. The exterior is sheathed in narrow clapboards, likely mill-cut, with wide corner boards. The roof has a steep pitch, covered with asphalt shingles, with gable eave returns. A corbelled brick interior chimney is at the ridge, approximately 4'-5' from the façade wall. A flagpole rises from the gable's peak on the façade. Two signs are located on the building's exterior: one historic wood sign for "Laurel School" over the front door, and a large, painted sign on the south elevation for "Troop 4 Boy Scouts, Sponsored by American Legion Post No. 23".



*Photo 6: At left, poured concrete steps in 2021 (Palance)*

*Photo 7: At right, new granite steps in 2022*

The building is approached on a newly installed path of granite stones and salvaged granite block steps, replacing poured concrete steps in 2022. An earlier iron railing was removed at this time, but a new custom iron railing is planned to replace it. Photos in the 1970s show the stairs as wooden.



*Photo 8: Arched Lintel window, west elevation (Palance)*

The entire south face of the building has three original window openings boarded-up externally. The windows on the north side are 4-over-4 double-hung windows, likely added in the twentieth century, with a crude wood-framed screen affixed to the exterior. Earlier photos show that this side originally had a bank of six identical windows mulled closely together (see Figure 7, Page 13). Only two remain, as the central four windows have been removed and walled over with siding sometime after 1972.<sup>36</sup> Several other window sizes are used with modern 2-over-2 and 6-over-6 wooden double-hung sash. The 6-over-6 sash on the façade is a twentieth century wood replacement (the original window opening to the south of the door has been infilled with siding), and the attic window in the gable is an older 6-over-6 upper sash with a louvered vent installed in the lower opening. The attic window has an arched lintel, while the rest of the window trim is simple square stock without any bed molding.

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<sup>36</sup> (Hunter 1973, 56)



*Photo 9: North elevation of the building, showing two 4-over-4 windows in the main building and a smaller 6-over-6 window in the addition.*

The front door is a replacement metal door, 35<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub>" x 79" x 2". Two other similar doors are mounted on the south side of building. These door openings were added in the late twentieth century. One is not used and is boarded up on the inside, while the other enters a storage room used by the town's Recreation department.



*Photo 10: A small set of wooden stairs and railings with a landing is on the south elevation. This leads to a storage room used by the Public Works Department.*

The foundation under the main building is of rough granite capped with a roughly dressed capstone. This foundation was constructed for the building's new location on Shepard Street in 1898. The material likely came from the nearby W.H. Young & Son Quarry, now Tonella Road, and drill marks are still visible on several of the stones.

**Interior**

*Photo 11: Blackboard on the east and south walls, metal ceiling, and wood floors in main room, looking southeast.*

The building's interior is comprised of a large "Main Room" accessed from the entrance through a "Lobby" or entry room, which would have been the original vestibule for the schoolhouse. A bathroom is built into and accessed from the Main Room. A 1984 addition on the east (rear) side of the building contains an office, a rear entry vestibule with access to the basement, and an attic storage space.

The interior walls of the original building are constructed with plaster on lath. The main room has low-hung blackboard, typical of an elementary school, on the east and south walls, with vertical wood wainscoting below and on the remaining walls beneath a simple chair rail. The walls around the bathroom addition have laminate wood panels to mimic the original wood panels.



*Photo 12: Interior of the main room, looking west toward bathroom addition.*

Several interior rooms on the west end of the building have been added since original construction: the lobby, a bathroom, and a storage closet (formerly a bathroom). The lobby has narrow beadboard laid horizontally covering the south wall, the other side of which is currently a storage closet accessed from the exterior. The rest of the room has wide, horizontal boards as wainscotting beneath a small, half-round chair rail. The bathroom addition has laminated wood paneling to mimic the older vertical, wide beadboard paneling in the main room. The interior of the bathroom has painted wallboard panels on the walls, and the original exterior door to this location has been boarded up on the interior. The transom above the door is still exposed. The rear addition contains an office with painted drywall and a rear entry a few steps down at grade level. This rear entry room has half-wall vertical pine panel wainscotting.



*Photo 13: Beadboard wall and metal ceiling in lobby*



*Photo 14: Basement door at left*



*Photo 15: Rear door of addition at right (Flynn)*

Most of the interior doors are new. The oldest door in the building is the door to the basement, which is a wooden, Greek Revival 4-panel door with modern replacement knobs, which could date anywhere from the 1860s to the early 1900s. The rear door is arranged with horizontal boards on the interior and vertical boards on the exterior, likely from salvaged pieces and not original. The other doors in the building generally date to the mid-late twentieth century: one 6-panel door from the lobby to the main room (hung upside down, Photo 49), the others flat panel hollow-core wood doors.



*Photo 16: At left, tin ceiling in main room (Flynn)*



*Photo 17: At right, ceiling in the office*

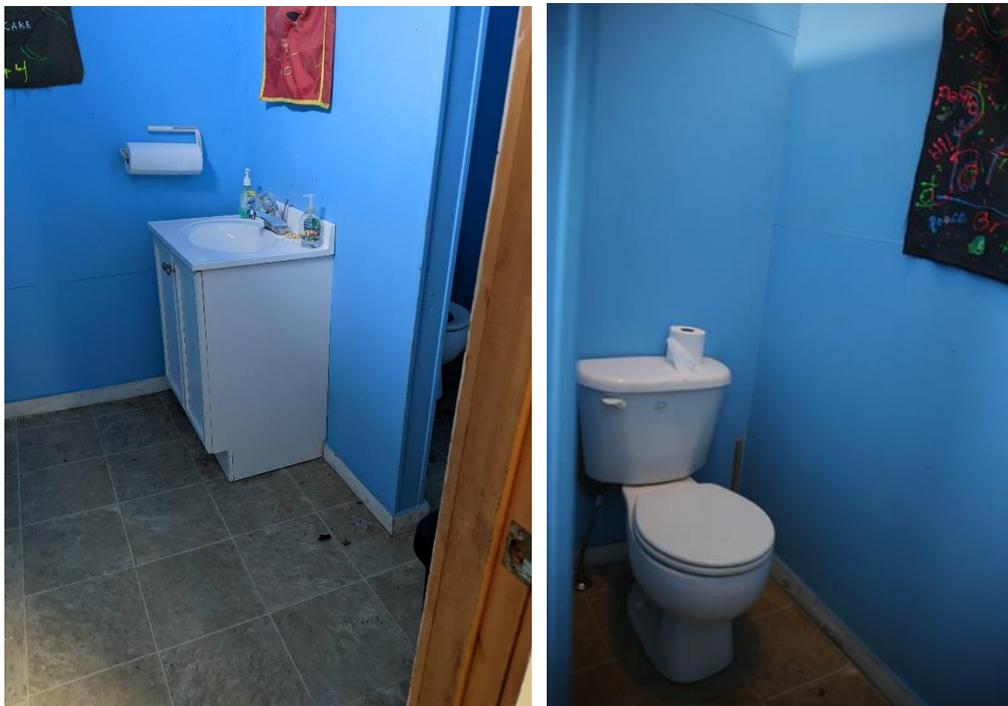
Ceilings in the main building are 10' high and are covered in square grid-patterned tin in both the main room and lobby. This ceiling appears to be historic, though no records show when it was added. The rear addition has a panel and strapping ceiling system and is approximately 8' high.



*Photo 18: At left, close-up of surface of the pine wood floor in Main Room (Palance)*

*Photo 19: At right, hardwood floor in rear addition office*

The floors throughout are 3"-4" softwood (pine) floorboards. The main room floor likely dates to the 1898 relocation, while the rear addition dates to 1984. The floor in the addition was designed and stained to match the older floor in the main room.



*Photo 20: At left, sink in the bathroom and laminate vinyl flooring tiles.*

*Photo 21: At right, toilet placed behind the partition wall in the bathroom.*

There is only one restroom, accessible from the interior main room. The floor is covered with linoleum tiles, and the simple vanity and toilet are modern, approximately 10-20 years old. The room in the southwest corner of the building is only accessible from the exterior. It was previously a restroom for park patrons, but it has recently been converted into a storage closet used by the town's Recreation department.

The attic over the main section has full-dimensioned lumber rafters running vertically with a modest sized ridge beam. Dropped ceiling supports hang from the ridge beam, and the open rafters over the ceiling have cellulose insulation added in 1984 (Photo 22). The attic level is accessed via a ladder and opening in the ceiling of the lobby, next to the chimney stack. The attic space over the rear addition is accessed via an opening in the ceiling in the stair hall, outside of the door to the office. It is currently used for storage, and the main attic is accessible from this space through an earlier window opening in the sheathing beneath the gable (Photo 23).



*Photo 22: Attic rafters and wide pine sheathing with dropped ceiling supports in main section. Note insulation on ceiling and baffles along the walls.*



*Photo 23: Roof rafters and plywood sheathing in rear addition and exterior sheathing of main building, east elevation.*

The basement level is accessed via wooden stairs leading from the entry room as well as the rear addition. The granite foundation block walls contain some stones that exhibit chisel marks, which are generally representative of early nineteenth century techniques, so they may have been reused or salvaged from elsewhere (Photo 24 and Photo 25, below). A later foundation of poured concrete was used for the addition in the 1980s.



*Photo 24: Original granite foundation with marks (pre-1830) laid on top of irregular cut granite scrap (Flynn)*

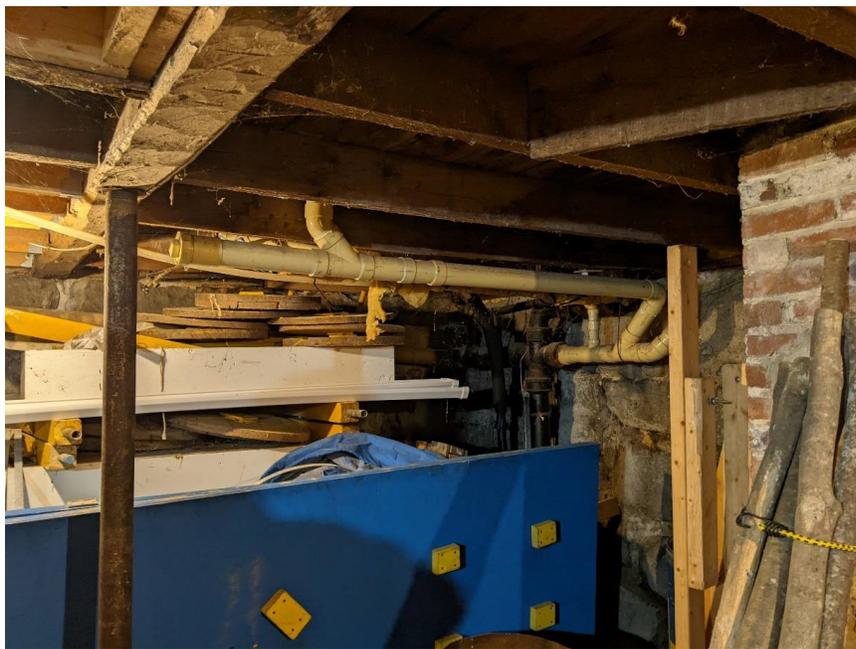


*Photo 25: Granite block support with plug and feather chiseling (post-1830) and concrete foundation under rear addition (at right).*



*Photo 26: The name “John Carter” appears on one of the larger cut granite blocks on the interior of the basement, beside the stairs, in the northwest corner.*

The basement has a poured concrete floor and has several posts added to support the floor joists. It is used for storage, and a locked storage area with chicken wire-covered walls has been constructed on the south side.



*Photo 27: Handhewn main floor beam, above left, and waste line, chimney to the right (Flynn)*



*Photo 28: Basement with concrete floor, metal and wood supports, joists, and storage (Flynn)*

### ***Primary Character-Defining Features***

Since its move in 1898 and despite its change in use from a public school to scout house, Milford's Abbott/Laurel Schoolhouse retains several character-defining features. The following are elements that should be maintained or replaced in kind in any future repair, renovation, or rehabilitation of the buildings:

#### **Exterior Character-Defining Features**

- Overall building form and massing
- Framing elements of the original, main building
- Granite foundation and secondary granite sub-foundation
- Exterior siding and trim details (wooden clapboards, wood trim, corner boards, window and door surrounds, raking eaves and returns, fascia boards, etc.)
- Original fenestration patterns including bands of window openings and door openings
- Original/historic wood windowsills
- Historic 4/4, 2/2, and 6/6 double-hung wood sash windows
- Historical signs (Laurel School and Boy Scout Signs)

#### **Interior Character-Defining Features**

- First-floor original plan, including lobby and the main room
- Lath-and-plaster walls
- Blackboards
- Wainscoting and beadboard paneling in the lobby and main room
- Pressed metal ceilings
- Hardwood flooring
- Historic basement door
- Chimney

#### **Non-Character-Defining Features**

These are interior and exterior details that are less than fifty years old as per National Park Service guidelines and could be considered expendable in future repair and renovation projects. However, they should be documented prior to any significant alteration or removal as part of the building's overall history.

##### **Exterior**

- Modern doors, including transoms
- Modern exterior window screens

##### **Interior**

- All modern wall partitions and finishes in the main room
- All walls, woodwork, and ceilings in the addition
- Restroom fixtures, electrical fixtures, and heating which date to the last quarter of the twentieth century or later

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## **Existing Conditions Assessment**

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### ***Exterior***

The exterior of the former schoolhouse is generally in fair condition, but repairs to the exterior envelope (roof, siding and trim, and foundation) are clearly needed. No obvious structural deficiencies have been noted, and the building appears level and straight. Regular maintenance of all exterior elements will ensure a prolonged life of the building.

### **Roof**



*Photo 29: South elevation showing roof, closed window openings, and vegetation growing close to the exterior wall.*



*Photo 30: North elevation roof, showing degradation and curling of the asphalt shingles.*

The roof is covered in three-tab asphalt shingles. The south slope has been installed more recently than the north and is lighter in color. The asphalt shingles on the north slope have reached their useable life and are visibly degrading.

### **Siding, Trim and Paint**



*Photo 31: East elevation, part of the 1980s addition, showing severe loss of paint on the wood trim and clapboards. The 2/2 window is an older window reused in the construction.*

The exterior shows visible signs of rot in clapboards and window sills in several areas. The paint on the clapboards and trim is peeling in thick layers in several areas, most notably on the east

elevation of the addition. The clapboards on the lower areas of the north side are deteriorated and need replacing. The south elevation could not be fully assessed because of the large bushes planted very close to the walls, which will lead to trapped moisture against this wall.



*Photo 32: Cornice return on the northeast corner of the main building shows paint loss and open joints.*

The trim throughout the building is generally in good condition, but several areas on the main building show signs of decay, especially at the cornice and eave lines where paint is peeling and joints are loose or opening.



*Photo 33: Flagpole and hole just beneath the peak of the gable on the façade.*

The flagpole mounted to the gable peak on the façade has lost most of its paint, and a hole is visible just behind it in the uppermost clapboard. This hole may have been used for access to the rope to raise and lower the flag.

## Stairs



*Photo 34: Wood stairs leading to the storage room at the southwest corner.*

The stairs leading to the main entrance on the west façade have been recently replaced with salvaged granite stones with an irregular stone path approach (see Photo 7, page 18). A new handrail is planned to be installed and should be done soon for the safety of the users of the building. The wooden steps leading to the storage closet on the southwest corner is made of pressure-treated wood and is generally in good condition.

## Windows and Doors



*Photo 35: 4-over-4 window on the north side, recently restored, with wood-framed screen affixed to the exterior.*



*Photo 36: 6-over-6 window on the south side of the addition.*

Several of the windows have been recently restored in a window workshop sponsored by the town in the fall of 2021. This work included the two 4-over-4 double-hung windows on the north elevation. The 6-over-6 windows, also on the west and north elevations, are twentieth century replacements but show UV damage on the interior and paint loss on the exterior. The 2-over-2 window on the rear is a reused window, as it predates the 1980s addition, and needs new paint and window glazing.



*Photo 37: Front door, showing the dents in the surface and rust forming along the bottom edge (Flynn).*

The front door is a modern replacement metal door with a 6-panel design. It is near the end of its lifespan, as corrosion is showing on the base and it is heavily dented. A new or salvaged wood door, with a similar 6-panel arrangement, would be a more appropriate replacement. The other exterior doors on the south elevation are in better condition. The door to the storage room is a modern fiberglass 6-panel replacement. The non-functional door to the bathroom is a wood, 6-panel door, likely dating to the mid-twentieth century (after ca. 1961, see Figure 10, page 16). Both doors have transoms with wood-framed screens affixed to the exterior. The screens, along with those on the windows, are functional but unsightly as trim paint has spilled over onto them.

## Masonry



*Photo 38: Brick stove chimney, with a few areas in need of repointing in the top corbeled section.*

The brick stove chimney is no longer in use and is generally in good condition, though uncapped. The exterior shows some need for maintenance and repointing of the topmost courses of bricks.

## Foundation



*Photo 39: Northeast corner foundation, showing open joints and loss of mortar. Rot in the lower clapboards at left.*



*Photo 40: Southwest corner foundation, showing loose stones and open joints. Stair landing to storage room at right.*

The foundations of the original building are mortared granite rubble capped with limestone blocks. The exterior exposure of the foundation shows several areas where the mortar has deteriorated, leaving open gaps between stones. The original mortar was most likely lime-based, and modern repointing efforts using Portland Cement have been inadequate. The north side of the building has areas of biogrowth, evidence of moisture retention especially behind a woodpile stacked against the building and a wood covering for the water meter, and generally the shade of the large tree on that side (Photo 41).



*Photo 41: North side of the building, showing 4-over-4 window. Woodpile and water meter with cover just beyond. Paint visible on the foundation blocks.*

The poured concrete foundation from the 1984 addition is in good condition. A couple of minor cracks are visible beneath the door on the east elevation. The wood door sill above this area is in poor condition and rotted. The cracks should be repaired or at least monitored, and a new sill with flashing should be installed in the doorway.



*Photo 42: Cracks seen in the concrete foundation beneath the deteriorated door sill on the east elevation.*

**Site and Landscaping**

The vegetation on the south side of the building is overgrown and has been placed too close to the building (see Photo 2, page 6). This situation can cause moisture to be retained against the building and foundation. A large propane tank is also located in the middle of the south façade, alarmingly close to the building. The large tree on the north side of the building also adds to moisture retention in that area.

## ***Interior***

The general condition of the interior is good, if not simply outdated. The floors, ceilings and walls are in good condition, though the floor in the main building has aged and has an uneven surface. The finishes have been regularly maintained, and no signs of significant structural issues are apparent.

## **Finishes**



*Photo 43: Doorway in lobby to the basement stairs, showing unfinished plaster on lath. Door likely dates to before 1900, around the time the building was relocated.*

The interior finishes are generally in good condition. Interior walls and partitions have been added and altered since the building's move in 1898. Most of the interior walls are made of gypsum board or drywall, though the wall of the stairway to the basement in the northwest corner has unfinished plaster and some areas of exposed lath. The walls in the "lobby" also retain their painted plaster above the horizontal board wainscotting.

The walls in the main room are of gypsum board above beaded vertical wood paneling below the chalk rail on the south and east walls, and below the chair rail and windowsills on the north wall. The interior wall around the bathroom in the southwest corner was likely inserted in the 1970s or 1980s, and laminate wood paneling below a chair rail was added to mimic the older walls. Other

than a few stray drops of paint and scuffing from use, the walls and paneling are all in good condition.

The flooring in the older building is a stained, 3" softwood (pine) that has an uneven surface and is worn by many years of use. It has a clear finish that has darkened over time. However, the floor is structurally in very good condition with no areas of rot, splitting, or weakness.



*Photo 44: The flooring in the main room is slightly uneven due to age and use but is in good condition (Flynn).*

The finishes in the addition mimic those of the older building and are generally in very good condition. The walls are painted drywall in the office, with the same above a taller V-groove pine paneling beneath a simple chair rail in the stair hall. The floors are comprised of slightly wider floorboards that have been stained to match the original floor, and the flooring throughout has the same level of wear and abrasion due to general use.



*Photo 45: Pressed metal ceiling in the lobby needs painting but is in good condition (Flynn)*

The ceilings throughout the building are in excellent condition. Some cosmetic paint touch ups are needed. Pressed metal ceilings were added in the lobby and the main room. They are likely not original to the 1898 relocation but are later, early to mid-twentieth additions. The ceiling in the addition is of gypsum or board with wood strapping. A few stains are apparent from either roof leaks or liquids stored in the attic above (see Photo 45 above), but no obvious current roof leaks were observed.



*Photo 46: Interior of the storage room, showing MDF panels applied on the surface of the walls and ceiling. Cast iron vent pipe seen at upper left.*

The interior of the storage closet in the southwest corner has been recently covered with Medium Density Fiberboard (MDF) panels, and the floor is of plywood. Wood shelving along the west wall has been built around the painted, cast iron plumbing vent that rises from the basement and exits through the roof above this location. The MDF is currently in good condition, but it is a temporary finish that will lose its structural form quickly, especially in an unconditioned space. This room will likely need to be refinished in the next ten years, depending on the use.

## Windows and Doors



*Photo 47: Interior of the 4-over-4 window on the northwest side, recently restored.*

The windows are in variable condition depending on their location in the building and their age. The two 4-over-4 windows on the north side were restored in 2021 to operable condition. The 6-over-6 window on the west façade is in poor condition and needs restoration. UV and water damage (from condensation) is apparent on the unpainted interior of the sash.



*Photo 48: Interior of the 6-over-6 window on the west façade, showing water and UV damage.*

The 6-over-6 sash on the north and south elevations of the addition are identical to that of the west elevation. They seem to be wood Brosco replacement sash, likely added at the time the addition was constructed. The window on the south has been recently repaired and repainted, but the window on the north side also has water staining and should be restored.



*Photo 49: Interior of the 2-over-2 sash, showing deterioration of the wood and sill.*

The window on the east elevation, in the addition, is likely reused from the original building as it is an older 2-over-2 double-hung window. It is the oldest window in the building, and it is also in need of restoration as it also shows UV and water damage due to condensation. The unpainted wood on the interior of this sash should be painted or coated with a clear sealant to give the wood further protection. The addition of storm windows on the exterior of the building will prevent much of the condensation on the interior of the windows.

The doors are all in good condition but vary in age and style. The oldest door in the building, at the basement stairwell in the northwest corner (Photo 14, page 24), has a split in one of the upper panels and needs painting. Other than surface abrasion it is in good, functional condition. The door to the main room from the lobby is a 6-panel door, likely dating to the mid-twentieth century, in good condition though it has been hung upside down. This causes the location of the doorknob to be higher than usual, and it may lead to accessibility problems, especially for children (see Photo 50 below).



*Photo 50: Door between the lobby and the main room is in good condition but has been hung upside down, making the knob height high.*

The rest of the interior doors in the building date to the 1970s or 1980s and are flat, hollow-core wood doors. They are all in good, working condition. The east exterior door, added in 1984, seems to be made of scrap wood panels and is more like a shed door (Photo 15). A better insulated door should be added in this location for energy efficiency.

### **Attic**

The main attic space is in good condition and shows no water infiltration. The window opening on the west elevation has a louvered vent with an interior screen to allow air circulation, but a smaller vent could be installed beneath the gable to allow air flow and decrease the size of the opening. The sash that was removed is stored next to the window and could be reinstalled.



*Photo 51: Attic interior, west (front) elevation of main building, louvered vent installed in the lower sash opening, with sash stored to the right.*

The attic space above the 1984 addition is also generally in good condition, though the connection between the roofline and the earlier building should be reflashed, as gaps between the two structures are apparent from the interior. The eastern wall of the attic also has a louvered vent with an interior screen that is not fitted well to the opening, and the louvers are broken and askew.



*Photo 52: Attic interior, east elevation, rear addition*



*Photo 53: Gaps seen between the framing of the roof addition and the older building's east elevation (arrows)*

## Basement

When visited in late fall, the basement was very dry, with no visible areas of water infiltration, though the building's users report that it is sometimes damp. The poured concrete floors were uneven in some areas, with several locations where the surface had spalled and was loose. Many items are stored in the basement, obscuring most of the surfaces of the floors and walls.



*Photo 54: Granite foundation wall, north wall, showing loss of mortar and several areas of light shining through from the exterior (shown with arrow)*

The stone foundation walls dating to ca. 1898 are generally in good structural form, but many areas show loss of mortar and gaps open to the exterior. The foundation walls should be repointed with soft lime or hydraulic-lime mortar to both protect the interior from moisture and air infiltration and strengthen the walls themselves. The poured concrete foundation walls of the addition are still in very good condition.

## MEP Systems



*Photo 55: Northwest corner of the basement, showing the electrical panel and the water meter to the left*

The electrical service serves the main rooms, the addition, attic, and basement. Photos show that the utility drop was re-located after 1972.<sup>37</sup> A single heater is mounted in the large main room on the northeast corner, powered by electricity and fired by two large propane tanks located on the south side of the building, added after 1972. One small horizontal exhaust vent serves this heater without ducting. This aged heater is likely less efficient than a new heat pump or mini-split unit would be, depending on how often the building needs to be in use. There is currently no heat in the office.

One 200-amp electrical panel is located on the west wall of the basement. There are two water meters in this area: one for the warming hut in the park and one for the irrigation system, which is planned for removal.

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<sup>37</sup> (Hunter 1973, 56)



*Photo 56: Plumbing in the basement*

The plumbing is located in the southwest corner of the building, beneath the bathroom. Waste lines from the current bathroom are of modern PVC piping, and the older cast-iron piping and vent still remains beneath the current storage closet, which was formerly a bathroom. The modern plumbing fixtures and toilet in the bathroom are in good, functional condition. The building is on the town's public water and sewer system.

### **ADA Compliance**

The building is not currently ADA compliant in many ways. The front and rear doors are all accessed by steps, and the bathroom door may not be quite wide enough to meet accessibility standards. If the town and the Scout Troop wanted to make the building more accessible, a ramp would need to be added to the front entrance, potentially a removable ramp to be used for certain occasions. Other modifications would also be needed, to be determined in conjunction with an architect.

## Recommendations

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### High Priority

- Exterior wood clapboard and trim repair: The exterior wood clapboard and trim should be inspected thoroughly and repaired where necessary. Approximately 20-30% will need repair or replacement. (Estimated cost: \$5,000)
- Exterior paint: After exterior wood repairs have been completed, the entire building should be cleaned, scraped with hand tools, and receive a new coat of paint, preferably one coat of oil-based primer and two coats of latex paint. Lead safety measures should be followed, especially on the original, main building. (Refer to *Tech Notes: Exterior Woodwork 1. Proper Painting and Surface Preparation.*) (Estimated cost: \$20,000)
- Window restoration: The remainder of the windows in the building should be restored to improve weather tightness/energy efficiency, as well as provide operable windows to ventilate the building. Another window repair workshop could be provided for volunteers. (Refer to *Preservation Brief 9: The Repair of Historic Wooden Windows*) (Estimated cost: \$2,000)
- Storm windows: Low-profile exterior storm windows are recommended to protect the windows, provide energy efficiency, and replace aged, paint-covered screens currently on the windows. (Estimated cost: \$2,000 – about \$300/unit installed)
- Roofing: Though the south slope of the roof likely has 5-10 more years of life left, the north side is in more immediate need of replacement. To ensure weather-tightness and a more cohesive aesthetic, the entire asphalt roof should be replaced with a low-profile architectural shingle in either a gray-black color or tan to imitate wood shingle. New flashing should also be installed along the connection between the main building and the addition. (Refer to *Preservation Brief 4: Roofing for Historic Buildings*) (Estimated cost: \$12,500)
- Foundations: The exterior and interior of the granite foundation walls should be repointed, and any loose stones reset to strengthen the walls and reduce water infiltration. A soft lime or hydraulic lime mortar should be used to match the properties of the original mortar that remains. (Refer to *Preservation Brief 2: Repointing Mortar Joints in Historic Masonry Buildings*) (Estimated cost: \$5,000)

Cost Summary: \$46,500

### Medium Priority

- Landscaping: The vegetation along the south side of the building should be trimmed back or removed to prevent moisture retention against the building. A 10"-20" strip should be dug out about 3"-4" deep around the exterior perimeter of the building and crushed stone or gravel should be installed to allow drainage and prevent biogrowth. This could be a good volunteer labor project. (Estimated cost: \$1,500 or less if volunteers are used)
- Exterior stairs handrail: A new handrail should be installed alongside the new stone steps leading to the front door for the safety of the users. (Estimated cost: \$500)
- Attic ventilation: New louvered vents should be installed on both the east and west attic elevations. The window in the west façade should be restored, and either a ridge vent or a

smaller wall vent could be installed. The vent on the east elevation should be replaced with one that fits more securely in the opening. (Estimated cost: \$1,000)

- **HVAC replacement:** The current propane-fueled heating unit in the main room is functional but outdated and inefficient. A more efficient heating (and possibly cooling) system could be installed using a heat pump or mini-split unit, which could also be installed in the office/meeting room. Electrical upgrades may be needed if heat pumps are added. (Estimated cost: \$10,000)
- **Doors:** The front door of the façade should be replaced, and a wood paneled door should be considered to replace the metal door. If more frequent use is expected, the rear door on the addition should be replaced with a more traditional door that can provide better insulation and aesthetic appeal. A salvaged exterior door is also an option if an appropriate one can be found. The scraping and painting of the old door could be a good volunteer project. (Estimated cost: \$1,000)

Cost Summary: \$14,000

### ***Low Priority/Long-Term Maintenance***

- **Interior plaster:** The plaster wall of the basement stairs in the northwest corner should be repaired using historic plastering techniques. (*Refer to Preservation Brief 21: Repairing Historic Flat Plaster – Walls and Ceilings.*)
- **Interior flooring:** The wood floors should be refinished within the next 5-10 years to preserve its life and prevent deterioration through regular wear and tear. The wood flooring should be lightly sanded and a protective, penetrating oil coating applied. Sanding may help level the older floor in the main space, but heavy grinding should be avoided.
- **Brick masonry:** The brick chimney should be inspected regularly. A chimney cap should be added and the upper courses need repointing. (*Refer to Preservation Brief 2: Repointing Mortar Joints in Historic Masonry Buildings*)

### ***Other Recommendations***

- **Floating floor:** The uneven surface of the wood flooring in the main room is sometimes a problem for Scout activities. If a new floor is desired, a floating floor system could be installed above the current floor, preserving the historic floor.
- **Maintenance of metal ceilings:** The historic metal ceilings in the lobby and main room are in good condition and should be maintained to ensure a long life. For guidance refer to *Preservation Brief 49: Historic Decorative Metal Ceilings and Walls: Use, Repair, and Replacement.*

## **Secretary of the Interior's Standards**

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All repairs and treatment of should follow the Secretary of the Interior's *Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties*. A full copy of the Standards and Guidelines can be found on the National Park Service's website (<https://www.nps.gov/orgs/1739/secretary-standards-treatment-historic-properties.htm>).

The guidelines for **Rehabilitation** as a treatment should be followed for The Abbott/Laurel Schoolhouse. According to the Secretary of the Interior, Rehabilitation as a treatment is appropriate "when repair and replacement of deteriorated features are necessary; when alterations or additions to the property are planned for a new or continued use; and when its depiction at a particular period of time is not appropriate."

### **Standards for Rehabilitation**

The Standards will be applied taking into consideration the economic and technical feasibility of each project.

1. A property will be used as it was historically or be given a new use that requires minimal change to its distinctive materials, features, spaces and spatial relationships.
2. The historic character of a property will be retained and preserved. The removal of distinctive materials or alteration of features, spaces and spatial relationships that characterize a property will be avoided.
3. Each property will be recognized as a physical record of its time, place and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or elements from other historic properties, will not be undertaken.
4. Changes to a property that have acquired historic significance in their own right will be retained and preserved.
5. Distinctive materials, features, finishes and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property will be preserved.
6. Deteriorated historic features will be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature will match the old in design, color, texture and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features will be substantiated by documentary and physical evidence.
7. Chemical or physical treatments, if appropriate, will be undertaken using the gentlest means possible. Treatments that cause damage to historic materials will not be used.
8. Archeological resources will be protected and preserved in place. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures will be undertaken.
9. New additions, exterior alterations or related new construction will not destroy historic materials, features and spatial relationships that characterize the property. The new work will be differentiated from the old and will be compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale and proportion, and massing to protect the integrity of the property and its environment.

10. New additions and adjacent or related new construction will be undertaken in such a manner that, if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.

## Preservation Briefs and Technical Notes

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The National Parks Service has published a series of Briefs and Technical Notes to recommend methods for rehabilitation and treatment of historic materials. These briefs and tech notes should be followed to maintain good standards of preservation and preserve the historic character of the Abbott/Laurel Schoolhouse building. Below is a list of recommended briefs and tech notes for reference.

(All Preservation Briefs can be found online at <https://www.nps.gov/orgs/1739/preservation-briefs.htm>, and Tech Notes can be found at <https://www.nps.gov/orgs/1739/preservation-tech-notes.htm>)

Preservation Briefs:

2. Repointing Mortar Joints in Historic Masonry Buildings:

<https://www.nps.gov/orgs/1739/upload/preservation-brief-02-repointing.pdf>

4. Roofing for Historic Buildings:

<https://www.nps.gov/orgs/1739/upload/preservation-brief-04-roofing.pdf>

9. The Repair of Historic Wooden Windows:

<https://www.nps.gov/orgs/1739/upload/preservation-brief-09-wood-windows.pdf>

10. Exterior Paint Problems on Historic Woodwork:

<https://www.nps.gov/orgs/1739/upload/preservation-brief-10-paint-problems-exterior-woodwork.pdf>

21. Repairing Historic Flat Plaster Walls and Ceilings:

<https://www.nps.gov/orgs/1739/upload/preservation-brief-21-flat-plaster.pdf>

24. Heating, Ventilating, and Cooling Historic Buildings: Problems and Recommended Approaches:

<https://www.nps.gov/orgs/1739/upload/preservation-brief-24-heating-cooling.pdf>

32. Making Historic Properties Accessible:

<https://www.nps.gov/orgs/1739/upload/preservation-brief-32-accessibility.pdf>

49. Historic Decorative Metal Ceilings and Walls: Use, Repair, and Replacement:

<https://www.nps.gov/orgs/1739/upload/preservation-brief-49-metal-ceilings-walls.pdf>

Preservation Tech Notes:

Exterior Woodwork No. 1 – Proper Painting and Surface Preparation:

<https://www.nps.gov/orgs/1739/upload/tech-note-exterior-woodwork-01-painting-surface-preparation.pdf>