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# SUNCOOK VILLAGE SCHOOL
# PEMBROKE WATER WORKS BUILDING
# PEMBROKE, NEW HAMPSHIRE

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**FEBRUARY 13, 2005**

*History:* The Suncook Village School was constructed in 1872 by Pembroke School District No. 8 to serve several grades of students in the village. District No. 8 came into being in 1817, when the village area, then beginning to grow under the effects of industry, was separated from District No. 1, which maintained its school building on Pembroke Street.[1] At that time, the first village schoolhouse was constructed, reportedly in the location where the present building stands.[2] Before the passage of legislation in 1885 that made every New Hampshire town a single school district, each separate district in each town had maintained control over its own governance and budget.

Because school district records were not kept by the town, the earlier history of buildings on this site is unclear. Prior to construction of the present building, it is known that the district maintained three "departments" in the village: a primary department, an intermediate department, and an advanced department.[3] During the school year prior to completion of the present building, advanced classes were held in the "old school-house," which is said to have stood on the site of the present building.

The current building was completed in 1873. The "School Report" of that year noted that

> The people in this district have done themselves great credit in erecting a new and elegant school-house at a cost of some six thousand dollars. The building is two stories high, contains four departments, and is fitted up with many modern improvements. . . . We hope that the people in some

[1] Rev. N. F. Carter and Trueworthy L. Fowler, *History of Pembroke, N. H., 1730-1895*, 2 vols., reprint ed. (Pembroke, N. H.: Allenstown-Pembroke Bicentennial Committee, 1976), I:306-7.
[2] Ibid., p. 304.
[3] *The Annual Reports of the Receipts and Expenditures of the Selectmen and Treasurer of the Town of Pembroke and the Report of the Superintending School Committee for the Year 1872-3* (hereafter cited as *Pembroke Town Report* for the appropriate year), "School Report," p. 32.

> other districts in town will visit and carefully examine this new house, and then go home and contrast it with their own.[4]

The four major rooms of the building were immediately put to use for a first primary division, a second primary division, an intermediate division, and an advanced or grammar division.[5]

"Sanitary changes"—probably the installation of indoor toilets in the basement—were carried out in the building in 1899. Town reports from the turn of the twentieth century reveal that the building suffered during cold weather from the freezing of sewer and water supply pipes. The 1902 school board's report noted that "we are now convinced that nothing but constant artificial heat during zero weather will obviate freezing there. The building sits upon a ledge and the only satisfactory explanation is that the cold follows the exposed ledge in, a condition that cannot be prevented." The report of the following year noted that "the Suncook building has been wired for electricity, and four thirty-two candle-power lights kept burning in the basement day and night since early in the winter term. Something had to be done to prevent the freezing and clogging of the water pipes. The arrangement is only partly satisfactory. Steam heat for the whole building would be an improvement."[6] Problems of freezing persisted, and two years later the school board concluded that "artificial heat more powerful than electric lights should be introduced."[7]

After the beginning of service by the electric street railway in 1902, another concern at the village school was the closeness of the tracks, which turned off Pembroke Street and descended into the village along Main Street, directly in front of the school building.[8] The 1905 report of the Pembroke School Board noted that "the Electric Railway Company has been asked to put up a guard rail between the sidewalk in front of the school and its tracks, but it has declined to do so, claiming that it would increase rather than lessen the danger."[9] At the same period, the School Board began to promote the idea of vacating the schoolhouse and constructing a new building in a more retired location with more spacious grounds. They stated in the 1905 report that "under the article inserted in the warrant . . . we believe action can be taken as desired as to playground, putting in a heating system, removing the building, or constructing new elsewhere. If the building is to be used as in the past, new floors in the upper rooms are desirable."[10]

According to research by Florence Woods and David Stack, the building did receive new hardwood flooring in 1906. The "Veterans" (presumably the Grand Army of the Republic) donated funds for a new flagpole, replacing a pole that had been mounted at the center of the

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[4] Ibid., p. 33.
[5] *Pembroke Town Report*, 1873-74, "School Report," p. 26.
[6] *Pembroke Town Report*, 1902, "Report of the School Board," p. 40; *Pembroke Town Report*, 1903, "Report of the Superintendent," p. 55; the *Pembroke Town Report*, 1905, "Report of the School Board," p. 46, notes that "The school building accommodations at Suncook village remain as when the last report was made, except that the artificial heat has prevented the freezing of the closet-pipes throughout the excessively cold season. It has not been possible to keep the pipe to the faucet in the main building in use, and during the few coldest months water for drinking has been brought in pails, as was formerly done."
[7] *Pembroke Town Report*, 1904, "Report of the School Board," p. 46.
[8] O. R. Cummings, *A Granite State Interurban: The History of the Concord and Manchester Electric Branch of the Boston and Maine Railroad*, Bulletin 12 of the Electric Railway Historical Society (Chicago: Electric Railway Historical Society, 1954).
[9] *Pembroke Town Report*, 1905, "Report of the School Board," p. 46.
[10] Ibid.

porch roof.[11]

The new Village School on High Street was completed in 1909. Classes were removed to this more modern structure, and over the ensuing years the older school building was adapted for school gymnastics and health exercises and for use by the Pembroke Academy Athletic Association. The School Board maintained the building for athletic uses, and as a reserve structure in case it was again needed for a school.

In 1926, the Pembroke School Board settled an eleven-year dispute with heirs of a former owner of the land by paying the heirs $450.00 to terminate all claims to the property. During the period of uncertainty over its title, the building had fallen into disrepair. The School Board recommended that it be adapted for use as a hall in which to hold grammar school graduation ceremonies and other school exercises. The board also recommended that the structure be used as a community building to serve any public need, "especially for the use of our boys and girls for athletic purposes." In its 1926 annual report, the School Board asserted that "one of the greatest needs of this community is a place for good wholesome amusements for our young people." Voters concurred, and the structure was repaired and designated the "Community Building." It was used as a gymnasium, and housed school graduation ceremonies, through the 1930s. When Pembroke Academy was gutted by fire in 1936, the old building provided space for classes.

In 1951, the Pembroke School Board sold the former Village School to the Pembroke Water Works for $1.00. The building has served as the Water Works' office and shop since that time.

*Description:* The Suncook Village School was built in 1872 to provide graded instruction for the children of rapidly growing Suncook Village. The school stands on a knoll at the intersection of Main Street and the Chester Turnpike in Suncook Village, facing south. The front of the building commands a view down the turnpike toward the Suncook River. To the north, behind the school, is a steep, rocky ravine that limits safe activity behind the building and constrained the playground area when the structure functioned as a school.

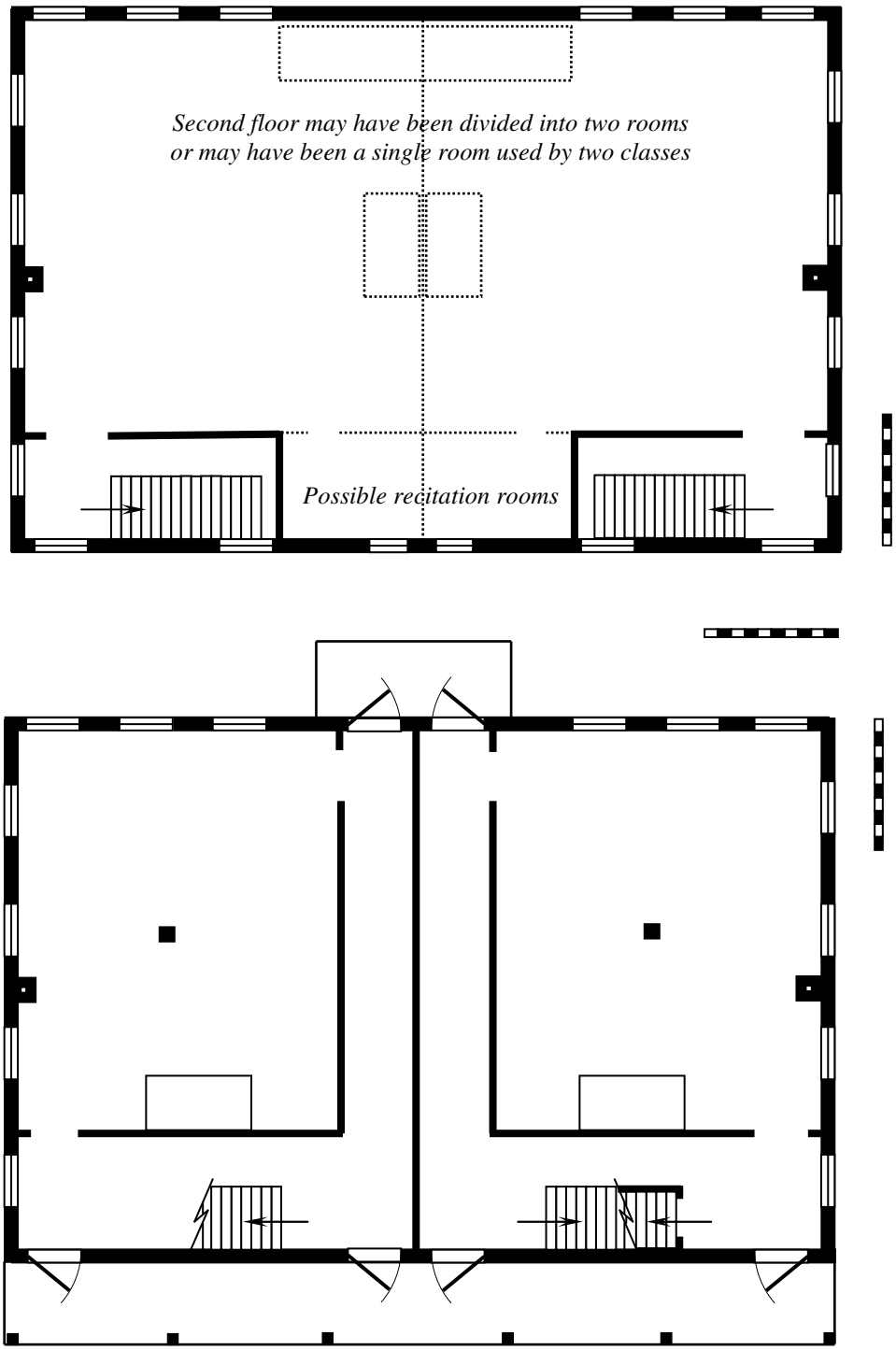
The building is a two-story, gable-roofed structure measuring 62'-1" long by 42'-1" deep. It has load-bearing masonry walls constructed of locally manufactured bricks laid in lime-sand mortar. The walls are laid in common bond, with a header course every tenth course. The building measures approximately 24'-7" in height from the bottoms of the granite thresholds of its doors to the bottom of its wooden cornice. It stands largely upon natural ledge, and has no stone underpinning courses visible above grade. A photograph dating from around 1900 in the collection of the Pembroke Historical Society provides a detailed record of the southern front of the building and the western end. This photograph provides the basis for descriptions of the original appearance of the schoolhouse that are given below.

Fenestration of the building is regular on each elevation, and reflects the original plan of the schoolrooms within. The south elevation, or original façade, has four doors on its first story, but no windows. Originally, a one-story porch extended across the entire first story on this side. Two doors opened onto this porch at each end of the building, and two others, probably one for boys and one for girls, opened from hallways at the center of the building (see floor plan, following page). Each entrance had a three-light transom sash above the door. Today, the

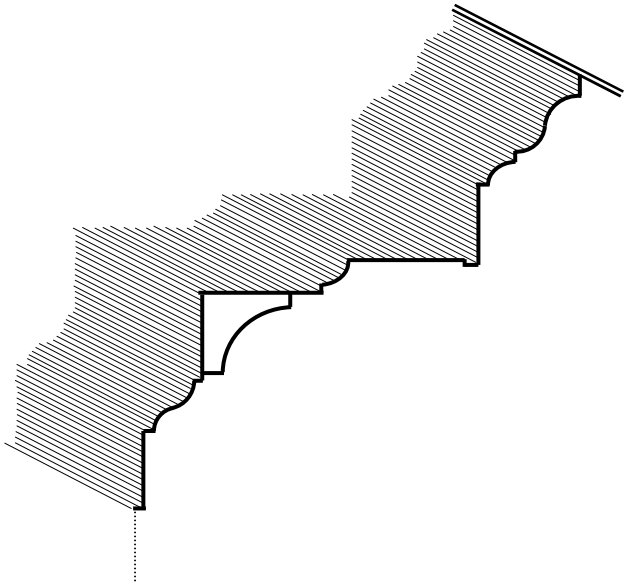
[11] Florence Woods and David Stack, "History of the Village School, Main Street, Suncook Village," *Pembroke Town Report*, 1999. For a photograph of the school as it appeared around 1900, see Frank Levi Aldrich, "Suncook To-Day," *The Granite Monthly* 29 (July 1900):6.

westernmost of these four doors has been enlarged as a vehicular entrance, and is fitted with a lifting garage door. Within, the first floor of the building has been adapted as a garage and shop area on the west. The eastern end of the building retains substantial evidence of the classroom and corridor plan. On the second floor, the building remains largely as it was adapted for gymnasium and recreational uses. Except for a stairway enclosure at the southwestern corner of this story, the entire second story is now a single, large room measuring about forty by sixty feet.

Although time has not permitted a detailed investigation of physical evidence in the building, its original floor plan appears to have approximated the following sketch:



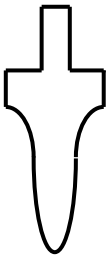
As shown by physical and photographic evidence, the exterior of the building was marked by a deeply projecting wooden cornice. This cornice remains on the front of the building and (except where damaged by fire) on the rear. As shown in early photographs, the eaves cornice originally returned along both gable ends of the building some three feet. Raking cornices of the same profile as the front and rear eaves cornices followed the roofline on each gable end. The cornice returns have been removed from each gable end of the building (exposing the wooden cleats that supported them) and the raking cornices have been replaced by flat boards placed snugly against the brick gable walls. The profile of the original cornice is as follows:



*Not to scale*

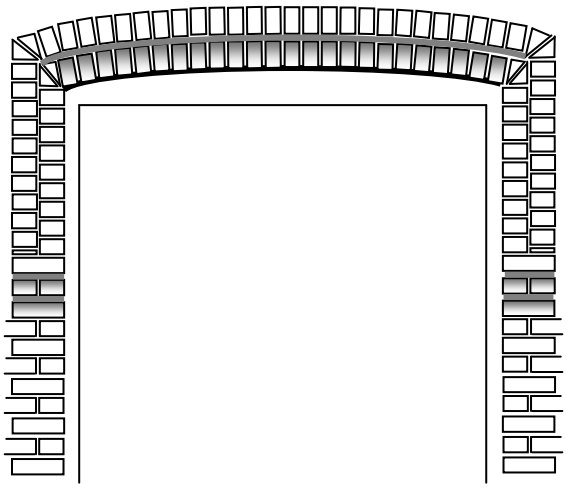
The front porch of the building was raised one or two steps above grade, depending on the slope of the site. The porch roof was supported by six columns of cast or wrought iron. These metal units were exposed to view up to the height of the four entrance doors. Above that level, the metal was covered by square wooden casings. From these casings, curved wooden brackets rose to support a wooden entablature at the roof of the porch. The cornice of the porch was more delicate than that of the main building, as shown above. It was decorated with dentils below its crown molding.

The building was originally provided with six-over-six window sashes with large panes of cylinder glass and with the muntin profile shown below.



Several of these sashes survive in various window openings of the building, especially in the garage area.

The exterior of each window and door opening of the building is covered by a projecting brick label molding fashioned by corbeling one course of bricks about four inches beyond the plane of the wall:



This treatment imparts a distinctive architectural quality to the school building. The use of label moldings is especially linked with the Italianate style of architecture, which was popular in New England from the 1850s.

Although the school was not intended to be an ornate or unduly expensive building, its substantial brick construction and its careful design and good craftsmanship marked it as a point of pride in the village. Even though Suncook Village had not yet seen the wholesale rebuilding in brick that followed major fires in 1876, 1878, and 1886, the building took its place alongside several already standing downtown brick blocks. These included not only the three great mills in the village, but also Jacob Noyes' block on Glass Street (c. 1865), and Jacob E. Chickering's jewelry store (1868) and Emery's Block (1869) on Main Street at the corner of Glass Street.

The use of brick for the new school building reflected the visibility of the structure, which stood on the Chester Turnpike, a major thoroughfare between Manchester and Concord. The schoolhouse was an imposing hilltop landmark for travelers as they approached and crossed the Turnpike Bridge over the Suncook River.

As an emerging center of brick production in New Hampshire's Merrimack River Valley, Suncook Village proclaimed its growing population and industry by placing this structure in a prominent position along the principal highway. During the nineteenth century, the manufacture of bricks became a major industry along the Merrimack River, not only in Pembroke but also in adjacent Concord, Allenstown, and Hooksett. This portion of the Merrimack Valley had been inundated by a glacial lake that had permitted the slow deposition of clay at the end of the ice age. Glaciers also deposited much sand in the area. The manufacture of bricks requires the mixing of native glacial clay, which is thick and viscous, with enough sand to make the clay sufficiently plastic to be pressed into wooden molds.

The beginnings of the industry are recorded in the account book of Sterling Sargent of Pembroke and Allenstown, which documents Sargent's activities during the period between 1813 and the

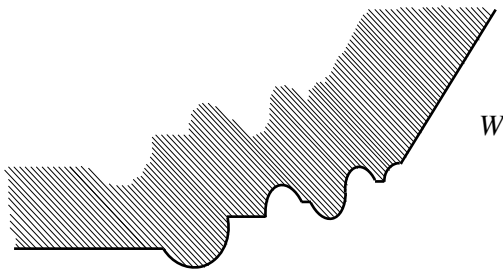
1850s.[12] Sargent worked at brickmaking only sporadically, mostly during the spring and fall months, and on a small scale, burning perhaps 50,000 or 55,000 bricks at one time.

Sargent was the father of two sons, Philip and Warren, who continued the trade of brick manufacturing into the era when the arrival of the railroad encouraged production on a much larger scale and permitted the creation of a brick village like Suncook, whose buildings consumed millions of bricks. By 1832, as the first brick dwellings were appearing in Pembroke, local production in the Pembroke-Allenstown-Hooksett area was a respectable 1,271,000 bricks per year. But by 1878, after the advent of the railroad in Pembroke and adjacent Hooksett, six brick manufacturers in Hooksett, Suncook Village, and the banks of the Merrimack in Pembroke were employing sixty men in making bricks. Each local yard averaged about 80,000 bricks per year per man employed, for a total of about 4.8 million bricks.[13] By 1895, maps in Carter and Fowler's *History of Pembroke* and Hurd's New Hampshire atlas indicate brickyards owned by Henry T. Simpson (Simpson owned two yards, and his showpiece brick house stands at 422 Pembroke Street), Edmund Elliott, the Whittemore family, F. S. Whitehouse, and G. N. Simpson. These yards were placed at intervals along the Merrimack River between the Concord border (Soucook River) on the north and the Allenstown border (Suncook River) on the south. An additional brickyard, owned by Martin H. Cochran and Isaac G. Russ, operated on Buck Street near McDaniel's Brook.

Brick had begun to emerge as a favored building material in Pembroke during the Federal period. One of the finest examples of an early brick dwelling is the two-story, L-shaped Doe House at 262 Pembroke Street. According to the town history, the Doe House was the first brick dwelling ever built in Pembroke. It appears to date from about 1825. Its walls are laid in Flemish bond rather than the common bond that became standard after about 1830. The Doe House was followed by other Federal and Greek Revival brick houses, including the two-story Bailey Parker House (c. 1830) at North Pembroke and the 1½-story Jonathan Kimball House (c. 1840) on Fourth Range Road.

Although more costly than wood, brick was occasionally employed for school buildings in Pembroke. Pembroke District Schoolhouse No. 1 was built in 1851 on Pembroke Street, opposite the Congregational Church, to replace an earlier brick school building on the same lot. A second brick school stood at North Pembroke, near a few other brick buildings in that area.

The interior of the Village School was originally characterized by plain plastered walls, by wooden wainscoting in most rooms and corridors, and by heavy door and window casings of the following profile (not to scale):



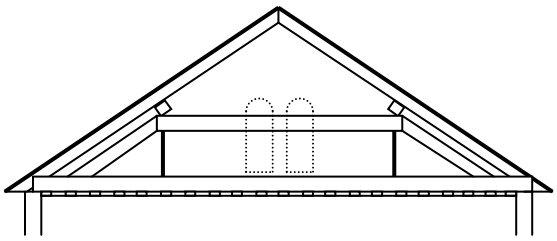
*Window casings have splayed sides*

[12] Sterling Sargent, account book, 1813-1857, New Hampshire Historical Society, Concord.
[13] James L. Garvin, "Small-Scale Brickmaking in New Hampshire," *IA: The Journal of the Society for Industrial Archaeology* 20 (1994): 19-31. This article illustrates one of the Simpson brickyards.

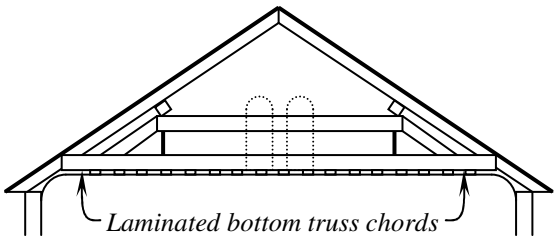
This interior woodwork was probably treated with painted graining when the building was finished in 1872. The school report of 1904 indicates that "the grained woodwork in the village schoolhouse [has been] varnished, considerable painting done . . . and new outside steps built for the same."[14] This indicates that the dark coloration seen on the old woodwork throughout the building is the result of a deliberate decorative choice.

*Changes after construction:* The Suncook Village School underwent a number of changes subsequent to its completion but prior to its acquisition by the Pembroke Water Works in 1951. Town school reports speak of "extended repairs" to the building, "where they were very much needed," in 1895-6. Since separate school board financial accounts are not included in town reports until 1904, we cannot know the nature of these repairs. As noted above, the reports mention "sanitary changes" in 1899, probably denoting the installation of water closets in the basement. Reports also reveal that the school was wired for electricity 1902, although electricity had been available in the village and along Pembroke Street since 1895.

An apparent change took place on the second floor in the late 1800s or early 1900s, although we do not presently have documentation for the change. This was the raising of the ceiling of the room for gymnasium or auditorium use. Although an engineering report prepared by SW&C Engineering in May 2004 does not provide a detailed roof framing plan or sectional drawing, it does suggest that the current framing system is as shown below, at the right. Shown below at the left is the probable original design. It is likely that the original trusses spanned the building at the eaves level, allowing the attic windows to function as intended. As revealed where fire damage has caused the pressed metal ceiling panels to be removed, the current raised bottom chords of the roof trusses are nail-laminated members. By contrast, as reported in the SW&C study, the original truss members are 6" by 8" solid timbers.



*Probable original roof truss system*




*Present roof truss system*

The style of the pressed metal ceiling and wall panels seen in the second floor suggests a period of manufacture in the late 1800s or early 1900s. These panels appear somewhat too early in style to have been installed after the Village School was supplanted by the High Street School in 1909, although it is possible that an older style was chosen at that comparatively late date. It is nevertheless possible that the ceiling was raised before the school was abandoned for classroom use in 1909. Further examination of school reports and financial accounts may ultimately reveal the date of the remodeling of the room.

[14] *Pembroke Town Report*, 1904, "Report of the School Board," p. 46.

*Significance:* The Suncook Village School is an important architectural landmark in history of school architecture in New Hampshire and in the story of public school education in the town of Pembroke. As noted below, the building followed precedents that had been established in other industrial villages in the decades preceding construction of the Pembroke building. Today, the structure and its counterpart in Allenstown (now the Allenstown town hall) survive as architectural rarities, representing the evolution of mid-sized schoolhouses designed to accommodate four grades.

Pembroke retains several early school buildings that provide a physical record of the evolution of education in the community from the mid-nineteenth century. These buildings may be separated into two groups: district or one-room schoolhouses, and consolidated or multi-room school buildings. Pembroke's two early buildings of the latter type are both found in Suncook Village: the subject of this report, and the present High Street School, which replaced the older building in 1909.

Until after the Civil War, all elementary education in Pembroke was provided in district schoolhouses that were located throughout the township at sites that were convenient for the children of various neighborhoods. Under a series of New Hampshire laws passed in 1805, 1808, 1825, 1827, 1842, and later, the construction, repair, and staffing of the district schools were the responsibility of the individual school districts to which each building belonged. These districts were required to choose their own clerks and keep their own records independently of the town selectmen or town clerk.

During this long period, the condition of schoolhouses throughout New England was generally very poor. The squalid and unhealthful condition of these buildings elicited a general, region-wide outpouring of condemnation and progressive literature, culminating in the 1840s in a widespread reform movement throughout New England. In Pembroke, on the eve of construction of the present Schoolhouse No. 1 (the brick schoolhouse on Pembroke Street), the superintending school committee indicted the conditions that prevailed throughout the town:

> . . . we wish to speak of the condition of our School Houses, believing them behind the time, and behind what they should be, to promote health, comfort, and mental application among the young. It is a fact, that more than one-half the School Houses in town are destitute of privies, while two or three are so out of repair and filthy as to be useless. Who is to blame for this notorious culpability? How long, parents, are your children to be debarred, not only a defense from the chilling blasts of winter while attending the imperative calls of nature, but a protection from the shame, and violent inroads upon modesty and chastity, which the want induces. . . . In District No. 1, the house is in a very bad condition; cold, cheerless, and uncomfortable in the extreme; seats and desks badly constructed and arranged; inside door without any fastening except a chip placed under it. One of the Committee remarked that he thought it an advantage in *one* respect, as it called into existence the inventive faculties.[15]

The State of New Hampshire began to take an official interest in public education and in schoolhouse architecture in the 1840s. The legislature established the position of State Commissioner of Common Schools in 1846. In his first annual report, published in 1847, the

[15] Report of the Superintending School Committee of Pembroke, *Pembroke Town Report*, 1850-51, "General Remarks," page 13.

newly-appointed commissioner placed strong emphasis on the defects of many of the schoolhouses that then served local school districts throughout the state. He lamented "the multitudes of [school]houses, in the State, [that are] not only inconveniently located, and awkwardly planned, but absolutely dangerous to health and morals . . ." He noted, however, that "if the architecture is neat, and the grounds tastefully laid out . . . not only will the [school]house answer the essential purpose of health and comfort, but prove a material auxiliary in elevating the minds and correcting the habits of those who receive their education in it."[16]

Subsequent commissioner's reports illustrated model school buildings selected from throughout the state, or reproduced illustrations and text from Henry Barnard's *School Architecture; or, Contributions to the Improvement of School-Houses in the United States* (1848). In June, 1849, to encourage the improvement of district schoolhouses across New Hampshire, the legislature authorized the distribution of a copy of Barnard's influential volume to the board of selectmen in each town.

The effect of this architectural reform movement seems to have been felt immediately in District No. 1 in Pembroke, the location of the Pembroke Street schoolhouse. The new brick school building was built on Pembroke Street in the summer of 1851 to replace an older brick building that had fallen into disrepair. Its design was closely patterned on that of the brick schoolhouse of the Northern District in Greenland, New Hampshire, built in 1847 and illustrated in the *Third Annual Report of the Commissioner of Common Schools* (1849). The report of the Superintending School Committee in the 1851 Pembroke Town Report called the new brick building "a beautiful, commodious, and well arranged school-house; a model for the town."

By the time that the Village School was constructed in 1872, Pembroke had nine districts: Pembroke Street (District No. 1), Brickett Hill (District No. 2), Buck Street (District No. 3), Pembroke Hill (District No. 4), Town Pound or Robinson district (District No. 5), North Pembroke (District No. 6), Borough School (District No. 7), Suncook Village (District No. 8) and Dudley Hill (District No. 9).

Although the effect of the commissioner's reports was not felt for some time in Suncook Village, the eventual growth of the village under the impact of increasing industry and immigration eventually resulted in construction of the present building, which departed greatly from the design of the typical one-room district school. The design of the Village School reflected that of the larger, urban schoolhouse models that had been illustrated in the commissioner's report of the 1840s. In particular, the Village School reflected the principles, if not the architectural design, of a two-story brick schoolhouse in Manchester, illustrated by floor plan and front elevation in the *Third Annual Report of the Commissioner of Common Schools* (1849).

This substantial building had a plan similar to the one adopted in Suncook Village. At the front of the building were two stairways leading to the second story. The second story was a single room, measuring 74 by 42 feet, used as a grammar school. This large room in the Manchester building contained ninety desks, some of them double desks, indicating that very large classes were then acceptable for certain grades or levels of instruction. As noted on the conjectural floor plans for the Suncook Village School shown above on page 4, lack of time has not yet permitted a careful examination to determine whether the second story was physically divided into two rooms. Given the precedent established in Manchester, it is possible that the second story was

[16] *Report of the Commissioner of Common* Schools *to the Legislature of New Hampshire, June Session, 1847* (Hanover, N. H.: Dartmouth Press, 1847), pp. 13-14.

always treated as a single space even though it was utilized from the beginning for an Intermediate Department and a Grammar School.[17]

A second influential school building was built in District No. 3 in Great Falls (Somersworth), New Hampshire, in 1849. Like the Manchester building, the Somersworth school illustrated the type of building, and the size of class, that was considered desirable or at least acceptable in an industrial community where the student population was large and growing larger. The Somersworth building was important in another respect: it was built to house the first public high school established under legislative authorization.[18] Its construction heralded the slow replacement of private academies by publicly-supported high schools throughout New Hampshire. The Somersworth building was described in the *Third Annual Report of the Commissioner of Common Schools* (1849):

> There are two entrances to the house, one for males and the other for females, with ante-rooms connected with each, for hanging cloaks, caps, &c., and furnished with sinks and pumps. The first story is to be divided into two departments, each 36½ by 33 feet, and 13 feet high in the clear. One is intended at present for a primary school, but probably will soon be occupied by a higher grade of scholars; and the other for an intermediate school. Each of these rooms will accommodate 90 pupils, and are so connected by sliding doors that both may be placed under one teacher. The second story, intended for the High School, is to be finished in one room, 66 by 36½ feet, and 16½ feet high in the clear, with two recitation rooms, each 11 by 18½ feet, and will accommodate 160 pupils.[19]

These well-publicized New Hampshire prototypes for multi-room and multi-grade school buildings undoubtedly had an effect on the design of the Suncook building. Today, however, the loss of these earlier urban models has left the two schoolhouses in Suncook Village (Pembroke and Allenstown) as rare documents of the post-Civil War school architecture of smaller industrial centers.

The few other surviving multi-room school buildings from this general era include the Portsmouth High School building of 1858 and the private Penacook Academy building of 1866. Both are much more ambitious structures than the Suncook schoolhouse, being intended for high school-level instruction. Both display strong expressions of the Italianate architectural style, with elaborate porticoes, heavy, elaborate cornices, and (in the case of Portsmouth) quoins and a cupola. But both the Portsmouth and Penacook buildings share certain features with the Suncook building, including brick construction, label moldings over the windows, and double-hung sashes glazed with large panes of glass. From all the buildings described above, surviving or destroyed, it is clear that the Suncook Village school conformed to the expectations of its age. Because it was intended for instruction below the high school level, the Suncook building provides valuable documentation of primary and grammar school architecture in an industrial village of moderate size during the years following the Civil War.

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[17] Note, however, that the "Report of the School Board" in the *Pembroke Town Report* of 1905 recommends installing "new floors in the upper *rooms*."

[18] Chapter 220, Laws of 1845; Chapter 631, Laws of 1848; Chapter 718, Laws of 1848; Chapter 729, Laws of 1848; compiled and printed in *The Compiled Statutes of the State of New Hampshire* (Concord, N. H.: Butterfield & Hill, 1853).

[19] *Third Annual Report of the Commissioner of Common Schools* (Concord, N. H.: Butterfield & Hill, 1849), p. 65.

*Future treatments of the building:* For the foreseeable future, the Suncook Village School will be required to serve the needs of the Pembroke Water Works, which has owned the property for more than half a century. Despite the fact that practical and utilitarian needs will prevent the restoration of the building to its original appearance, there are many things that can be done to enhance the appearance of the structure and its contribution to the architectural interest and integrity of Suncook Village.

The exterior envelope of the building is in sound condition, with very little deterioration of the brick walls except for slight loss of the lime-sand mortar through roof water splashback in certain areas. A structural analysis carried out in May, 2004, by Robert P. Brecknock, P. E., of SW&C Engineering also confirms that, where undisturbed by alterations, the floor and roof framing of the building generally meets or exceeds the requirements of modern codes. Assuming that the interior of the building is retained in its current use and layout, future enhancements of the structure will probably concentrate on the exterior appearance of the building.

At present, the main detriments to the appearance of the building are the garage door at the western end of the façade, the boarding up of all the windows on both floors, the loss of the cornice returns and the raking cornices on each gable end, and fire damage to the cornice at the northwestern (rear) corner of the structure. Loss of the original porch is also detrimental to the visual integrity of the structure, but restoration of the porch is probably incompatible with retention of the garage door at the left end of the façade.

Probably the single most effective aesthetic change that might be carried out on the building would be the restoration of the window sashes, including the transom sashes above the two central doors. Although most sashes have disappeared from the building, several sets remain on the western end, providing the muntin profile shown above, on page 5. Restoration of the sashes throughout the building, together with any window frames that may have been damaged by fire or decay, would immediately transform the building, returning it to a fixture of pride on the hilltop at the junction of Main Street and Turnpike Street.

Restoration of the two central front doors of the building would likewise restore symmetry and architectural interest to the structure. The left-hand door accommodates the filler pipe and vent for an oil tank in the corridor within. These pipes could be left in place, while a new duplicate door could be installed on the right side of the twin openings. The two transom sashes above the doors could be restored or replaced.

The elaborate cornice of the building was an important original architectural feature of the schoolhouse. This feature fortunately remains intact along the front of the building. Restoration of the cornice returns and the raking cornices on each gable end would greatly enhance the appearance of the structure, returning some of the visual interest of the original roofline.

The bricks of the Village School were laid in lime-sand mortar, the standard formula for the period before 1900. This mortar is relatively soft (today characterized as “Type O” mortar), and is perfectly adapted to the hardness of the bricks in the walls. Certain zones in the lower walls have lost their surface mortar due to splashback of roof water and subsequent freezing and thawing of the wet walls. It would be a mistake to point the brickwork in the walls with a harder mixture containing Portland cement, but it would be beneficial to plan for the future repointing of the lower joints in some wall areas with a mortar that duplicates the original formula.

Some future consideration might be given to the eventual restoration of the front porch of the building. Because this porch had a high roof that was well above the label moldings over the doors, and because it was supported on widely-spaced iron columns, it might even be possible to reproduce the porch while retaining the active garage door as it currently stands.

Future work that may be contemplated on the building, especially work that may be partly supported by grants from preservation organizations, should take cognizance of a set of guidelines that are usually applied to the planning and execution of such work.
These standards are referred to as the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation*. The *Standards* are mandatory for work carried out on historic buildings with federal funding. They may also be mandatory for work carried out with funding from the State of New Hampshire. Even where they are not mandatory, the *Secretary's Standards* are a prudent method of ensuring that work done on a historic building is beneficial, and does no inadvertent harm to the historical or architectural integrity of the structure. The *Standards* are general guidelines, not rigid codes, and are meant to be applied with flexibility but sensitivity.

*The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation:*

*"Rehabilitation" is defined as the act or process of making possible a compatible use for a property through repair, alterations, and additions while preserving those portions or features which convey its historical, cultural, or architectural values.*

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. Archaeological 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 shall 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.