

Baseline Documentation

Harrisville Community Church

13 Canal Street, Harrisville, NH 03450



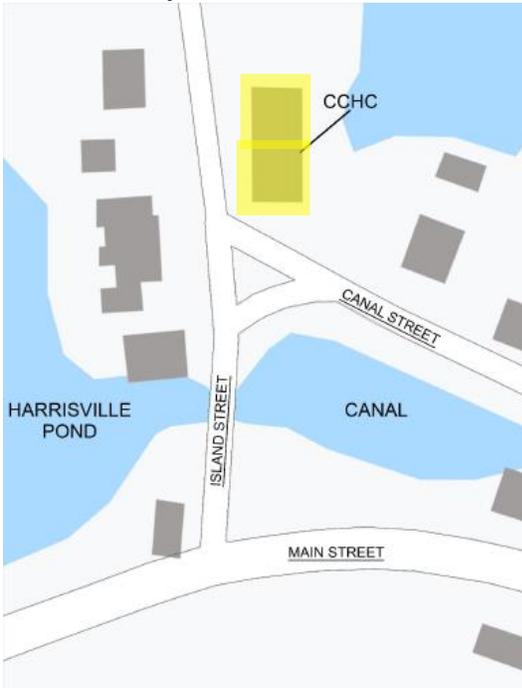
Prepared by Erin Hammerstedt of Historic Harrisville, Inc.
as a management tool for the
Community Church of Harrisville and Chesham

DRAFT - January 2022

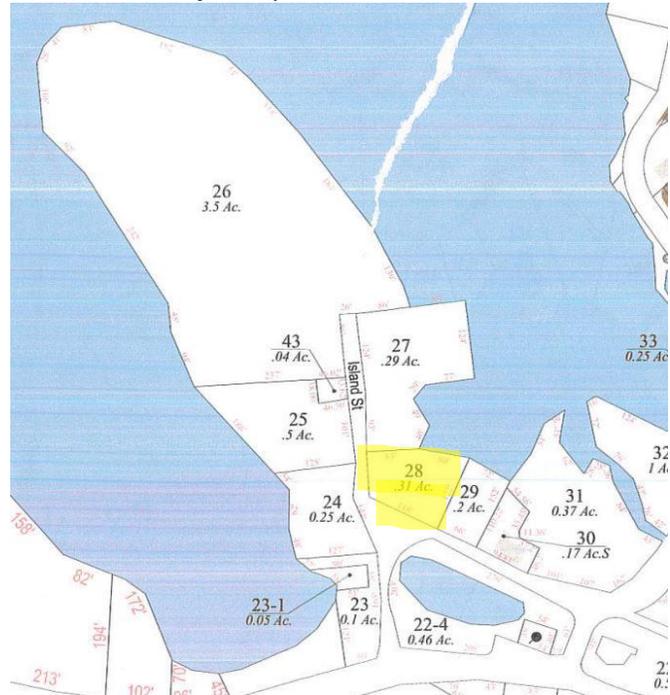
Property Location

Address: 13 Canal Street, Harrisville, NH 03450

Location Map: 13 Canal Street



Tax Parcel Map: Map 32, Parcel 28



Site Description:

The Community Church of Harrisville and Chesham is located on .26 acres (Map 32, Lot 28) on the northeast corner of the intersection of Canal and Island Streets, with the church facing Canal Street to the south. The parcel is bounded to the west by Island Street, to the north by Harrisville Pond and a private residence, and to the east by a private residence, and to the south by Canal Street. The location is central to Harrisville's National Historic Landmark mill village among a setting of nineteenth and early twentieth century mill buildings, residences, community structures, including the Harrisville Library.

Legal Boundary Description:

The current legal boundary description includes the original property boundary, which was refined/clarified by two boundary line agreements in 2009.

Original Description

Beginning at an iron pin in the northeasterly line of Water (now Canal) Street at the easterly corner of land of the Cheshire Mills Company;¹
thence northeasterly by said Cheshire Mills Company land, 121.9 feet to an iron pin near the swamp;¹
thence northwesterly 98 feet, more or less, crossing the swamp to an iron pin;

thence north of west 61.6 feet to a stone post in the easterly line of the street;
thence southerly by said street, 70.8 feet to an iron pin at Water Street;
thence southeasterly by said Water Street 117.8 feet to the bound begun at.

East Side Adjustment¹

Beginning at a 5/8" diameter rebar set flush with a red survey cap on the northerly sideline of Canal Street in Harrisville;
thence North 36°51' East 76.34 feet, more or less, to a 5/8" diameter rebar set flush with a red survey cap;
thence continuing North 36°51' East 24.39 feet, more or less, to a point;
thence South 66°46' East 58.49', more or less, to an iron pin.

North Side Adjustment²

Beginning at a point on the easterly sideline of Island Street ... at a 5/8" diameter rebar set flush with a red survey cap being 152.17 feet, more or less, southerly along the sideline of said Island Street from the northwest corner of land (formerly) of Richard L. Bayles and Sarah Kendall Bayles;
Thence South 81°6' East 61.37 feet, more or less, to a 5/8" diameter rebar set up 6" with a red survey cap at or near the top of a bank at Harrisville Pond.

Statement of Significance

Harrisville village, including its mill buildings, millworker housing, commercial and community buildings, is nationally significant as a largely intact surviving example of a 19th century New England industrial community. The Community Church of Harrisville and Chesham is located at the heart of this National Historic Landmark village and contributes to its historic significance and current beauty and way of life.

The Harrisville Congregational Church was built in 1842, on land conveyed by Charles C. P. Harris to the Prudential Committee for the Evangelical Congregational Church at Harrisville, by deed dated September 1, 1841. For many years, this was the only church in the village.

As the mills prospered and attracted Irish and French-Canadian immigrant workers, St. Denis Catholic Church was built in 1890-1894 on land in the village donated by the Cheshire Mill Company to support the spiritual needs of these new town residents. A frame Baptist church also existed in the Chesham area of Harrisville. Today all three of these church buildings survive in Harrisville, but only this brick Community Church of Harrisville and Chesham is used regularly for church services and community functions.

Physical Evolution of the Property

1953 Alterations and Addition

In 1953, the historic church was rehabilitated with funding provided by a local family whose daughter was to be married in the church. Originally, there were two doors into the auditorium (sanctuary) across from each entry door. The two doors from the entry hall into the auditorium were removed and replaced with a central double-leaf door leading to a single, central aisle. The original box pews were removed, a composite tile floor was installed, and longer, slightly curved slip pews purchased from another church were installed, flanking the new central aisle.

Also in 1953, structure known as Fellowship Hall was added to the north elevation of the original church. This addition houses a gathering room, kitchen, bathroom, and office. Physical evidence indicates that there were 12-over-12 windows on the north façade above the pulpit, which were removed and infilled with masonry during the 1953 rehabilitation when Fellowship Hall was added.

In late 1998 and early 1999, the existing concrete stairs and platform that spanned the front of the church providing access to both doors was removed and replaced with the current granite steps and platform. It is likely that the original configuration was a smaller set of wooden stairs serving each door. There is no record of when the original steps were replaced by the concrete platform and steps.

In 2021, the steeple was repaired and painted, and the gable was painted. The church the 1953 pews were removed and stored offsite, so that the composite (asbestos) tile floor could be removed. Once the tile and subfloor had been removed, physical evidence confirmed the initial layout with two aisles and three bays of straight, short box pews. In 2022, the existing wood floor will be sanded and refinished. New pews will be fabricated and installed, maintaining the single central aisle.

Assessment of Condition (from visual inspection)

Will provide update from Michael Petrovick assessment, noting work done as part of the LCHIP project and additional/unfunded scope.

Exterior Photographs (keyed to site plan)

Exterior Character-Defining Features

Location/Setting

Relationship to mill village

- Relationship to Harrisville Pond and Canal
- Orientation to adjacent roads

Greek Revival Proportions

- Height and massing
- Entry on short side
 - Symmetrical façade with double entry
- Brick and timber construction

Greek Revival Style Architectural Details

- Two wood panel doors with sidelights and granite thresholds
- 12/12 windows on the south elevation; (is there one on the north?) with granite lintels
- 32/32 windows on the east and west elevations with granite lintels
- Closed pediment gables
- Tower, belfry and spire

Interior Photographs (keyed to floor plan)

Interior Character-Defining Features

Proportions

- Meetinghouse floorplan with stair hall, auditorium, and gallery

Architectural Details

- 12/12 gallery windows
- 32/32 sanctuary windows
- Flat plaster ceilings with bold cornice
- Flat plaster walls with wood wainscot