

**NEW HAMPSHIRE HISTORIC PROPERTY DOCUMENTATION  
SHORT FORMAT**

**CHURCH STREET PUMP HOUSE**

NH State No. 718

**LOCATION:** 50 Church Street, Hampton, Rockingham County, New Hampshire.  
USGS Hampton NH Quadrangle. UTM Coordinates: 19.352086.4753063

**DATE BUILT:** 1934-35

**BUILDER:** Town of Hampton, NH

**ENGINEER:** Frank A. Barbour, Sanitary Engineer, Haley & Ward Engineering, Boston, MA

**CONTRACTOR:** McDonald Construction Co. (no location information obtained)

**OWNER/USE:** Town of Hampton, NH / Sewer System Pumping Facility

**SIGNIFICANCE:**

The Church Street Pump House is a surviving example of an uncommon property type in New Hampshire. It retains the necessary integrity of setting and use to convey its association with the development of a modern sewerage treatment system during a period of rapid population growth in Hampton Beach. It retains the necessary integrity of original design, materials and function to convey its specialized industrial purpose and role as an important component of the town's sanitary system. The facade retains the principal architectural features of simple Art Deco styling adapted to a small utilitarian building.

**DESCRIPTION:<sup>1</sup>**

The pump house is a one-story (above grade) yellow brick and reinforced concrete, block structure with brick cladding. The main block is nearly square in plan (19' x 22') with a rectangular bump-out (3' x 14') centered on the front façade. The flat roof is covered with a rubber membrane overlaid with tar and gravel. The centered front entrance door consists of a flush steel door, not original to the building. Immediately inside the entrance is a steel platform approximately 3 feet wide by 6 feet long, equipped with a simple steel balustrade railing. At each end of the platform are winding steel stairs that drop down four steps (30") to the floor of the upper-level equipment control room. The platform and stairs fit entirely within the aforementioned front-wall bump-out. The control room is a single open room with modern electrical control panels mounted on the rear (north) and west walls. Single square window openings are centered on the east and west walls at ceiling level and fitted with single 6-light steel tilt sash. The rear wall has three steel tilt-sash windows consisting of a single 6-light window flanked by 4-light windows. The rear windows are now enclosed in a narrow addition extending across the back of the building, added to accommodate a metal staircase to the lower-level (basement) pump room. The stairway addition was added in 1967 to replace a steel ladder. A doorway was cut in the rear wall to access the stairway to the

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<sup>1</sup> This section is adopted from *NHDHR Inventory Form # HAM0036, Church Street Pump House*, prepared by Frederick L. Richards, 11 October 2013.

basement pump room, the floor of which is approximately 25 feet below grade. The pump room is located directly beneath the control room and houses the piping and pipe connections to the three main pumps. The current pumps were installed in 1985-1986.

The most distinctive architectural feature, besides the building's almost faceted cube-like appearance, is the decorative brickwork on the front facade and the use of concrete bands (vertical and horizontal) to define the entranceway and the cornice area. The arrangement of the decorative brickwork and banding, as well as the overall cube-like massing, identifies the pump house as a simple but refined expression of 1930s Art Deco. This period style is consistent with the building's design and construction between 1935 and 1936.

## **HISTORY:<sup>2</sup>**

The Church Street Pump house was designed and constructed in 1934-35 as the main pump interceptor for sewage from Hampton Beach destined for the town's first sewerage treatment plant located about 3,300 feet to the northwest (across the Great Marsh) off of Tide Mill Road. The pump house was built as part of a comprehensive, state-mandated upgrade of Hampton Beach's sewer system which had existed since 1908 as little more than long pipe discharging raw sewage into the ocean about 300 yards below low water. Hampton Beach is located on a long, narrow sand spit separated from the mainland by saltmarsh. The spit developed into a summer colony that grew increasingly dense from the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century onward. Water service was brought to Hampton Beach in 1907 and in 1908 a rudimentary sewer system was established. The system lacked a treatment component and as it was expanded over the next two decades, public outcry over unsanitary conditions at the beach increased. In 1931 the State Department of Public Health recommended "drastic steps" be taken immediately.

An initiative to sell the beach to the State of New Hampshire to operate as a state park had been gaining local support. In April 1933 at a special town meeting voters approved resolutions to convey the beach to the state and to spend \$118,000 for a treatment plant to be located on the Church Street town property now occupied by the pump house. Problems and arguments over the sewer system plan, location and cost continued until December 14, 1933 when voters adopted a final plan. In 1934 the town hired Frank A. Barbour of Haley & Ward Engineering to design the entire treatment system, including the Church Street Pump House. Barbour had entered professional practice in 1897 and earned a national and international reputation as a sanitary engineer. He served as president of the Boston Society of Civil Engineers during the 1920s. When the system became operational in 1935, it was reportedly the first treatment plant of its kind in New Hampshire, and the only system along the Atlantic coast between Canada and Florida that prevented raw sewage from being discharged directly into the ocean.

Since 1935, the pump house, along with portions of the sewage treatment system, has been upgraded numerous times. The extension of sewer lines often required changes in equipment and layout. Modifications to the system were made in 1936, 1948 (1935 treatment plant remodeled and expanded), 1951 (lines to village center completed), 1955, 1960, 1975-76, 1985 and 1987. The current project (2012-13) calls for demolition of the existing 1934-35 pump house and replacement with a new structure on the same property. The town's consulting engineers, Wright-Pierce of Portsmouth, NH, have concluded that "due to the age, condition and structural limitations of the existing pump station, it is not cost effective to upgrade the existing station in place."

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<sup>2</sup> This section is adopted from *NHDHR Inventory Form # HAM0036, Church Street Pump House*, prepared by Frederick L. Richards, 11 October 2013.

**SOURCES:**

Richards, Frederick L. *NHDHR Inventory Form # HAM0036, Church Street Pump House*. October 11, 2013. Report on file at NH Division of Historical Resources, Concord.

**PROJECT INFORMATION:**

Church Street Pump House was documented July 2013 in accordance with the New Hampshire Historic Property Documentation Program, by Historic Documentation Company Inc. (HDC), Portsmouth, RI, for the Town of Hampton, NH. The report was compiled by Richard M. Casella, Architectural Historian. Rob Tucher conducted and processed the large-format film photography in accordance with HABS/HAER standards.

## INDEX TO PHOTOGRAPHS

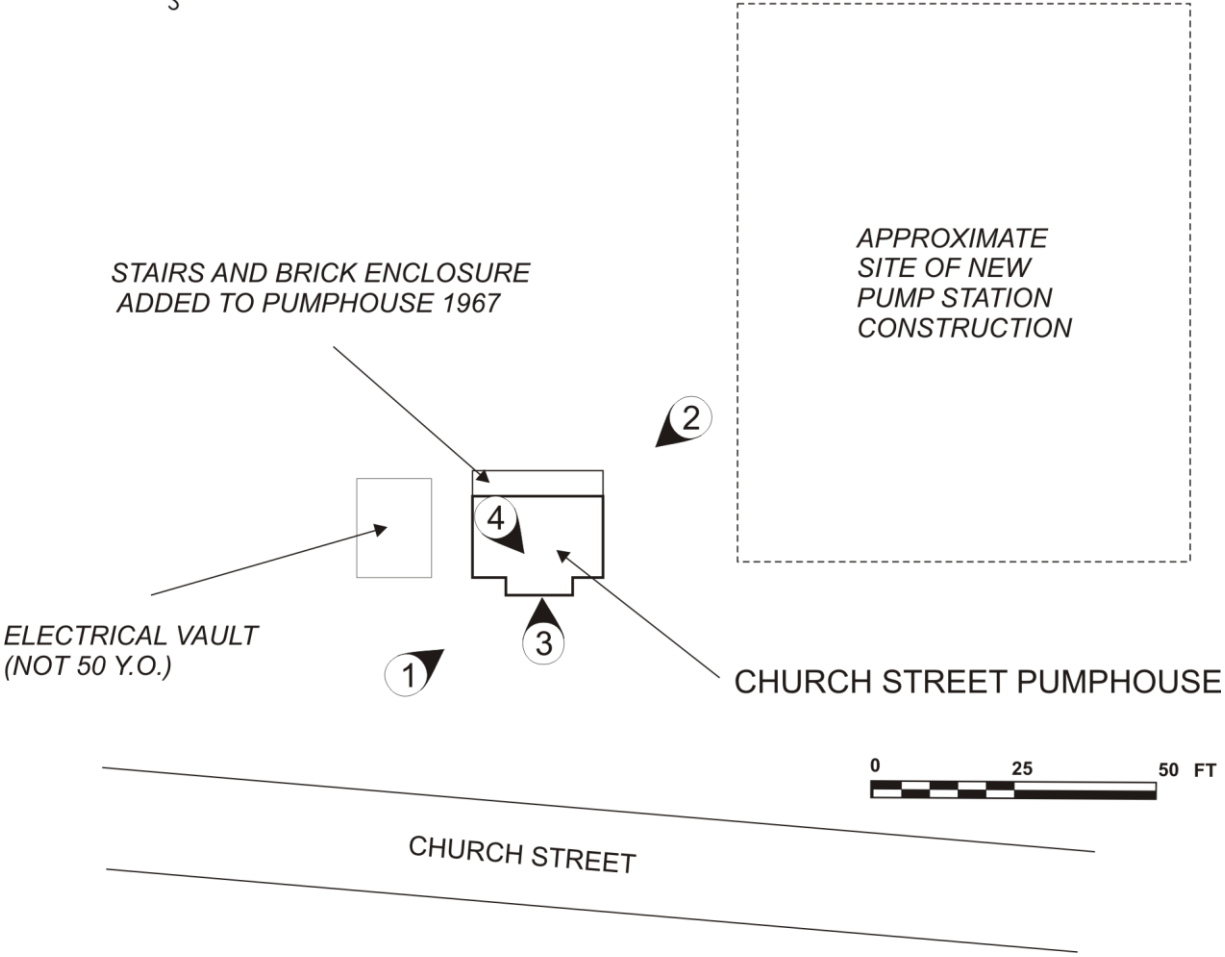
### CHURCH STREET PUMP HOUSE

50 Church Street  
Hampton  
Rockingham County  
New Hampshire

New Hampshire State No. 718  
Photographer: Rob Tucher  
July 2013

- NH-718-1      Front (south) and west side elevations. Looking northeast.
- NH-718-2      East elevation and rear addition (1968). Looking southwest.
- NH-718-3      Interior, ground level control room, view through open front door, showing original stair railing, foreground; original steel tilt-sash windows on rear wall now enclosed in stairwell addition; modern electrical control panels. Looking north.
- NH-718-4      Front (south) and west side elevations. Looking northeast.

CHURCH STREET PUMP HOUSE  
NH State No. 718  
KEY TO PHOTOGRAPHS



BALDWIN STREET BRIDGE  
NH State No. 718  
4x5 B&W NEGATIVE SCANS



NH-718-1: Front (south) and west side elevations. Looking northeast.

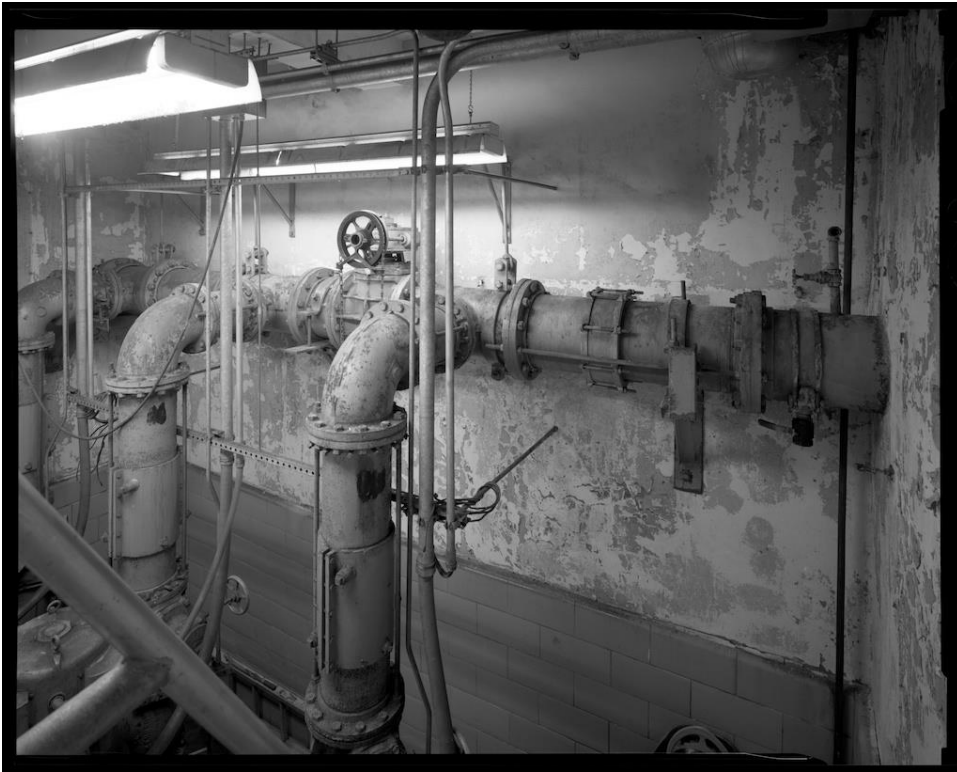


NH-718-2: East elevation and rear addition (1968). Looking southwest.



NH-718-3: Interior, ground level control room, view through open front door, showing original stair railing, foreground; original steel tilt-sash windows on rear wall now enclosed in stairwell addition; modern electrical control panels. Looking north.





NH-718-4: Interior, lower level, showing original concrete walls with ceramic tiling, some original piping components. Looking southeast.