

The Colors of Town Hall – A Brief History



Town Hall

*In 1789, it was voted to paint the meeting-house:
“The walls to be stone yellow, the roof Spanish
brown, and the corner boards and window frames
and sashes white.” - A Historical Sketch of the
Town of Hanover, John S. Barry,*

Since Hanover's founding in 1727, we know that there have been five buildings that have served as Hanover's Town Hall (first combined with the town's church and known as the Meeting House). We also know that these buildings have been painted in at least five colors combinations. It has been white, with white trim since sometime in the 1920s.

TOWN HALL



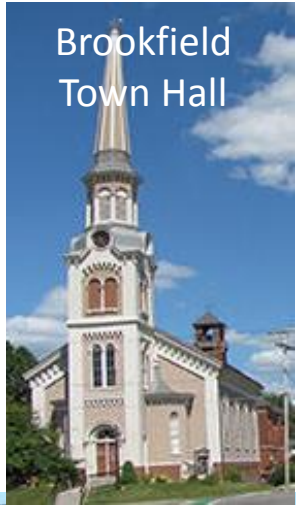
Some residents had a strong reaction to returning Town Hall to the colors it was painted after its renovation and expansion in 1893 - that is, dark gray-green siding with cream trim. In response, Historical Commission members decided that returning Town Hall to the color scheme shown on this postcard (light gray siding with white trim) would also highlight the elegant trim on the building, but not be such a radical departure from what people have been used to seeing for the past 90 or so years.

EXAMPLES FROM HANOVER



Town Buildings in Other Towns

Brookfield
Town Hall



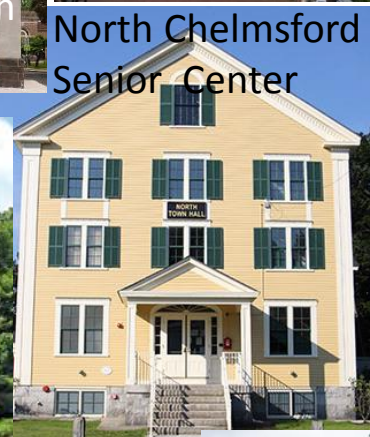
Northampton
Town Hall



Provincetown
Town Hall



North Chelmsford
Senior Center



Middleboro
Town Hall



Saugus
Town Hall



Norfolk
Town Hall



Georgetown
Town Hall



Topsfield
Town Hall



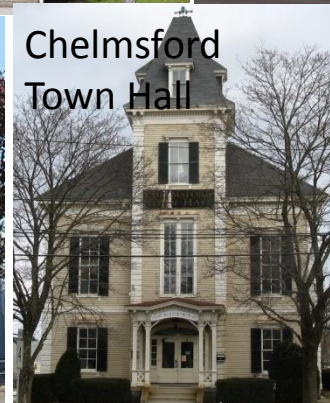
Sandwich
Town Hall



Hanson
Town Hall



Chelmsford
Town Hall



Bellingham
Town Hall



James Library



The Historical Commission recognizes that Town Hall has been white as long as anyone alive can remember. However, if we count about 25 years in a generation, that's about 12 generations of Hanover residents between 1727 and now. For only about last four of those twelve generations, Town Hall has been white.

Renderings showing Town Hall painted in the gray/white color scheme and the all-white color scheme will be on view at the High School on Saturday.

The Historical Commission urges you to look at the renderings critically. Look at which scheme does justice to the architecture of the building and the beauty of its features - and then make a choice.

Town Hall Gray with White Trim

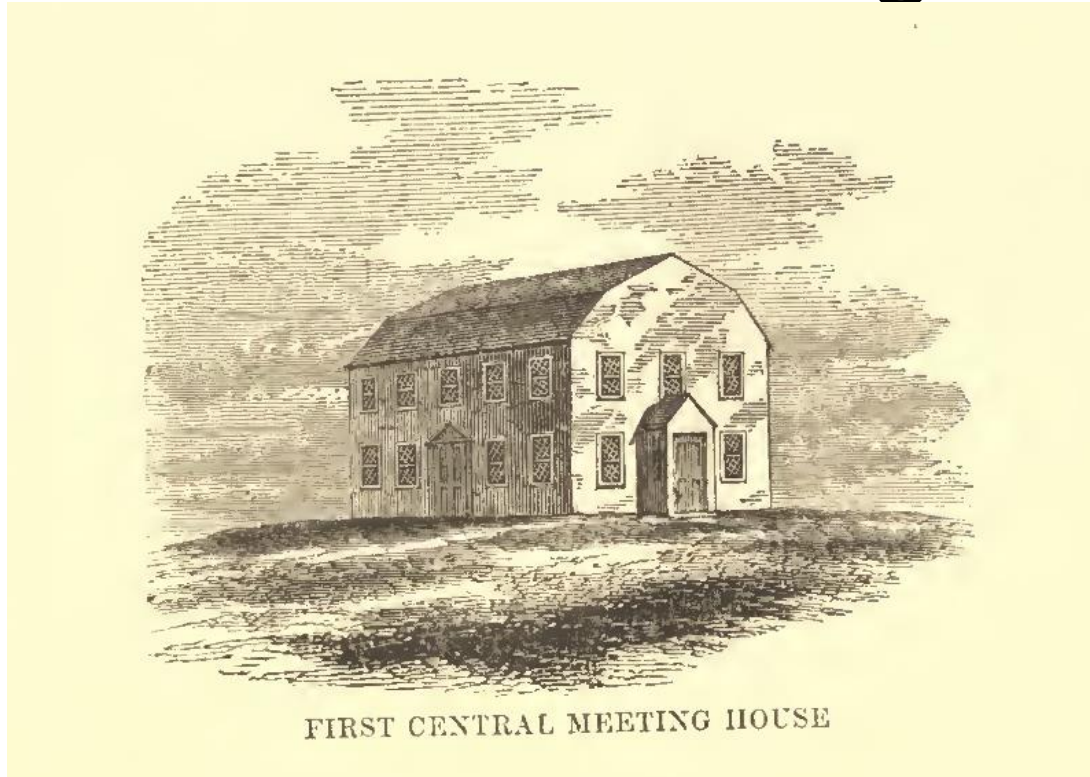


Town Hall White with White Trim



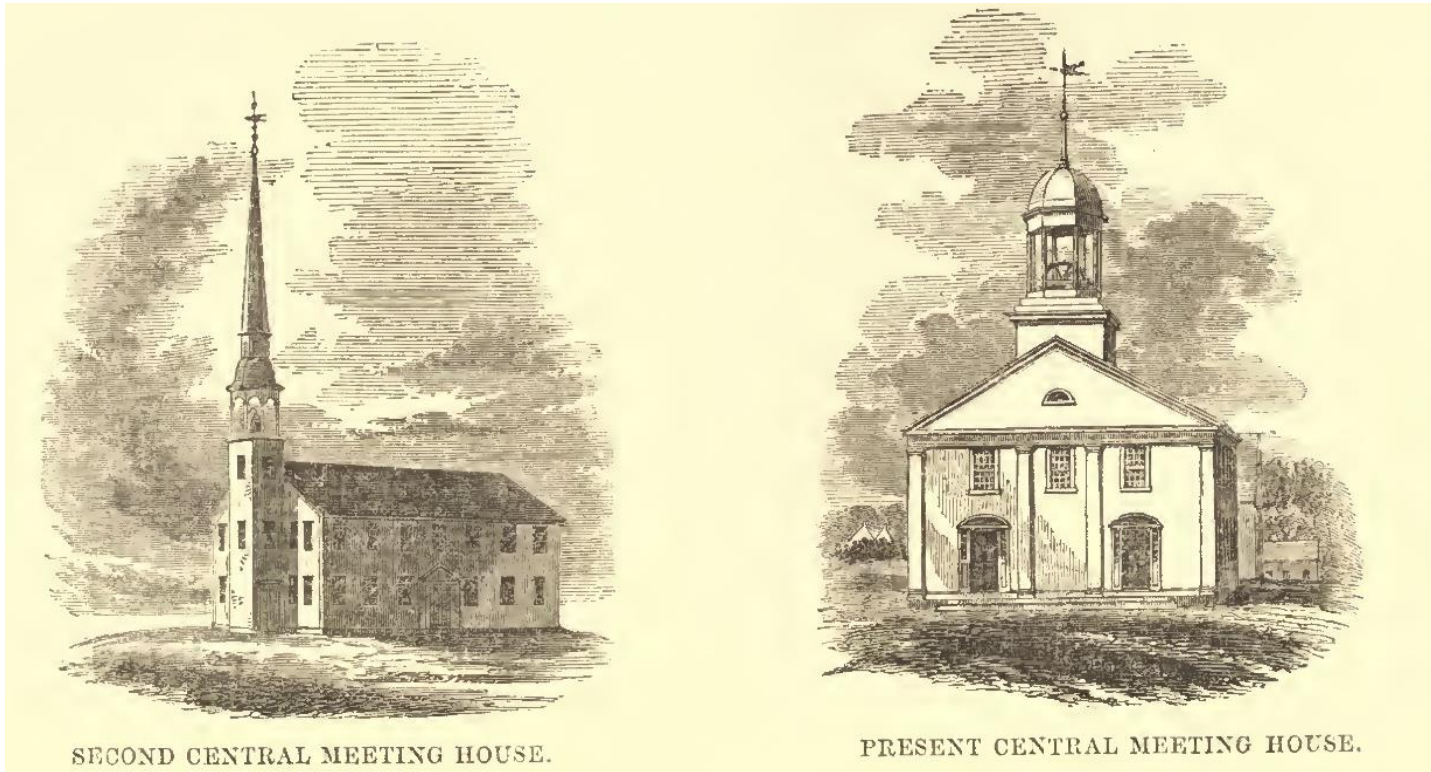
More Background Information

Hanover's First Meeting House



We have very little information about what the first meeting house looked like, but here is an etching from Barry's book, based on the information available. Completed in 1728, it was very simple, and it might not have been painted at all.

Second and Third Meeting Houses



We know that the second meeting house was painted yellow with white trim and brown roof. The third meeting house was built in the 1820s, and so far we have not been able to find a record of its color. This building and the sort of annex behind it that was used for Town business burned in 1863.

TOWN HALL 1863



In 1863 a separate Town Hall was built on the site of the present Town Hall, and the present First Congregational Church building across from Town Hall was built at the same time. They looked almost like twins. We know from paint analysis carried out during the Town Hall restoration project that the 1863 Town Hall had rather dark, brownish green siding and cream trim.

TOWN HALL 1907



Town Hall was renovated and expanded in 1893. The 1863 version was incorporated into this renovation and there's very little left of it. After the 1893 renovation, this building was both high school and Town Hall until the Sylvester School was built. This is the earliest image we have of the present Town Hall that we can date.

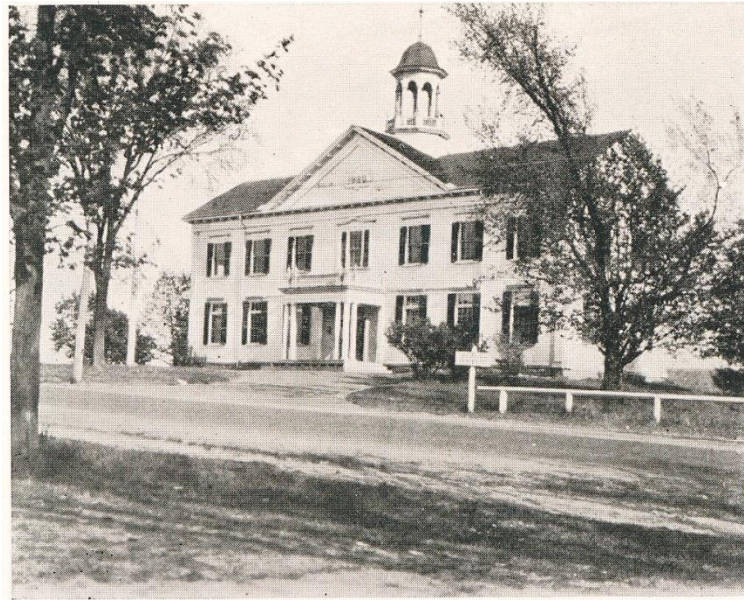
When we began the restoration process for Town Hall, the Historical Commission started looking carefully at old photographs, and members were pretty sure that this 1893 renovation was painted a color – not white, and the trim was painted a lighter contrasting color.

TOWN HALL 1910



Paint analysis revealed that in 1893 the clapboards were painted a gray/green color and all of the trim was painted a creamy, yellow white. The most important aspect of this color scheme was that the architect chose to highlight elaborate and quite beautiful trim on the building – the corner boards, the portico at the front door, the framing around the windows and the cupola. You can see that contrast in this black and white photo, although you can't tell what colors it was painted. The Historical Commission first recommended to the Selectmen that Town Hall be returned to the colors it was painted in 1893 because Commission members believe our forbears back in 1893 had made a good choice, and that Town Hall would look very striking in this color scheme.

TOWN HALL 1927



THE TOWN HOUSE



THE first Town House
was erected in 1826 and
burned in 1862. The
present building was
built in 1863 and en-
larged in 1893.



200th Anniversar.

TOWN OF HANOVER
JUNE 14, 1927

Town Hall was first painted white in the 1920's.

An initial vote showed people who voted were divided fairly equally on whether Town Hall should be painted with a dark color or the clapboards and light color for all of the trim, or remain all white.

Since it was clear that some people found this older color scheme too radical a change, the Historical Commission looked for a compromise.

TOWN HALL



Commission members looked again at old photographs and came across this image. It's not dated, but certainly before Sylvester School was finished, which was in 1927, and the high school moved out of Town Hall.

The Commission decided that returning to a color scheme of light grey for the clapboards and white for the trim would highlight the elegant trim on the building, but not be such a radical departure from what people have been used to seeing for the past 90 or years.

Historical Commission Recommendation

We therefore asked the architects to produce yet another rendering showing this color combination - gray siding with white trim. After reviewing how the returning to this color scheme would look on the restored Town Hall, the Historical Commission voted unanimously to recommend it to the Selectmen. The Town Hall Task Force has also voted unanimously to recommend this color scheme.