

Completed Projects

The North Wilmot Union Meeting House Society (NWUMHS) was established in 1984 as a 501 c3 nonprofit organization to maintain the historic North Wilmot Church, which was built in 1829.

Over the years the NWUMHS has completed several major maintenance projects including a standing-seam metal roof in 2005, painting the exterior in 2012, and repairing the bell tower in 2017.

After three years of planning and fundraising, the NWUMHS embarked in 2022 on a significant project to stabilize the foundation, level the structure, replace a rotted beam under the bell tower, restore all the windows, repair and paint the shutters, and paint the exterior. The work was completed in October 2023.

Phase One: Restoration of the North Wilmot Church

In 2020 the North Wilmot Union Meeting House Society (NWUMHS) embarked on a campaign to raise funds to pay for the restoration of the historic 1829 meeting house known as the North Wilmot Church.

Phase One of the restoration of the church started in April 2021. This work included removing a non-functioning furnace and asbestos-covered ducts, restoring the windows, pouring a partial concrete foundation, and replacing rotted clapboards, sills, and joists.

NWUMHS secured grants from several sources including the NH Preservation Alliance/The 1772 Foundation, the Land and Community Heritage Investment Program (LCHIP), the National Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution, Mary Butler Chapter; Bar Harbor Bank & Trust, and

Mascoma Bank. The Wilmot Historical Society paid for the restoration of the Palladian window over the front door of the church. More than 175 individuals contributed to Phase One of the restoration project.

To facilitate the structural work, the meeting house society first hired a company to remove the non-functioning furnace and asbestos-covered ducts in the basement. EnviroVantage, a company licensed for asbestos removal, completed the work in early April 2021. Removing the asbestos-covered ducts ensured that contractors could safely work under the church to stabilize the foundation and replace rotted beams and joists. In 2021, during the COVID-19 pandemic, contractors were busy and materials were in short supply. In light of these issues, the meeting house society scheduled the window restoration and foundation work for 2022.

John Thompson, owner of JLT Painting of Alexandria, NH, started window restoration in February 2022. He removed windows and installed temporary windows in each opening. At his shop, Mr. Thompson removed the paint, glazing, and glass. He repaired the wood as needed, replaced the glass, glazed the windows, and primed and painted each window. Originally, Mr. Thompson had planned to reinstall the windows as he finished them. However, he suggested that we should wait until the foundation work was complete. He wrapped each window with moving blankets and stored the windows in the meeting house. In all, Mr. Thompson restored fourteen 16-over-16 windows in the sanctuary, the Palladian window over the entry door, three windows on the lower level of the west side, a small window in the bell tower, and tall, narrow windows that flank the front door.

In early April 2022, meeting house society board members used a small excavator to remove the front steps and granite-edged gardens in front of the church. This allowed Mike Howard, owner of Howard Construction Building Movers, to see the rotted sill and order materials, including the replacement beam.

In late July, Howard Construction Building Movers started work. They built cribs to support the façade. During this process, they also raised the building about three inches - just enough to remove the sill. The section of the beam under the front door was almost completely rotted. Originally, the board thought the rubble foundation was stable. However, it was not and it crumbled on July 28, 2022.

On July 29, Mike Howard contacted the meeting house society to recommend installation of concrete footings and foundation under the pavilion at the front of the church. Mr. Howard's estimate for pouring a concrete foundation, an unanticipated expense, was \$5,000. Because it was not included in the original proposal, we contacted George Born, LCHIP's historic resource specialist, for permission to proceed. He approved the change. To ensure solid support for the front pavilion, the contractor poured concrete footings and foundation under all three sides of the pavilion, the small entry room at the front, the east facade of the church.

Once the sill was in place, the contractor's crew lowered the building and leveled it as much as was feasible and safe for the nearly 200-year-old structure. Mr. Howard said the building is now as square/level as it can tolerate. Previously, two corners were off by three to four inches from the other two. Now the building is almost level. At the conclusion of the foundation work, the structure is more stable than was in decades.

On the west end of the building, the contractor poured concrete pads on which posts now sit. The crew also built a crib under the center aisle of the sanctuary. This eliminated the unstable effect that people had felt when they walked on that area of the floor.

The board decided not to replace the gardens that had flanked the front

steps. This will ensure that no roots infiltrate the rubble foundation and that moisture will not be trapped between the top step and the front sill.

Prior to the start of the foundation restoration in 2022, four steps led to the front door. One was concrete and another was less than 8 feet long and required two short pieces on either side to make up the difference. To allow the installation of two steps instead of four, Howard Construction raised the grade in front of the meeting house by about 8 inches. This allowed them to use two long granite steps to provide access to the front door.

After the steps were installed, the contractor brought in several loads of top soil. Then they graded the area in front of the church so it slopes away from the building. They raked, seeded, and mulched the new soil. By early November, the grass seed had sprouted.

Once the foundation work was complete in mid-September 2022, John Thompson returned to reinstall all the windows. He completed the project in early October 2022.

The North Wilmot Union Meeting House Society board had planned to complete this work in 2021, but the contractors we had selected were booked. But the outcome in early fall of 2022 was well worth the wait. The front of the church now closely resembles its original appearance.

In August 2023, John Thompson returned to the North Wilmot Church to scrape, prime and paint the exterior. He completed this work in October 2023.

In October 2025, Nick Eaton donated a boulder from one of his fields to the North Wilmot Church. David Atwood and Gary Gove loaded it into a one-ton

dump truck and moved it from Eaton's property to the church where they positioned it on the left side of the front door. Later that month, Marc Berry, a Wilmot-based stone mason, affixed the Land and Community Heritage Investment Program plaque on it.

Work in 2026 will include installing hand-crafted railings on either side of the front steps. Jay Aubertin, owner of Wilmot-based J.A. Metalcraft, will create and install the railings.