



TOWN OF SWANZEY FIRE DEPARTMENT

620 OLD HOMESTEAD HIGHWAY
P.O. BOX 9
EAST SWANZEY, N.H. 03446-0009

To: Town of Swanzey Selectman

September 3, 1996

Subject: Whitcomb Hall

On July 18, 1996 representatives of the Swanzey Fire Department and Swanzey Police Department along with the Swanzey Code Enforcement Officer conducted a Town requested inspection of Whitcomb Hall in West Swanzey.

Our findings agree with those documented in the letters dated Feb. 29, 1988 from David Osgood and Apr. 11, 1988 from the State Fire Marshall (copies enclosed).

In addition to the above, the building would have to comply with the American Disabilities Act. This would include, but is not limited to; ramps, hand rails, elevators, etc.

If there are any questions regarding this report, please feel free to contact me so we can discuss any issues.

Sincerely,

Lt. Randy G. Phillips

Lt. Randy G. Phillips
Fire Inspection / Prevention Officer

CC: Swanzey Police Department
Chief Lee Dunham
File

David B. Osgood
Fire Prevention Officer
Swansey Fire Department
RD 2, Winchester NH 03470
(603) 352-7948

February 29, 1988

Swansey Board of Selectmen
Box 9
East Swansey NH 03446

Dear Sirs,

Report of Fire Inspection of Whitcomb Hall on February 25, 1988

The building is of wood frame construction about seventy (70) by thirty (30) feet and two and one half ($2\frac{1}{2}$) stories high and appears to be structurally sound. The Life Safety Code classifies it as a CLASS C PLACE of ASSEMBLY. That is a building or portion of a building that can hold from fifty (50) to three hundred (300) people. For the purpose of purpose of the inspection I considered the two levels of the building as separate places of assembly. For the first floor the occupant is one hundred forty one (141) or sixty five (65) people depending on whether dining tables are set up in the room. The second floor has an occupant load of two hundred (200) people. If the stage area and the two small rooms under the balcony are figured this would raise that figure to two hundred fifty (250) people. The balcony, which is considered a third level, would accomodate approximately fifty (50) people.

The Life Safety Code allows places of assembly on the second floor in wood frame buildings only if it is protected by an automatic sprinkler system. The balcony is considered a third floor and would not be permitted at all.

Other deficiencies are:

- (1) The varnished pine paneling in the stairways and on walls do not meet the fire resistance ratings required.
- (2) Panic Bars need to be installed on the exit doors.
- (3) Illuminated exit signs need to be installed.
- (4) Emergency lighting needs to be installed.
- (5) Fire doors would have to be installed on the first floor to protect the exits from the second floor.
- (6) The electrical panel has too many wires going to too few fuses and the fuses in the panel are too large for the circuits they protect.

Board of Selectmen
February 29, 1988
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- (7) The furnaces are installed to close to the floor joists and should be enclosed in their own protected room.
- (8) The fire extinguishers need recharging.

My recommendation at this time is to immediately close the balcony, second floor and basement to any public or private use.

The first floor could be used as a place of assembly if it were brought up to code (without installing a sprinkler system.) The first floor could be used if the occupant load were kept under fifty. This would mean that it is not a place of assembly and the code is not as strict. In my opinion that as a Town building and to protect the Town's liability that the first floor not be used until it is brought up to Code as a place of assembly.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "David B. Osgood". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "David" and last name "Osgood" clearly distinguishable.

David B. Osgood
Fire Prevention Officer

David B. Osgood
Fire Prevention Officer
Swanzey Fire Department
RD 2, Winchester NH 03470
(603) 352-7948

The key to utilizing Whitcomb Hall as a place of assembly is the installation of a sprinkler system. The sprinkler system has a record of controlling or extinguishing fires 96% of the time that there is a fire. Records of sprinklers performance have been kept for over one hundred years. Since the water system owned by the Town in West Swanzey is not approved for automatic sprinkler systems and the private system at the Mill does not come across the river there is no water main to tie sprinklers into.

The Town should be looking into upgrading its own system or encouraging the private water supply owners to upgrade and expand their system so that a reliable water supply will be available. The Cutler School and the proposed Nursing Home are just two places that need sprinklers.

Low cost residential sprinkler systems are available for one and two family dwellings and mobile homes, condominiums apartment houses, town houses and motels. These residential type systems are usually too costly to install if there is no water mains to tie into. If there are no mains than holding tanks and pumps must be installed and these are expensive.

If a dependable water supply could be established in the West Swanzey area, property owners could take advantage of this new sprinkler technology and improve the life safety of their buildings and the Fire Department would have good water supplies for firefighting.

STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE
DEPARTMENT OF SAFETY
DIVISION OF SAFETY SERVICES
OFFICE OF FIRE MARSHAL
Concord, New Hampshire

City or Town <u>West Swanzey</u>				Date <u>4-11-88</u>	
Street and Number <u>Main Street</u>					
Owner <u>Town</u>			Occupant		
Purpose Used <u>Place of Assembly</u>			Type of Bldg: <u>W. Frame</u>		Stories <u>2 1/2</u>
Kind of Roofing <u>Slate</u>			<u>Pitch</u> or Flat		
Stairway Location <u>Front</u>			<u>Open</u>	Closed	Fire Doors <u>None</u>
Fire Escapes <u>None</u> Number			<u>Iron</u>	Wood	Condition
Are Exits Adequate?		Panic Hardware where required?		Exitways Marked and Lighted?	
		<u>No</u>		<u>No</u>	
Fire Extinguishers	No.	Type	Condition	Placed where necessary	
			<u>Poor</u>	<u>No</u>	
Automatic Sprinklers	Yes	<u>No</u>	Standpipes and Hose	Yes	<u>No</u>
Fire Alarm	Yes	<u>No</u>	Type	Will it Operate?	
Are Electric Lighting and Appliance Circuits Fused Correctly?			Yes	<u>No</u>	
Heating Equipment:	Oil	Gas	Coal	Wood	Other
Emergency Lights	<u>1</u>			Smoke Doors	

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 1) Install a Cover on openings in Breaker Panel Backstage.
- 2) Install Fire Extinguishers and maintain according to NFPA 10
- 3) Clean out and secure area under stage
- 4) Install Illuminated Exit Signs that Also operate on Emergency Power
- 5) Install Emergency Lighting in the Hall and means of Egress
- 6) Install Panic Hardware on All Exit and Exit Access Doors
- 7) Secure Access To Balcony
- 8) Building Shall be Covered by Automatic Sprinklers to operate a Class C Place of Assembly on the Second Floor (50-300 People)
- 9) Remove all Exposed old Wiring and Bring the Entire Building Wiring System up to the National Electrical Code Standards
- 10) Therein shall be no storage under the stairs of the Building

Reinspected

Recommendations completed

Inspector

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STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE
DEPARTMENT OF SAFETY
DIVISION OF SAFETY SERVICES
OFFICE OF FIRE MARSHAL
Concord, New Hampshire

Whitcomb Hall

City or Town Wat Swanzey

Date _____

Street and Number _____

Owner				Occupant			
Purpose Used				Type of Bldg:		Stories	
Kind of Roofing				Pitch or Flat			
Stairway Location				Open	Closed	Fire Doors	
Fire Escapes	Number			Iron	Wood	Condition	
Are Exits Adequate?		Panic Hardware where required?			Exitways Marked and Lighted?		
Fire Extinguishers	No.	Type	Condition	Placed where necessary			
Automatic Sprinklers	Yes	No		Standpipes and Hose	Yes	No	
Fire Alarm	Yes	No	Type	Will it Operate?			
Are Electric Lighting and Appliance Circuits Fused Correctly?				Yes	No		
Heating Equipment:	Oil	Gas	Coal	Wood	Other		
Emergency Lights				Smoke Doors			

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 11) Police Storage Area shall be separated from Exit by a 1 hour Fire Rated Enclosure
- 12) Provide a 1 hour Fire Rated door to Front Exit Access from the First Floor Assembly Area
- 13) Provide a Railing on Both Sides of Rear Exit Stairs
- 14) Provide a 1 hour Fire Rated Enclosure around the oil Burners
- 15) Clean and Inspect the Chimney
- 16) Protect the oil line across the Floor
- 17) Secure access to the Basement and Attic
- 18) Install Fire Dampers in the ductwork to the Second Floor
- 19) Install a 20 minute Rated door on the Rear Exit Access.
- 20) Clean out Heat duct on First Floor
- 21) Provide a Second Means of Egress Protection to the Second Floor Rear with a 1 hour Fire Rated Enclosure

Reinspected _____

Recommendations completed _____

22 Interior Finish shall be Class A or B

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Inspector _____

J. Wilbur Deane

The above recommendations _____, shall be made in accordance with the authority of the New Hampshire Statutes, Chapter 153-RSA.