

# The Grange

Current Conditions & Options

September 5<sup>th</sup>, 2018

**- The Grange circa 1920 -**

Note some differences:

- the two chimneys
- a large bell tower
- no window shutters



From the National Register LHD description:

"Just south of St. Marks's is the Grange Hall, which once housed Centre School on the first floor and Town Hall on the second (Inventory #52) A long clapboarded two-story building, it has Greek Revival doorways at each end."

Grange Doors on North East corner

Right Door goes to 2<sup>nd</sup> floor





Front Door on South End

- Water damage under step
- Rotten wood & lead paint
- Not handicap accessible

- Inadequate Fire Escape
- Cracks in Foundation
- Peeling Lead Paint







Under the Grange building is the evidence of failed foundation.

Foundation and structural underpinnings require replacement.



Photo 7: Poorly constructed 6" concrete block foundation wall at Mechanical Room.



Photo 11: Poorly installed sister joist to replace failed joist.  
Missing lally column cap allows crushing into wood beam. Rust on lally column.

### Assembly Room

- Posts are unsupported
- Windows have Asbestos
- Ceiling is sagging





Assembly Room for  
~ 80 seats which is too  
small for Town Meetings

- Cheap paneling
- Lead paint



### Grange Kitchen

- Not a commercial kitchen
- Needs new appliances
- Not code compliant



- Kitchen Details
- Old plumbing system
  - Not code compliant
  - Lead & Asbestos



First Floor Bathroom

- Not handicap accessible
- Not code compliant





### Second Floor

- Narrow Steep Stairs
- Not code compliant
- Lead & Asbestos



#### Second Floor Details

- Exposed piping
- Lead solder joints
- 60 amp Electric Service



### Grange 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Details

- Bowed Ceiling
- Slanted Floor
- Undersized Support



### 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Ceiling

- Old Plaster Failed
- Re-covered w/tiles
- Smoke Detector ?





Grange Attic in bad shape with several problems.



Photo 19: Failure of abandoned south chimney.



Photo 18: Beam failure at hanger rod. Movement of attic joists in mortise joints.

*This is a summary on the condition of the Grange  
from our structural engineer, Kevin Archer. 2015*

Grange Hall – very poor structural condition:

All framing at all levels (roof, attic, 2<sup>nd</sup> floor, 1<sup>st</sup> floor) is undersized as compared to current Code load requirements.

The floor framing for both levels are particularly undersized considering that they should be capable of supporting “Assembly” floor loading at 100 pounds per square foot.

The stud walls are undersized.

The foundation is in very poor condition. It is not frost protected, is just unmortared rubble stone for about half of its volume, has suffered significant damage due to poor construction, freeze/thaw, and water infiltration.

There is insect and water damage in the perimeter portions of the 1<sup>st</sup> floor framing.

Lally columns and footings were added in the crawl space but the footings are undersized and the lally column have rusted.

The fire escape on the west side of the building is undersized, decayed and inadequately supported.

There is an abandoned chimney at the south end of the building that is in very poor condition and should be removed.

In April of 2016 an old oil tank was excavated at the northwest corner of the Grange. The 275 gallon tank had leaked extensively before abandonment in about 2006.

Our contractor removed several truck loads of oil soaked soil excavated at 8 ft. depth below tank grave. The contamination had spread to the property line with St. Mark's Church. All the contaminated soil was removed except for an area next to and under the foundation of the Grange.

When the old Grange is either removed and rebuilt or renovated in place, the oil soaked soil should be excavated to prevent future petroleum contamination of two nearby public water supply wells at St. Mark's Church and Bridgewater Bistro.



Contaminated soil from leaking oil tank still remains under the Grange foundation or building. Any further excavation would be dangerous to the structural integrity of the building.



Our contractor estimates that 44-66 tons of contaminated soil remain under the northwest corner of the building at an 8-10 ft. depth. It will be difficult and costly to excavate if building is renovated, but easier if replaced.





Features to be included in a new or renovated structure:

**Ground Floor:**

1. Clear span meeting room on ground level to accommodate 120 seated people
2. Galley kitchen to serve food via pass-through to meeting room
3. Two ADA compliant bathrooms
4. Entry foyer with coat closets

**Walk out basement level:**

1. Raise level of ground floor by 4-5ft to allow for adequate headroom
2. Utility Room for water and heating systems
3. Small storage rooms for various groups using building (3 or 4)
4. Possible Recreation room with ping pong table and game space for kids & teens

**Future Grange Community Center activities include:**

- ❖ Town meetings and hearings where up to 120 people can be seated
- ❖ Indoor Town Ceremonies in bad weather
- ❖ Dances and receptions would allow for a capacity up to approximately 200 people
- ❖ Base for local farmers to have events/dinners under the Grange #153 auspices
- ❖ Slide shows, lectures & Art exhibits and group meetings
- ❖ Storage rooms in basement for Grange, Scouts, Historical Society, etc.
- ❖ Utility room in basement for water & septic lines, furnace, etc.
- ❖ Playroom space in basement for youth programs (ping pong & games)
- ❖ Kitchen used for traditional Grange dinners and catered events/receptions

A Rebuild or Renovation of the Grange Building will require land for a septic system and a reserve area.

St. Mark's Church is willing to let the Town use a 2+acre lot for this purpose. The church also wants to retain a small area for parking and a septic field reserve. The cost to the town would range from \$80,000 to \$100,000 for the excavation, septic system, surveying and parking area.



***Three contractors have reviewed the Grange structure and opted not to provide firm (not-to-exceed) estimates to renovate the building for several reasons. We also have several “Hard Bids” for renovation.***

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- The labor time involved is unpredictable because there are so many documented structural issues.
- The CT Prevailing Wage Law will add significant overhead and labor expense (~ 30%).
- Contractors prefer to work on a “Time & Materials” basis because they can’t predict labor.
- One group said they work until job is finished and no labor time limit applies.
- Another contractor said costs would run way over a million \$ and it is foolish not to build new.
- **If renovated, the building would essentially become a whole new structure.**



Brad Schide, the “*Circuit Rider*” from the Trust, has said that a possible funding source to pay for renovation of the Grange is the ***Small Cities*** Program.

However, that scenario seems unlikely since the competitive funding principally benefits only low-and moderate-income persons and takes up 2 years to secure funding after a burdensome application process.

*Excerpt from the CT DOH website:*

– CDBG Small Cities funding is an important program. This federal funding is essential to low and moderate income residents and without these dollars, we would likely be unable to assist as many of our low and moderate income residents as they make these kinds of repairs.”

***The Bottom Line for the future of the Grange/Community Center***

If the Grange demolition/rebuild option is not permitted by CT Historic Preservation Office, then The Town is required by our insurance company to install a construction fence by October. The Grange building will sit vacant for a long time (possibly years) to make plans, apply for grants, and hire contractors.

***The Bottom Line for the future of the Grange/Community Center***

The best option for the future of Bridgewater, which is in accord with our downtown re-vitalization plans since 2013, will be to demolish the failing structure with care to save chestnut wood elements for re-use. This historic wood will be re-milled for trim details in the new Grange Community Center.

The building will function better as one story with a full basement. The architecture will keep most historic details without being a replica. We believe the new structure could be in place by the end of 2019.

***The Bottom Line for the future of the Grange/Community Center***

The Demo/Rebuild plan is an immediate option which is less costly, more predictable labor costs w/o Davis-Bacon provisions for prevailing wage, and environmentally responsible considering asbestos, lead paint, and oil contamination. Bridgewater does not want a condemned building surrounded by chain link fence in the middle of the ***Bridgewater Center Historic District*** for the foreseeable future.



Rendering of one story new  
Grange/Community Center by  
McQueen architects.



I support the Bridgewater Selectmen's recommendation that The Bridgewater Grange building be demolished. After engineering and architectural studies, it is clear that the building cannot be safely or responsibly restored. This is especially true given the challenges of the small site on which the building resides, and its associated environmental problems.

I have attended two town meetings in which this issue has been discussed in great detail. In spite of the last minute effort by a minority of residents to provide emails to you with the opposite opinion, it is clear to me that the majority of residents agree with the Selectmen's recommendation.

Regards,  
Member, Bridgewater Board of Finance