

MAIN STREET

EARLIER (1800'S) DOWNTOWN BRICK BUILDINGS



Unitarian Church Parish Hall addition, 1926
(an original Russell design).



Unitarian Church, 1825 (attributed to Bulfinch).



Second Guernsey Cattle Club, 1950, Russell style, on site of Phoenix Mill (demolished 1921).



Carr Building, 1842.



Baptist Church, 1854.



Peterborough Savings Bank, in the Russell style
1965 (additions and renovations 1966-1987).



Library, 1892.

Source: Roper, Scott C. "The World is Moving to a Higher Level: The Cost of Progress in Downtown Peterborough, 1813-1921", Historical New Hampshire, Vol. 56, No's 1 & 2 (Spring-Summer, 2001, pp. 35-53).
Design & photos: C. Kirkpatrick.

Peterborough Heritage Commission
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The Russell Tour

"Designing comprehensively
and thinking on a grand scale".



Benjamin F. W. Russell, 1875-1943

In 1912 Benjamin Russell, a partner in the Boston architectural firm of Little and Russell, purchased the former "poor farm" in Peterborough, where he spent weekends and summers. He had served as architect Guy Lowell's Chief Assistant on the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, and later was responsible more than anyone for Peterborough's transformation into a "progressive community". He brought the brick Georgian Revival style to Grove Street, with his design of the Town House, Historical Society, and first American Guernsey Cattle Club buildings. A contemporary of the MacDowells, and known for his involvement in community affairs, he was a member of the Old Phoenix Mill Associates, a group incorporated in 1916 to purchase and revitalize one of the town's major industries, the Phoenix Mill.

GROVE STREET

THE ORIGINAL RUSSELL DESIGNS



Historical Society, 1920.

Clara Foster Bass, mother of Governor Robert Perkins Bass, proposed this building in 1913 and contracted Russell for the design. Although downtown Peterborough was predominantly late 19th century Second Empire buildings, Russell chose Georgian Revival, his interpretation of "the spirit of the town". Working with the Basses, Russell finalized design plans in 1915. The building wasn't finished until 1920, distracted by coincidental construction of the Town House. To assure a unified landscape, Russell employed the same overseer and contractors, the same hard-burned, dark-red, water-struck bricks from the same vendor in Boston, for both the Historical Society and the Town House.



Town House, 1918.

Designed to coordinate with the Historical Society building, under construction at the same time, it was modeled after Bulfinch's 1905 re-design of Faneuil Hall in Boston. These 2 harmonizing buildings formed the core of the civic center on Grove Street. The Opera House, which stood on the location (1861-1916) was razed in 1917 after damage from 3 fires in 7 years. At a special town meeting, June 10th, 1916, by a vote of 324 to 14, the town approved \$60,000 for this new building. Constructed by J.H. Mendell Co. of Manchester, it was completed in less than 1 year, despite labor and supply problems. It was a building for the people for generations to come and intended as an "inspiration for each...structure in town."

American Guernsey Cattle Club, 1919.

One of Peterborough's leading enterprises, called the "Cow Palace" for the cow head medallions that decorate it.

RUSSELL-INSPIRED CONTEMPORARIES



First National Bank, 1924.



Peterborough Savings Bank, 1870, remodeled Russell style 1924.



Post Office, 1936.