



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Sanford Town Hall (Former)  
other names/site number Springvale Town Hall

2. Location

street & number 505 Main Street N/A not for publication  
city or town Springvale N/A vicinity  
state Maine code ME county York code 031 zip code 04083

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this  nomination  
 request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of  
Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  
 meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant  
 nationally  statewide  locally. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

[Signature] 11/30/06  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

Maine Historic Preservation Commission  
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register.  
 See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register.  
 See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register.
- removed from the National Register.
- other, (explain): \_\_\_\_\_

[Signature]  
Signature of the Keeper  
Edson H. Beall Date of Action 1.9.07



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## DESCRIPTION

### *Present Condition*

The (Former) Sanford Town Hall is a multi-function, one-story frame building located on Main Street in the Springvale section of Sanford, Maine. Constructed as a municipal building in 1873 the gable-fronted structure combines Greek Revival forms with details influenced by Italianate styling. Originally built as a 42 x 76 foot high-posted rectangle facing east towards Main Street, the footprint was expanded with the addition of a low-pitched (almost flat) gable roof structure, twenty feet deep and spanning the west elevation.<sup>1</sup> The Town Hall sits on a .37 acre urban lot fronted by a level lawn held in place by a low cement retaining wall and a sidewalk, all set in a neighborhood of vernacular 19<sup>th</sup> century houses. To the north of the building the driveway connects Main Street to a small parking lot behind the structure. Underlying the building are granite foundation stones, and it is clad with painted clapboards and has a corrugated steel roof on the front section and a membrane roof on the addition.<sup>2</sup> Two brick chimneys protrude through the roof; one near the northeast corner of the building and a second at the western exterior wall which penetrates the cornice line midway between the ridge and the southern eave. Also on the roof are two cylindrical metal bathroom vents, each positioned in the general vicinity of the chimneys.

The primary elevation is three symmetrical bays wide with a central entrance set between two large (four feet by ten feet) six-over-six wooden double-hung sash window. A matching window is positioned under the gable peak in the attic. Lending the structure its Greek Revival form are wide corner pilasters which support flared, but rectilinear, capitals under substantial cornice returns. Broad frieze boards in the rake (and also under the eaves along the side elevations) and an overhanging roof with a moulded cornice combine with the symmetry and overall proportion to give the building its Greek Revival feeling.<sup>3</sup> However, the tall windows are capped with a heavy wooden lintel that, along with the window sills, are supported by elongated modillions. Also lending romantic revival feel to the structure is the scroll-work bracketed hood mounted over a five-light transom and two leaf paneled door.

The long sides of the (Former) Town Hall each contain five additional window bays and corner pilasters at the rear. The north elevation also has a rear fire door, positioned just above the sills between the fifth bay and the corner, which is accessed by a broad wooden ramp with hand rails

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<sup>1</sup>The subject building faces east north-east towards Main Street; however, for ease of description it will be said to face east.

<sup>2</sup>The main portion of the structure contains only a crawlspace, while the stage addition was built over a full basement with a dirt floor.

<sup>3</sup>The pilasters are built up of four five-inch wide vertical boards, which, after years of weathering, suggest a fluted detail that may not have been intended initially).

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with turned balusters. The rear addition added in 1903, has only a simple, unornamented door on the west wall. In contrast to the front portion of the building this section is marked with narrow corner boards and a moderately wide frieze under the eaves. On the west wall of the main building, visible above the low slope of the addition, is another large window set in the same trim as those found on the rest of the building.

The interior of the (Former) Sanford Town Hall is divided into three principal spaces: the entry rooms, the auditorium, and the stage. The foyer of the hall is a large, open room occupying the southeast bay and center of the building. In the southeast corner is a two-run open staircase leading to the balcony, the floor of which forms the inclined ceiling of the front rooms. Opposite the entry door is a two-leaf door leading through the partition wall to the auditorium, and another single, four-panel door is positioned opposite the bottom of the staircase. The floors of the foyer are hardwood, and the walls are papered above a two feet high bead board wainscot. In the northeast corner bay are two small rooms: a handicapped accessible bathroom opening into the foyer, and a work room in the corner that is accessed from a four panel door in the auditorium.

The auditorium measures approximately forty by sixty feet and contains eighteen feet high ceilings. The walls are clad with two generations of matchboard siding. The lower two feet of wide (five inch) boards and chair rail were installed in 1873, and the upper five feet of narrower (three inch)boards were added sixteen years later. Above the matchboard the walls and ceilings are covered in embossed tin. The four windows on each side wall are set in plain board trim, as are all of the doors into and out of the room. The flooring is hardwood. In the east wall of the hall, above the doors to the entry area, is the front railing of the balcony. Here a set of decorated panels (consisting of scroll-sawn floral motifs applied to a field of beaded boards) are topped with a pipe railing and span the width of the hall. With the exception of a small access door the balcony is enclosed behind the railing. However, the matchboard wainscot, tin walls, and stepped floor remain in this space, which is presently used for storage.

The western end of the hall is dominated by the stage. Centered on this wall is the projecting stage apron framed above by a proscenium arch. Two engaged columns with applied capitals form the sides of the wide opening, which is then spanned by an ovoid arch set with a molded wooden keystone. At the far corners of the western walls are matching staircases leading to paneled doors that access the backstage areas. In the northeast corner of the stage is a staircase leading to two basement rooms and two small bathroom stalls under the addition. These are finished with horizontal matchboard siding on the walls and ceilings. A second basement staircase in the southwest corner has recently been closed over but not removed.

### *Historic appearance.*

The (Former) Sanford Town Hall was acquired by the Sanford-Springvale Historical Society in 2005. Since 1960 the building had been used as a gymnasium and basketball court. In order to function

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thus the original stage apron was removed and both the stage and balcony openings were enclosed. Bathrooms and locker rooms were constructed backstage, and the lower sash of the windows in the hall were covered, as was the center door to the foyer. Affixed to the front of the building was an enclosed vestibule with two exterior doors. This small structure evolved from a 1930s era gable-roof porch with simple column-like supports, and it was fully enclosed in the early 1960s.

As part of the transformation of the structure from gymnasium to museum the front vestibule was removed and the Italianate hood and entry doors rebuilt based on good photographic evidence. In the auditorium all the windows, doors, and stage openings were uncovered, and the stage apron reconstructed, again using evidence in the floor and photographic documentation as a guide. Exact replicas of the window sash were created to replace those that had been severely damaged. The backstage rooms were removed, the floor patched and the original doors repositioned. In the front of the hall the staircase to the balcony, which had been partitioned off from the foyer, was opened up. The former Selectmen's office in the northeast corner was partitioned and remodeled into bathrooms and workspace. Throughout the building moldy plaster was replaced with sheet rock and walls and trim painted. In order to facilitate the use of the hall as exhibition space temporary movable partitions, built of matchboard siding, have been installed. The intent of these restoration activities was to return the exterior of the building to its 1873 Town Hall appearance and the interior to its circa 1913 appearance, by which time the governmental functions had been relocated and the building was used as a public hall.

**8. Statement of Significance**

**Applicable National Register Criteria**

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions)

POLITICS / GOVERNMENT

ENTERTAINMENT / RECREATION

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Period of Significance**

1873-1956

\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Dates**

1873

1903

1908

1913

**Significant Person**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

\_\_\_\_\_

**Cultural Affiliation**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Architect/Builder**

Dennett, Moses (architect)

Goodwin, Edmund (builder)

**Criteria Considerations**

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or a grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property.
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

**Bibliography**

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
  - Other State agency
    - Federal agency
    - Local government
    - University
    - Other
- Name of repository:

Sanford-Springvale Historical Society, and Sanford City Hall, Sanford, Maine

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### STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The (Former) Sanford Town Hall is eligible for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A, for its association with Sanford's town government between 1873 and 1908, and its use as a public hall from 1873 through 1960.

The (Former) Sanford Town Hall was neither the first nor last town house erected in the York County town of Sanford, Maine. In the first years after the town was incorporated in 1768 town meetings were held in local dwelling houses or inns, and later, after the meeting houses were constructed they too served a civic function. In 1848 the town finally voted to build its own town house. This one story, 36 x 42 foot structure was located near Sanford Corner, near the town's Congregational and Baptist Churches and around the corner from the District #2 school house. By this era many communities in Maine had formalized the separation of religious and civic activities into independent structures. Little is known about the style of the first Sanford Town House, but if it followed the predominant fashion, it was likely built with Greek Revival detailing.

In the years just after the Civil War the need was felt to expand the Sanford Town House. In 1872 plans were proposed to lengthen the building by 30 feet, add a second story, and to allow the Sanford Dramatic Club (which was to share the cost of the alterations with the town) to use the building for its performances free of charge. The validity of the town's endorsement of this plan was called into question, and eventually these renovation plans were dropped. Not willing to invest any more money in the old building, the town voted in 1873 to erect a new town house, this time located in the northerly village of Springvale.

Sanford has had three town centers. The earliest center was in the southern portion of the town, now known as South Sanford. The second was at Sanford Corner. The third was the village of Springvale, which became the business and industrial center of the community in the middle of the nineteenth century. When a new town house was needed, it was logical to build it in Springvale, as this was the most thriving section of Sanford.

The design for the new building, drawn by Moses Dennett, reflects the Greek Revival style, especially in the use of wide corner pilasters and prominent cornice returns and frieze boards. Architecturally, the (Former) Sanford Town Hall is notable for its Greek Revival details, which throughout Maine, was the preferred stylistic choice for many civic structures. From homes to churches in the 1820's to the 1860's, the adoption of the Greek forms symbolized the ideal of democratization over republicanism, the importance of Classical studies to the general school curriculum, and pride in developing a new, non-British, national style. (Bibber, p.11-12.)

This high opinion of Greece might well have been strengthened by feelings of empathy in the 1820's, when the Greeks were engaged in a renewal of the struggle for independence from centuries-old Turkish rule. Only a few decades removed from their own war for independence, Americans had no qualms at all about perhaps having "exported revolution."

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More commonly, they delighted in the Greeks' having followed American example....It may also have been important that, as Americans were very much aware of the uniqueness of their type of government in the modern world and as increasing emphasis was placed on democracy, a kinship with ancient Athens was felt. History showed that Athens had had the only earlier form of democracy. Was it not therefore logical to assume that buildings which were fitting for democratic Athenians might also be proper for democratic Americans? Jefferson had long insisted on the unsuitability of following English cultural leadership because of the differences in government. Perhaps Greek forms might provide an answer as to what was appropriate. (Bibber, p 12.)

Elements of Greek Revival style continued to be utilized after the Civil War, but the overall popularity of the style faded, especially among residential structures. The intentions of Dennet and the builder, Edmund Goodwin, are unknown, but the building that emerged firmly referenced the Greek Revival. Yet the building also expressed the Italianate style, one of the romantic revival movements popular in American architecture at mid century. The builders of the hall softened the Grecian features by adding a decorative hood supported by scrolled brackets over the front door and subtle brackets under the window sills and moldings.

Based on a careful reading of the town reports, one of the aims in constructing this structure was to provide not just a democratic governmental building but an auditorium for hosting performances and ceremonies, a hall that could accommodate large gatherings of people. The interior spatial design evolved over time. The corner selectmen's office (now a bathroom and storage room) was added in 1877. Originally, the stage was at the east end of the auditorium, and consisted simply of a platform about 18 inches tall. Town records note that even this platform had to be altered early on. "The town has been aware of the inconvenience of conducting town meetings without some different arrangement on the platform. The Selectmen have fitted up the same for the convenience of the town." (*Report of the Selectmen's Accounts*, 1878, p. 4.)<sup>4</sup>

Although built primarily as a town building, this large meeting space also has a history of being rented for special occasions and gatherings. In many Maine towns it is not uncommon for a building like the Sanford Town Hall to be the focal point of community events and activities. The 1877 Town Report indicates that by that time the town was renting the hall for various functions, collecting \$111 in rent in that year alone. In future years the income from the hall frequently met or exceeded its operating expenses. Improvements to the building were made as well, including adding to the interior finishes and purchasing additional furnishings. In 1903 the stage was constructed at the back of the building, and ten years later the balcony was installed over the two front rooms and the foyer and possibly extending west along the north and south walls. Among the events held in this building, in addition to town meetings and election activities, were IOOF banquets, dances,

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<sup>4</sup>The earlier location for the stage was discovered by carpenters renovating the auditorium. Sanford-Springvale Historical Society Newsletter. Volume 2, No. 1 (Winter 2006).

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masquerades and balls, graduation exercises for Springvale High School, receptions, and recitals.

One of the most noteworthy events, and one that reflects the use the hall received, occurred on March, 27 1897, when the floor collapsed. As described by Albert Prosser, the collapse "interrupted a town meeting which was being held in the Springvale town house, and several citizens were bruised, while Captain Edmund G. Murray had two ribs broken. The hall was packed at the time, and a stringer broke, owing to the heavy weight put upon it. As a consequence, an area of about twenty square feet of floor gave way. Between sixty and seventy-five men were precipitated through the opening, most of them landing in the soft earth about five feet below." (Prosser, page 108.)

After the turn of the twentieth century, it was evident that an even larger town hall was needed. However, by then the industrial activities, as well as supporting commercial enterprises, had largely become concentrated in Sanford Corner. The next Town Hall, a large Beaux Arts brick building, was built there in 1908, and included offices, meeting rooms and a spacious second floor hall, all scaled to reflect the growing prosperity of the whole Town of Sanford.

The (Former) Sanford Town Hall did not fade into obscurity, rather it continued to fill a crucial need in the civic, social, and cultural life of the village of Springvale. Now renamed, the community looked to the Springvale Town Hall to host graduation exercises, exhibits, dances and gatherings much in the same manner that community centers do today. For the last four decades of the twentieth century the building was the location of the Sanford Springvale Youth Athletic Association's activities. Basketball nets were installed, and the backstage area was converted to bathrooms. For the safety of both the building and its occupants, protective coverings were put over the original windows and in front of the balcony. Most of the vestiges of this period of the building's history have been removed during the 2005-2006 restoration, returning the hall to its pre-gymnasium appearance.

As a secondary village of the Town of Sanford, Springvale has a history that is both separated from and connected to the surrounding communities. It developed at a specific time, and in response to specific economic and cultural forces. The (Former) Sanford Town Hall is a powerful reminder of that period of time, between the Civil War and the first World War, when Springvale's main streets were at the center of the village, both politically, socially and commercially. In its presence, this building symbolizes an aspect of the village's history that is increasingly being lost in the public's consciousness. The old town halls in many villages, including Surry, Otisfield, and Monson have similarly been acquired by local historical societies and adapted for use as history centers and museums. It is thus fitting that this building, the Town Hall, an important gathering place for the community of Springvale for over 130 years, has found a new purpose, to preserve the history of this village.

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## VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The boundaries of the nominated property are described by the Town of Sanford tax map L 17, lot 34.

## BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The above map and lot describes both the historic and current property boundaries for the (Former) Sanford Town Hall.

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## PHOTOGRAPHS

Photograph 1 of 3  
Harland Eastman  
Maine Historic Preservation Commission  
17 July 2006  
East facade; facing west.

Photograph 2 of 3  
Harland Eastman  
Maine Historic Preservation Commission  
17 July 2006  
Interior, front hall; facing south.

Photograph 3 of 3  
Harland Eastman  
Maine Historic Preservation Commission  
17 July 2006  
Auditorium, facing west.