

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

received MAY 3 1988

date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*

Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Damon Hall

and or common same

2. Location

street & number U.S. Route 5 and Vermont Route 12 N/A not for publication

city, town Hartland vicinity of Three Corners

state Vermont code 50 county Windsor code 027

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	N/A in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Town of Hartland

street & number Damon Hall

city, town Hartland N/A vicinity of state Vermont 05048

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Office of the Town Clerk

street & number Damon Hall

city, town Hartland state Vermont 05048

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Vermont Historic Sites and Structures Survey has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1973 federal state county local

depository for survey records Vermont Division for Historic Preservation

city, town Montpelier state Vermont 05602

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Surrounded by commercial and residential buildings at the Three Corners intersection in Hartland village, Damon Hall (Hartland Town Hall) is a Colonial Revival style, one-and-one-half story (plus raised basement), concrete-trimmed brick building with a slate-shingled hip roof. The three-bay main (southeast) facade is marked by a central entrance portico with stuccoed columns, above which a pedimented wall dormer with three-part window interrupts the modillion cornice at the main eaves. On the longer secondary (southwest) facade, three oversized central windows mark the interior auditorium with full stage and balcony. Both the auditorium and the other rooms are sheathed generally with pebbled stamped metal on their walls and ceilings. The former town library (the southeast corner room) differs by its oak woodwork, the rest of the interior being trimmed in hard pine. Aside from the altered main entrance and the replacement light fixtures in the auditorium, the building retains intact its original (1915) fabric.

Damon Hall is situated on the northwest corner of the so-called Three Corners at the center of Hartland village. Quechee Road enters the intersection from the north in front of the building's main (southeast) facade. Vermont Route 12 parallels its southwest facade on a northwest-southeast alignment. A small public green lies immediately southeast of Damon Hall within the converging roadways, and U. S. Route 5 curves past its southeast corner. An irregular cluster of commercial and residential buildings surrounds the intersection.

Damon Hall stands somewhat recessed from the streets on a simply landscaped lot. A medium-sized maple tree provides shade for the southeast grounds. The tapered rectangular concrete posts of a former chain fence define the perimeter of the southeast and southwest grounds. A small granite memorial slab and an aluminum flagpole have been placed on the lawn near the building's southeast corner.

Oriented with its longer dimension parallel to Route 12, Damon Hall possesses an original rectangular plan of about 40 feet by 90 feet. A small ell projection was added in 1967 near the east end of the northeast elevation. The building rises one and one-half stories above a raised basement, except on the northwest elevation where the basement is fully exposed and a second story is marked by reduced sash.

A high concrete foundation extends around the southwest, southeast, and northeast elevations while a beveled water table of the same material completely encircles the Colonial Revival style building. The walls are laid up in five-course American bond with cross-bond courses composed of alternate headers and stretchers. The window openings are framed with concrete sills and shouldered pressed-brick lintels whose soldier arches are flush-jointed for contrast to the tooled

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joints of the walls. The wall surfaces are articulated by brick piers into panels surmounted by corbeled heads below a corbeled stringcourse that encircles the building. The deeply projecting eaves of the slate-shingled hip roof carry a modillion cornice. Flush with the wall planes, four, tall interior chimneys rise from the lower edges of the roof, one each near the east ends of the northeast and southwest elevations and two near the center of the northwest elevation.

The main (southeast) facade of Damon Hall presents to the village green a symmetrical three-bay arrangement dominated by a central one-bay, gabled entrance portico. Approached by a high flight of unsheltered concrete steps, the shallow portico incorporates stuccoed Tuscan columns at the front corners and pilasters at the wall plane. The columns carry a paneled frieze band bearing the name DAMON HALL in raised letters below a pediment with modillion cornice. The entrance was altered in 1983 with partial plywood infilling around a modern metal door, replacing the original double-leaf paneled wood doors. Directly above the entrance portico, a gabled wall dormer interrupts the main cornice (stopped by overscale stylized brackets). A triptych window with continuous concrete sill occupies the entire width of the dormer, comprising a twelve-over-one central sash and flanking six-over-one sash, the latter being enframed by smooth pilasters. The gable is pedimented like its portico counterpart except for a broken horizontal cornice; the date 1915 appears in raised numbers on the tympanum. The side bays of the main facade contain coupled two-over-one sash with continuous concrete sills and soldier-arched lintels, mounted in the lower half of the wall. The raised basement repeats this arrangement with half-height sash of the same division.

The secondary (southwest) facade extends seven bays in length, each bay being delineated by brick piers. The three central (auditorium) bays contain vertically elongated two-over-one sash, each surmounted by a twelve-light transom. The two right-end bays have two-over-one sash of conventional size. The opposite (left) end of this facade possesses a secondary entrance sheltered by a somewhat reduced version of the portico on the main facade. This entrance retains its original paneled wood door with a single rectangular light. Above the entrance, a pedimented gable with modillion cornice surmounts the main eaves; a nine-light oculus with raised brick surround lights its brick tympanum. At the center of the main roof, a slate-sheathed gabled dormer is lighted by paired six-over-one sash enframed by pilasters carrying a pediment with modillion cornice. A basement entrance vestibule with double-leaf paneled wood doors projects from a right-center bay of this facade; its brick walls support a shallow-pitched gable roof.

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The northwest elevation of Damon Hall is articulated (above the water table) by brick piers into three bays. The exposed brick basement has twin side-bay entrances, each of a paneled wood door with four-light glazing; the right entrance is sheltered by a small gabled canopy. Three coupled, half-height, two-over-one sash with continuous sill occupy the central bay. Two-over-one sash of conventional size light the first story while sash of half that height are mounted at the second-story level.

The northeast elevation repeats the articulation and partly the fenestration of the southwest facade, e.g., the elongated central windows. The right-end bay differs by having triptych windows on two levels. The first-story window incorporates a two-over-one central sash flanked by one-over-one sash while the upper window consists of half-height counterparts. A gabled dormer centered on the roof matches its counterpart on the southwest slope.

Added in 1967 against the northeast elevation to contain a records vault, a small gabled projection conceals the second bay from the left end. The projection matches the main block's high concrete foundation and its blind brick walls are laid up in stretcher bond but the wood-sheathed gable is not classically detailed. Its asphalt-shingled roof rises to the lower edge of the cornice along the main eaves.

The interior plan of Damon Hall is dominated by a large central auditorium with stage at the northwest end and balcony at the south-east end. The latter constitutes a second story above two corner rooms (used for Hartland municipal offices) that flank a central entrance hall with stair to the balcony. At the opposite end of the building are rooms on both floors used by the Hartland Historical Society and Nature Club. The basement level repeats the basic plan of the first floor, having a large central meeting room and small rooms at each end.

Corresponding to the three central bays on the southwest and northeast elevations, the auditorium rises the full height of the interior. The original sheathing materials remain in place. The woodwork is mostly of varnished hard pine. The floor is laid with narrow matched boards. Narrow matched wainscoting on the walls rises to a molded rail slightly higher than the level of the window sills. Both the upper wall surfaces and the ceiling are sheathed with stamped metal in a pebbled pattern, now painted light blue instead of the original apple green. A massive ceiling cornice of the same material displays lyre and egg-and-dart decorative forms. From the cornice along each side of the auditorium, the paneled ceiling slopes upward to a central horizontal surface. A chandelier medallion of stamped foliated openwork is centered above

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the balcony, although the chandelier has been removed. A similar medallion is missing from a central position above the main floor. The ceiling is supported by boxed wood beams that spring from wood capitals above the level of the window lintels and correspond in profile to the ceiling surfaces.

The proscenium opening with curved upper corners displays a molded stamped-metal surround surmounted by a cartouche with flanking cherubs. The stage platform has been extended beyond its original curved front edge into a rectangular projection with plywood skirting. The angled rear stage wall is also sheathed with stamped metal, and stage balconies with wainscoted fronts surmount the triangular dressing rooms (also sheathed with stamped metal) that flank the stage floor. Mounted on a roller, the stage curtain is painted in a landscape scene.

Beneath the balcony overhang, the main entrance to the auditorium passes through a central trabeated opening enframed by wood Tuscan columns supporting a wood entablature. However, the double-leaf doors (of the five-panel design common to the building) are mounted in the entrance hall beyond the stair to the balcony. The balcony rises in tiers to the southeast end of the building, lighted by the triptych window of the southeast wall dormer. The balcony railing incorporates diagonal stickwork ("Union Jack" pattern) alternating with solid, molded panels. From the auditorium, single-leaf doors with architrave surrounds (like those of the windows) lead to other rooms.

The original ceiling and wall light fixtures have been removed from the auditorium in recent years. The replacement fixtures of modern utilitarian design are wired by means of metal conduit attached to the wall surfaces. Two fluorescent fixtures are suspended from the balcony overhang. Metal heating ductwork has been installed along the side walls, mostly concealing the wainscoting.

The entrance hall is divided into inner and outer vestibules by double paneled doors with rectangular glazing and transoms. The inner vestibule retains the original box office window on its north wall. The outer vestibule provides access to the offices at the front of the building. Also finished in stamped metal and hard pine, the northeast office is occupied by the Hartland Town Clerk. The vault addition is entered via this room.

The southeast room was originally designed and furnished to serve as Hartland's public library; the library was removed in 1957 and the room was adapted to an office for the Town Manager. Sharing the

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stamped-metal sheathing common to the building's interior, this room lacks wainscoting but is distinguished by varnished oak woodwork, closely spaced boxed beams on the ceiling, and a pressed brick fireplace. Along the room's northeast and northwest walls, oak bookcases rise about five feet in height; their vertical members are treated as fluted pilasters that support a molded cornice along the top shelf. Placed against the southwest wall between the windows, the fireplace possesses a corbeled mantel and a paneled breast that rises to a denticulated ceiling cornice.

Occupying the northwest end of the building, the rooms used by the Hartland Historical Society and Nature Club are oriented to the southwest entrance. The first-floor space extends the breadth of the building (40 feet) by about 18 feet, subdivided at about two-thirds of its length by a partial partition whose central trabeated opening with Tuscan columns carrying an entablature matches the entrance opening of the auditorium. Trimmed with varnished hard pine, the first-floor walls and ceiling have pebbled stamped-metal sheathing with an egg-and-dart ceiling cornice while the unpartitioned second floor shows exposed brick wall surfaces. An attic was created in 1935 by the installation of a third floor beneath the roof framing.

The basement of Damon Hall contains a large central meeting room finished with narrow matched-board floor, stuccoed walls, and pebbled stamped-metal ceiling encircled by a narrow egg-and-dart cornice. In the kitchen, both the ceiling and the walls are sheathed with pebbled stamped metal. Original wood cupboards with paneled doors are mounted along the southwest wall. An elongated soapstone sink engages the opposite (northeast) wall.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400–1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500–1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600–1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/ humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

Specific dates 1914–15 Builder/Architect H. F. Beckwith

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Damon Hall constitutes an outstanding Colonial Revival style town hall that belongs among the last generation of monumental public buildings in Vermont. Designed by H. F. Beckwith and erected in 1914–15, the building represents the civic spirit and philanthropy of the Damon family then resident in Hartland. William E. Damon pursued a successful business career in New York, and after his death in 1911 his family presented the Town of Hartland with a new community center in his memory. The classically detailed brick building holds particular interest for the stamped-metal sheathing applied nearly throughout the interior, including the auditorium with full stage that dominates the interior plan.

The Damon family moved to Hartland from Reading, Massachusetts and settled on a farm about one mile south of the Three Corners (Hartland village) on the Windsor road. Luther Damon, son of the original settler, built the extant house on the property about 1845. He and his wife, Betsey Thayer of Braintree, Massachusetts, became the parents of ten children. Principally a farmer, Luther Damon engaged also in various other activities. He drove a freight wagon between Hartland and Boston prior to the arrival in 1849 of the railroad along the Connecticut River valley. Adapting to the technological changes, he then contracted to build the railroad roadbed in the Hartland vicinity.

Born in Hartland in 1838, William Emerson Damon was the youngest of Luther and Betsey's offspring. William was educated in local schools and the Kimball Union Academy in New Hampshire, and married Alma C. Otis of Windsor. Thereafter the couple joined the middle nineteenth-century tide of emigration from Vermont. William pursued a career in business that culminated as superintendent of the credit department at Tiffany's in New York, a position that he held for many years. Nevertheless he retained ownership of the family homestead, a farm of 160 acres in 1883.

William Damon's prevailing avocational interest involved natural history, and he became a specialist in marine life. He directed an expedition that succeeded in bringing the first live tropical fish to New York. In 1879, he published a book, Ocean Wonders, that was among the first popular treatments of the subject. His efforts were largely responsible for the establishment of an aquarium in New York. Apparently he retired to the family farm in Hartland, where he died December first, 1911.

9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet.

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 0.75

Quadrangle name Hartland, Vt.-N.H.

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References

A

1	8	7	1	0	0	5	0	4	8	2	4	0	0	0
Zone			Easting					Northing						

B

Zone			Easting					Northing						

C

Zone			Easting					Northing						

D

Zone			Easting					Northing						

E

Zone			Easting					Northing						

F

Zone			Easting					Northing						

G

Zone			Easting					Northing						

H

Zone			Easting					Northing						

Verbal boundary description and justification

See continuation sheet.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state N/A code county code

state code county code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Hugh H. Henry

organization Historic Preservation Consultant date April 1986

street & number Green Mountain Turnpike telephone 802-875-3379

city or town Chester state Vermont 05143

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature *Eric J. Bellah*

title Director/State Historic Preservation Officer date 4/27/88

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I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

John A. Brown date 6/2/88
Keeper of the National Register

Attest: _____ date _____

Chief of Registration

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At that time, the Town of Hartland used a plain, two-story, clapboarded, gable-roofed building at the Four Corners (a small village about one mile west of the Three Corners) for a town hall. The population of the township was only 1,316 in 1910, almost the nadir of a century-long decline. The immediate need for a substantially larger and more stylistically sophisticated Town Hall must have seemed debatable under the circumstances. Nevertheless Mrs. William Damon took the initiative and the estate of her husband apparently provided the funds. Actually the new Damon Hall was the joint gift of the widow and several other members of the family (the children of Urias and Harriet Cotton Damon, the children of John and Lucy Damon Lamb, and the children of Merit and Lavinia Damon Penniman).

The site for the new town hall was selected at the Three Corners and it was occupied by an historic building. The large two-and-three-quarters story, clapboarded, gable-roofed Pavilion House (hotel) had stood there since circa 1795, containing at various times the village post office, a store, courthouse, and large ballroom. Nevertheless in January, 1914, the Town of Hartland purchased the site from L. E. Merritt for \$1,000, and the hotel along with its large barns were demolished.

An "architect and builder" by the name of H. F. Beckwith from Claremont, New Hampshire (about 15 miles southeast of Hartland) was retained for the project. Construction started in the summer of 1914, and the brick building was dedicated on December 2 of the following year. Its fully developed Colonial Revival style suggests a metropolitan influence within the setting of predominantly clapboarded vernacular buildings. Probably a concession to cost was the substitution of concrete in place of the stone traditionally used for the foundation, columns, and sills. The unusual application of stamped-metal sheathing almost throughout the interior affirms an interest in contemporary materials (albeit expressing classical forms). Upon completion, the building together with its furnishings was appraised at \$25,000.

Damon Hall was planned to serve as a community center providing facilities for various municipal functions and organizational activities. The auditorium was equipped with a complete stage and dressing rooms for theatrical productions as well as being the scene of Hartland town meetings. The southeast front room was designed specifically for the town's public library, being distinguished from the other rooms by its classically detailed oak woodwork and pressed-brick fireplace. The opposite northeast front room was provided for

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town offices (and served also as box office for the auditorium by means of a vestibule window). Reflecting the Damon family's interest in natural history, the rooms at the northwest end of the building were dedicated for permanent use by the Hartland Nature Club and Historical Society.

The basement of Damon Hall was intended principally for the serving of meals at public events. The large central room was called originally the dining room, adjoined on the northwest by the "commodius" kitchen with its extraordinary elongated soapstone sink. The local Grange chapter, Progressive Grange No. 283, began holding its meetings in the dining room not many years after the building was completed.

Damon Hall retained its original appearance and functions for about forty years. The first significant change occurred in 1957 when, owing to insufficient space, the library was removed to a new building nearby. The library room was subsequently adapted to an office for the Hartland town manager. In 1967, the first addition was made to the exterior of Damon Hall; the small blind brick ell near the northeast corner contains the municipal records vault. More recently, the decorative character of the auditorium was impaired by the removal of the original light fixtures and the installation of utilitarian replacements with exposed conduit wiring. And in 1983, the original double-leaf paneled doors were removed from the main entrance in favor of plywood infilling and a single modern door.

Collectively these changes exert rather minor effect on the architectural integrity of Damon Hall. In the cases of the light fixtures and the main entrance, the alterations are readily reversible. Changing municipal needs and access requirements, however, will probably lead to extensive alteration of the basement in the near future. A plan exists to convert the basement into municipal offices to overcome the serious inadequacy of space in the present office rooms. The plan also includes the provision of an unobtrusive ramp for handicapped access from the parking area next to the northwest elevation.

Damon Hall shares, on somewhat reduced scale, the Colonial Revival style characteristic of the monumental municipal buildings erected in Vermont during the first third of the twentieth century, the last generation numbering only a few such buildings. It followed by six years the West Rutland Town Hall (entered in the National Register on July 28, 1983) that exhibits striking similarity of design, although any direct influence is merely speculative. Unlike its publicly

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funded counterparts in the larger towns and cities, Damon Hall was placed in a small rural village as an expression of civic philanthropy by a local family. The forthcoming adaptation of its basement to contain expanded town offices will ensure the continuity of Damon Hall's historic role in Hartland community affairs.

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1. "A Fine Community Building." The Vermonter, XXI (January, 1916), 23-26.
2. Annual Reports of Town Officers of the Town of Hartland, Vermont. Hartland, Vt.: Town of Hartland, 1915, 1916.
3. Hartland - The Way It Was 1761-1976. Hartland, Vt.: Hartland Historical Society, 1976.
4. Hinkle, Ricardo. A Plan for Damon Hall, Hartland, Vermont. Woodstock, Vt.: Two Rivers-Ottawaquechee Regional Commission, 1985.

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The property being nominated consists of Damon Hall and its original lot of approximately 0.75 acre. The lot is bounded easterly by Quechee Road and southerly by Route 12 but it has not been surveyed and its actual dimensions are not known. The deed to the property is entered in Book 8, Page 411 of the Hartland Land Records. The nominated property is sufficient to protect the historic resource.