

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

For NPS use only

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

received JAN 5 1983  
date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

**1. Name**

historic "Miss Bellows Falls" Diner

and/or common Same

**2. Location**

street & number 90 Rockingham Street N/A not for publication

city, town Bellows Falls N/A vicinity of

state Vermont code 50 county Windham code 025

**3. Classification**

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input checked="" 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	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
	N/A	<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 Delmer G. and Joanne M. Bush

street & number R. F. D. #1, Alden Street

city, town Bellows Falls N/A vicinity of state Vermont 05101

**5. Location of Legal Description**

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

street & number The Square

city, town Bellows Falls state Vermont 05101

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**

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

date 1982  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records Vermont Division for Historic Preservation

city, town Montpelier state Vermont 05602

## 7. Description

<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> original site
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> altered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> moved date <u>c. 1942</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

### Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Sited on Rockingham Street just north of the commercial center of its namesake village, the "Miss Bellows Falls" Diner was assembled probably in the 1930's by the Worcester Lunch Car Company in Worcester, Massachusetts; its production number is 771. The sixteen-by-thirty foot diner possesses a distinctive barrel roof and porcelain enameled metal sheathing, the latter having a polychrome color scheme. Although encrusted with additions, the diner retains completely intact its original appearance.

The Miss Bellows Falls stands on the west side of Rockingham Street oriented with its thirty-foot length parallel to the street. The exterior sheathing consists of porcelain enameled metal panels, whose gray color is trimmed with red striping and lettering. On the street (east) elevation, the name "Miss Bellows Falls" appears in large block letters, extending across the six central panels and flanked by the phrase "Booth Service" on each end panel. A band of eight metal-framed sash occupies the upper wall, their transoms outlined in red stained glass; the single-light sash slide vertically in ratcheted tracks. Light fixtures with cylindrical glass globes are mounted between adjacent pairs of windows.

Each sixteen-foot end of the diner contains an entrance occupying the second bay from the street front and flanked by sash similar to those on the front. A pair of smaller windows surmounts the main openings, their curved heads corresponding to the segmental curvature of the barrel roof. The ends of the asphalt-shingled roof project substantially beyond the wall planes to shelter the entrances. The south door carries a small builder's plate affixed to its exterior below the rectangular window; the plate reads "Worcester Diners #771, Worcester, Mass."

Both ends of the diner are mostly concealed by wood-framed entrance vestibules built on the site. The larger flat-roofed north vestibule possesses glass-block sheathing on its street (east) front, and connects on the rear (west) to a wood-framed, composition-shingled, hip-roofed kitchen wing constructed on the site circa 1942. The kitchen wing conceals most of the diner's west elevation; on the exposed section at the south end there appear the final letters of another name for the diner applied in the Tudor style favored by the Worcester factory. Both entrance vestibules and the kitchen wing are later additions to the diner; they lack the architectural significance of the diner itself and are considered non-contributing to its historic character.

Like the exterior, the interior of the Miss Bellows Falls retains intact its original appearance. The walls are sheathed with polychrome enameled metal panels (beige with red striping) below the beltline and varnished wood above that level. The segmental-arched ceiling is paneled with fiberboard and carries six three-tube fluorescent lighting fixtures. The floor is inlaid with polychrome tile (beige and light/dark brown) having a checkerboard pattern.

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Installed along the street (east) wall are five four-person oak booths with metal clothes posts attached to their aisle ends; their oak-legged tables have red Formica tops. The longitudinal central counter (sheathed with enameled metal on its vertical surface) extends nearly the length of the diner, stopping short of the end walls to provide narrow passageways; the counter retains its original reddish marble slab top. Five of the original six metal counter stools flank each end of a central glass pastry case, giving the diner a present seating capacity of thirty.

The backbar shares the enameled metal sheathing of the other surfaces. Enameled refrigerated cabinets occupy its south end flanked by a Monel or stainless steel grill, deep fryer, coffee unit, steam table, and other kitchen fixtures along the work counter. Multi-section, glass-enclosed menu boards are recessed along the exhaust hood above the work counter. Most of the fixtures and equipment appear original to the assembly of the diner.

# 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** 1930's **Builder/Architect** Worcester Lunch Car Company

**Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)**

The "Miss Bellows Falls" Diner constitutes the only completely intact example in Vermont of the barrel-roofed Worcester Diner produced by the Worcester Lunch Car Company, a leading manufacturer during the first half of the twentieth century. The production date of the Miss Bellows Falls has not been established more definitely than being some years prior to 1942. Notwithstanding the fifty-year criterion of eligibility, the diner merits entry in the National Register for being a unique representative of early twentieth century roadside architecture, an importance enhanced by its continuously active use.

Produced probably during the 1930's at the company's factory in Worcester, Massachusetts, the Miss Bellows Falls Diner was hauled by road to Bellows Falls and installed on its site in 1942. Francis A. ("Frank") Cutler acquired the barrel-roofed Worcester model to replace an older diner on the site. The Miss Bellows Falls bears the production number 771, being the 571st unit constructed by the now-defunct company under a numbering scheme that started at 200 in 1906.

The actual year of the Miss Bellows Falls' production remains uncertain. On a short section of the diner's rear elevation now concealed by a kitchen wing, there appear the final letters of a different name, "... & Johnnies." These letters display the Tudor style usually applied by the Worcester factory, and indicate that the diner was originally constructed for a different location. The appearance of the Miss Bellows Falls does not assist its precise dating; the Worcester firm built the same pre-streamlined barrel-roofed model from the 1920's into the 1940's - a remarkable persistence of an anachronistic style whose prototypical form disappeared with nineteenth century railroad passenger cars.

Whatever its vintage, the Miss Bellows Falls preserves almost exactly its original appearance. Only a small number of diners (possibly a dozen) built by various companies survive in Vermont; among these, the Miss Bellows Falls has become the last unaltered Worcester diner of its model. An identical Worcester model, the former Ten Eyck in nearby Springfield, has been recently renovated to the extent of losing its historic character. (An excellent example of a contemporary but different Worcester model exists in northern Vermont, the "Miss Newport.")

A circa 1947 advertising brochure published by the Worcester Lunch Car Company provides a detailed description of the Miss Bellows Falls model. The text notes that each Worcester Diner was built to the customer's specifications, and that the company would "never build two dining cars exactly alike." Along with the functional flexibility, that practice conferred a certain individuality on the completed diners. Worcester products achieved a widespread reputation for their quality of materials, craftsmanship, and durability - attributes clearly demonstrated by the example in Bellows Falls.

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

Margolies, John. The End of the Road. New York: Penguin Books, 1981.

Taft, Peter. "Miss Bellows Falls Finds Fame and Stardom." Brattleboro Reformer, April 8, 1976

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property 0.18

Quadrangle name Bellows Falls, N.H.-Vt.

Quadrangle scale 1:62500

### UTM References

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**Verbal boundary description and justification** The property being nominated consists of the Miss Bellows Falls Diner and its trapezoidal lot with dimensions of 90.95 feet (east), 120 feet (north), 38.85 feet (west), and 130.9 feet (south) as recorded in Book 189, Page 149 of the Town of Rockingham Land Records. The nominated property is sufficient to enclose and protect,

**List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries** the historic resource.

N/A

state	code	county	code

state	code	county	code

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Hugh H. Henry

organization Historic Preservation Consultant

date July 1982

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

*William B. Pinney*

title Director/Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

date 12-27-82

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

*Tommy Van Arsdale*  
Keeper of the National Register

date 2/15/83

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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The Miss Bellows Falls also represents the period during which the Worcester Lunch Car Company achieved a leading position in the diner-building industry. Appropriately, the Worcester Diners gained their greatest popularity in New England where their conservative designs resisted for decades the increasingly ostentatious competition. The Worcester firm built a total of 650 diners before its demise in 1961, the victim of rapidly changing roadside eating habits.

Although probably not yet fifty years of age, the Miss Bellows Falls deserves the recognition of being entered in the National Register. The diner holds the exceptional importance of ranking among a dwindling number of pre-streamlined diners that preserve their original appearance and remain in active use. The Miss Bellows Falls represents a genre and period of American roadside architecture that has been bypassed both physically and culturally during the last two decades. Indeed, within Vermont's roadside environment, the Miss Bellows Falls has become a singular survivor of an architectural and cultural expression now verging on extinction.

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Yorke, Douglas and Eve. "Hash House Greek Spoken Here." Yankee (March, 1977), 86-97

Interview of Dolly Moore, daughter of Francis A. ("Frank") Cutler, by Hugh H. Henry  
on May 12, 1982.

The Inside Story of Money-Making Diners. Advertising brochure published by the  
Worcester Lunch Car Company, Worcester, Mass., c.1947.