

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

received APR 9 1986
date entered

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

1. Name

historic Cornwall Town Hall

and/or common Cornwall Town Hall

2. Location

street & number Vermont Route 30

N/A not for publication

city, town Cornwall

N/A vicinity of

state Vermont

code 50

county Addison

code 001

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> other: Library/Grange

4. Owner of Property

name Town of Cornwall

street & number RD #2

city, town Middlebury

N/A vicinity of

state Vermont 05753

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Cornwall Town Offices

street & number Vermont Route 30

city, town Cornwall

state Vermont

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

Vermont Historic Sites and
title Structures Survey

has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date March 1976

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

The Cornwall Town Hall is a 2½ story, gable front, wood-framed and clapboarded Italianate public building of 1880 with a c.1905 rear, 1 story, shed roofed frame addition. It is situated on gently rolling farmland at the geographic and formal town center of Cornwall in Addison County, Vermont. It faces Vermont Route 30, the main road from Cornwall Center to Middlebury. Across from a small triangular green, it shares its prominent location with the Congregational Church of 1805, the Sampson Memorial of 1915 (housing the D.A.R.), and several small nineteenth century vernacular residences. The structure is currently utilized as a combination of the town hall and offices, the library, and the grange hall. It is undergoing interior renovations and exterior restoration that are in keeping with its well maintained architectural integrity.

The main block of the Cornwall Town Hall consists of a 2½ story, 3x4 bay, wood framed and clapboarded Italianate structure oriented with its gable front facing the road. The slate gable roof features twin interior brick ridge chimneys, while the foundation is a combination of coursed fieldstone with a modern concrete section added on the north facade. The hall is further articulated with a plain watertable, and plain cornerboards with flat, scrollsawn "bracketed" tops. These visually support a full entablature that has a molded cornice with gable returns and ornate pierced and scrollsawn brackets. A set of concrete steps with simple iron railings leads to the principal entrance at the center of the gable front facade where a sign above the large double leaf door reads "Cornwall Grange no. 550". Each leaf of the Italianate door has two vertical flush panels set over two small flush panels trimmed with bollection molding. The singular entrance surround has shouldered corners, and a peaked lintel with stepped ends, cap molding, and a decoratively sawn and tooled cross-in-lozenge motif. A louvered opening in the gable peak mirrors the surround treatment of the central entrance. The 2/2 sash has simpler shouldered surrounds, cap moldings on the first story, peaked lintels with cap moldings on the second story, and flanking louvered wood shutters. Wooden window boxes decorate the first story windows on the front facade. A shed roofed, enclosed exterior straight run stairway rises to the second story in two stages on the north side facade. It was added during the first part of the twentieth century.

Attached to the east rear of the main block is a 1 story, full width, 2x1 bay, clapboarded, shed roofed addition. The roof is slate and the structure is supported on posts, thereby leaving the rear open at ground level. Sash is 2/2 with plain surrounds and simple cap moldings. A shed roofed, enclosed exterior stairway leads to the entrance on the north side facade.

The interior of the main block features a central entrance hall on the first story with original Italianate 4-panel doors with cast decorative hinges and knobs leading to the various adjoining rooms. Double-leaf doors identical to those on the exterior lead from the hall to what was a large meeting room in the east rear portion of the building, with an entrance to the selectmen's room on the right of the hall, and the staircase to the second story and a closet on the left of the hall. Entrance hall walls feature original beaded board wainscoting and molded chairrails, while the floor is laid with 6-8" boards. The original large meeting room has been divided into a library, town office with a vault, and smaller meeting room as the result of recent renovations. The partitions erected during the rehabilitation are sheetrock, with plain baseboards, modern raised

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4-panel stock doors with plain trim, and lowered ceilings that are boxed around the window to reveal surrounds with plain trim and cap moldings. A small hall in the north rear leads to the kitchen in the rear ell. The room is entirely sheathed with horizontal, beaded matched boarding dating from this ell's construction by the grange in the early twentieth century.

The second story is reached by an enclosed L-shaped stairway which rises in two flights with one landing from the north side of the central entrance hall. A paneled halfwall surmounted with a railing with turned balusters and a molded handrail divides the stairwell from the large second floor room. The staircase is distinguished at the top by turned newel posts, one of which is partially engaged. The room features a raised stage in a rectangular opening in the east rear wall. The stage opening has a surround of simply rounded bolection molding in a wall with beaded boarding and is flanked by two pass-sized doors leading to dressing rooms. The doors feature 4 raised panels and ceramic knobs. The polygonal stage is defined as a "room" backdrop with its side walls set at a diagonal to add to the illusion of depth. A small room behind the stage wall features a semi-elliptical arch recessed from the wall surface. It may have originally been exposed before the grange redecorated the stage at the beginning of the twentieth century. The hall has plaster on lath walls and its narrow board hardwood floors were added by the grange at the turn of the century. Early electric fixtures hang from the ceiling on chains. An original furnace provided by the town and grange at the beginning of this century remains on the west front portion of the room. It is a large "Empire" model cast by the Cooperative Foundry Co. of Rochester, NY. Also evident throughout the hall are folding hardwood benches with decorative iron legs cast by the Buffalo Hardware Co. The second floor of the Cornwall Town Hall is scheduled for remodelling in several years.

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is still present in the upstairs hall.⁹ The grange continued to support the building after it was reorganized as Cornwall Grange no. 550 in 1946. In 1950 it donated \$50 to repair the Hall after a hurricane and in 1960 it donated \$250 toward its repair.¹⁰

The detailing of fenestration and the principal entrance, while not specifically Italianate, closely resembles architectural elements on documented structures of Clinton G. Smith, a nearby Middlebury architect and builder. The Smith and Allen Mill in Middlebury was built in 1880, the same year as the Town Hall was constructed. The mill may have furnished the regionally singular enframements, the peaked lintels and the cross-in-lozenge motif elements used on the building.¹¹ However, Smith and Allen had been partners since 1877 and presumably had means of turning out architectural components prior to 1880. A list of documented works of Clinton Smith compiled from local papers by Robert Jones does not list the Cornwall Town Hall as one of Smith's works, however. Hence, at the present time it is merely conjectural that the town of Cornwall purchased the components for their town hall from the partners in nearby Middlebury.¹²

The Cornwall Town Hall is presently being renovated on the interior and restored on the exterior. It remains as a significant architectural testament to the history of the grange in Cornwall and its vicinity and to local architectural influences resulting from the practice of Smith and Allen based in nearby Middlebury, Vermont.

FOOTNOTES

1. Notes compiled by Carrie Bingham from Cornwall Town Reports.
2. Ibid.
3. Cornwall Land Records, vol. 12, pg. 84.
4. Bingham, op.cit.
5. Ibid.
6. Guy P. Horton, History of the Grange in Vermont (Montpelier, VT: 1926) pg. 59
7. Beulah M. Sanford, Two Centuries of Cornwall Life (Rutland, VT: Sharp Printing, 1962) pg. 58.
8. Ibid., pg. 58.
9. Ibid., pg. 58.
10. Ibid., pg. 58.
11. Interview, Glen Andres, professor of Art History, Middlebury College, Middlebury, VT, April 1985.
12. Ibid.

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Child, Hamilton. Gazetteer and Business Directory of Addison County, VT, 1881-82. Syracuse, NY: The Journal Office, 1882.

Hemenway, Abby. Vermont Historical Gazetteer. Burlington,VT: Miss A.M.Hemmenway, 1868, vol. 1 part 1.

Horton, Guy P. History of the Grange in Vermont. Montpelier, VT: 1926.

Rozwenc, Edwin C. Agricultural Policies in Vermont, 1860-1945. Montpelier, VT: Vermont Historical Society, 1981.

Rozwenc, Edwin C. "Agriculture and Politics in the Vermont Tradition". Vermont Quarterly, vo. 17, no. 4, October 1949, pp. 81-96.

Sanford, Beulah M. Two Centuries of Cornwall Life. Rutland, VT: Sharp Printing, 1962.

Notes compiled by Carrie Bingham from Cornwall Town Reports.

"Documented Works of Clinton G. Smith (1846-1905)". Notes compiled from newspapers Middlebury Register (1872-97, 1905) and Addison County Independent (1876-82) by Robert O. Jones.

Cornwall Land Records. vol. 12, pg. 84.

Interview, Glen Andres, professor of Art History, Middlebury College, Middlebury, VT, April 1985.

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 checked="" 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/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates 1880, c.1905 **Builder/Architect** Not known

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Cornwall Town Hall is significant as a well preserved Italianate public building in a Vermont agricultural community with only several vernacular residential examples of the style. Its architectural components resemble details on structures attributed to architect/builder, Clinton G. Smith, of nearby Middlebury, VT and may have been manufactured at the Smith and Allen Mill there. Early referred to as the 'Town House', since 1903 it has also been well known as the home of the Cornwall Grange. It achieves further significance from its association with this rural fraternity, which was responsible for organizing a regional grange, the C.J. Bell Pomona Grange, in 1904.

Cornwall, located in the center of the western portion of the state of Vermont, was chartered in 1761 and settled first mostly by persons from Litchfield County, Connecticut. The town was organized in 1784 and grew quickly into a prosperous farming community due to its relatively level terrain and fertile soil that was easy to cultivate. Cornwall was well known for its flocks of Spanish Merino sheep by the time the Town Hall was built in 1880 for a cost of \$2,600.¹ The early association of the hall with the grange marks this as a period in Vermont history when the shift in agriculture from self-sufficiency to specialized commercial farming (e.g. sheep breeding) and increased competition from western markets made necessary an organization of farmers to influence agricultural policy at the state and national levels. Vermont granges were established beginning in the 1870's and state grange history at this time was marked by movements to regulate railroad rates and by the battle to establish a separate agricultural college.

Cornwall's first grange was organized in 1874, but lasted only a short while. Consequently, although the grange later had much to do with improving the town hall structure, its influence was not immediately evident. The first improvements were carried out by the town. In 1881, a place was prepared for the town hearse underneath the Hall,² and on January 5, 1882, the parcel of land with the right of way for the hearse was deeded by farmer Charles Benedict to the town of Cornwall.³ The structure was improved with seats, stove and a table in the lower hall in 1884-85.⁴ Town meeting was first held there on March 10, 1881. In 1892, voting booths that are still in use were purchased from C.E. Sampson for \$15.90.⁵

Cornwall Grange no. 304 was organized in 1903 and it is this group which appears to have been instrumental in maintaining and improving the Town Hall as a community center during the first part of the twentieth century. Cornwall Grange was responsible for the organization of the C.J. Bell Pomona Grange #13 in October 1904, which served as a regional association of farmers and which presumably met in the Town Hall.⁶ The grange built on the rear kitchen ell c.1905 and provided kitchen equipment, banquet tables in the dining hall, kerosene chandeliers and later, electric lights.⁷ Later, an electric warming oven was provided for the kitchen and folding chairs were purchased for the dining room.⁸ The Cornwall Grange redecorated the stage, purchased a piano, and provided window drapes, as well as splitting with the town the cost of the furnace which

9. Major Bibliographical References

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property approximately 1/30 acre

Quadrangle name Cornwall, VT

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References

A

1	8	6	4	3	2	5	1	0	4	8	6	1	8	9	2	5
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 code county code

N/A

state code county code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Deborah S. Noble

organization Preservation Consultant

date May 1985

street & number P.O. Box 106

telephone (802) 695-2507

city or town Concord

state Vermont

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.

Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer signature

title Director, Vermont Division for Historic Preservation

date 3/31/86

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

Keeper of the National Register

date 5/8/86

Attest:

Chief of Registration

date

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The boundary describes the property held in common ownership with the Town Hall and consists of the land under the building itself with a right of way for a hearse. The property is further described on page 84 of volume 12 of the Cornwall Land Records.