

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)
TRANSPORTATION/road-related

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)
TRANSPORTATION/road-related

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(enter categories from instructions)

OTHER: Masonry Arch bridge

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation Limestone

walls

roof

other Limestone

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

See continuation sheet for description.

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The Colburn Bridge is located on U.S. Route 7 in a densely settled residential area near the center of Pittsford Mills, in the town of Pittsford, Vermont. The bridge, rectangular in shape, 46 feet in length and 39 feet in width, is a well-preserved example of the monumental stone bridges erected in many of Vermont's larger or more prosperous towns at the end of the nineteenth century. The single masonry span has a semicircular arch of 20 to 25 foot radius. It was constructed in 1899 and exemplifies the precision and craftsmanship found in Vermont's urban masonry bridges of the period. Despite some recent changes, the bridge retains its integrity of location, setting, design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.

The Colburn Bridge, named for Charles T. Colburn, a Pittsford resident who lived in the house located near its northwest end, is a vehicular and pedestrian bridge that carries U.S. Route 7 across the Sugar Hollow Brook in Pittsford Mills, Vermont. Route 7 is the primary north south-route in the western part of the state and connects St. Albans, Burlington, Middlebury, Rutland, and Bennington. The single-span two lane structure carries the roadway twenty feet above the brook, has a semicircular arch of 20 to 25 foot radius, and is rectangular in shape, 46 feet in length and 39 feet in width. The bridge is located in a dip in the road and spans a deep gorge in the center of Pittsford Mills.

The bridge structure consists of a single large stone arch spanning the brook. The arch is completely exposed on the eastern side of the bridge, while steep bank of the brook covers the lower portion of the arch of the west side of the bridge. The bridge's spandrels are constructed of random coursed ashlar of rough faced limestone blocks. The flush voussoirs are constructed of limestone blocks of greater roughness. The barrel of the arch is also constructed of rough faced limestone blocks and rests on a wall constructed of random coursed ashlar of rough faced limestone blocks. Extending perpendicularly from the southwest spandrel is a coursed ashlar abutment which anchors the bridge to the steep slope of the stream bed. The construction and materials of the bridge are typical of Vermont's urban masonry bridges. The bridge retains its original masonry structural elements and is in excellent condition.

As originally constructed, the spandrels on the north and south sides of the bridge were surmounted by single belt courses of protruding rough faced limestone blocks. These belt courses were in turn surmounted by

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railings constructed of random coursed ashlar limestone blocks similar to those used for the bridge spandrels. The stone railings were capped by a course of quarry faced limestone. The inside of the south railing was a sidewalk.

In 1972-73, the stone railings were removed when the bridge was widened and the road surface realigned. On the south side of the bridge is a slightly incurvate metal guardrail, which was installed following the removal of the original stone railing. This guardrail consists of three half-oval metal rails attached to regularly spaced vertical steel beams bolted to the side of a poured concrete slab. This slab is cantilevered out approximately eight inches above the top of the masonry arch. This cantilever allowed the bridge to increased in width. The slab extends above the asphalt road surface and forms a curb, rectangular in section, on the south side of the bridge. The slab is supported by a concrete abutment, which is anchored to the bank of the brook behind the original stone abutment for the bridge.

On the north side of the bridge deck, a concrete sidewalk and a railing constructed of vertical steel beams, half-oval metal rails, and closely spaced vertical metal bars attached to the rear of the rails was installed at the time of the 1972-73 renovations to the bridge. The poured concrete slab which forms the sidewalk is cantilevered out beyond the railing and rests on a large steel I-beam. A sewer pipe is suspended from the beam by metal hangers. The north side of the bridge is supported by angled concrete walls which intersect the bridge at its east and west end. These walls are anchored to the east and west banks of the brook.

In the center of the bridge railing is a metal plaque bolted to the two lower rails. The plaque reads, "Colburn Bridge Built by Anne A. W. Boardman 1899 T.F. Chappell E.L. Grimes Engineers J.E. Flood J.D. Sherrill Contractors. The plaque was originally attached to the ornamental stone railing which was removed in 1973.

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria A B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Engineering
Transportation

Period of Significance

1899

Significant Dates

1899

Cultural Affiliation

NA

Significant Person

NA

Architect/Builder

Chappell, Thomas F.
Grimes, E. L.

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

See continuation sheet for statement of significance.

See continuation sheet

9. Major Bibliographical References

- Caverly, A.M. History of the Town of Pittsford, Vermont. Rutland, Vermont; Tuttle and Company, 1872.
- Pittsford Historical Society. Pittsford: Now and Then. Pittsford, Vermont: Pittsford Historical Society, 1980.
- Pittsford, Vermont. Vermont Historic Sites and Structures Survey, Survey Number 1116-73, #63. Vermont Division for Historic Preservation.
- The Rutland Directory. 1897-98 and 1899 editions. Rutland, Vermont: The Tuttle Co., 1897, 1899.
- Who was Who in America. Vol. I (1897-1942). Chicago, Illinois: Marquis' Who's Who, 1942.

See continuation sheet

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

Specify repository:

State of Vermont Agency of Transportation

10. Geographical Data

Acres of property Less than one acre.

UTM References

A

1	8	6	5	9	4	2	0	4	8	4	1	0	1	0
Zone				Easting				Northing						

C

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

B

Zone				Easting				Northing						

D

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundary for this property is the bridge and its abutments. The bridge carries U.S. Route 7 across the Sugar Hollow Brook in the town of Pittsford at UTM Reference Point: 18/659420/4841010. It is 46' in length and 39' in width.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes all the land historically associated with this bridge.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Douglas C. McVarish

organization University of Vermont Historic Pres. Program date April 17, 1990

street & number Wheeler House telephone (802) 656-3180

city or town Burlington state Vermont zip code 05405

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The Colburn Bridge, constructed in 1899, is historically significant under National Register Criteria A for contributing to Vermont's transportation history at the state and local levels as part of the road, bridge, and railway network that increased interregional transport, trade, commerce, and travel. The bridge is architecturally significant under National Register Criteria C for embodying the style, form, and methods of engineering associated with masonry bridge building in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. As part of a multiple property submission, the bridge is being nominated under the historic context, "Metal Truss, Masonry, and Concrete Bridges in Vermont." The property type is masonry bridges. The bridge meets the registration requirements for this property type. The original spandrels and barrel of the arch are still visible and functional, and the bridge is still used to carry vehicular and pedestrian traffic across the Sugar Hollow Brook. Despite alterations to the bridge deck and removal of the original railings, the structure retains all qualities of historical integrity.

The bridge is located on U.S. Route 7, historically and currently one of Vermont's major roads. The bridge is located on the heavily traveled stretch of road between Middlebury and Rutland and is an important part of Vermont's transportation network. Histories of Pittsford document that the site of the Colburn Bridge has been the location of a bridge since the early part of the nineteenth century.

Technologically, the bridge required only the age-old skills of stone cutters and masons. These craftsmen used limestone, an abundant material in Vermont. However, the bridge's location and appearance make it significant. Building a bridge of such large proportions required careful planning. The tight fit and finish of the voussoirs and spandrels is typical of the privately financed monumental arches constructed in Vermont town centers near the end of the nineteenth century. As in other cases, a member of the local elite contributed the construction costs to demonstrate the community's pride in itself and its achievements.

The bridge was named for Charles T. Colburn, a native of Fredericton, New Brunswick, who had moved to Pittsford in 1832. Colburn lived in the farmstead located a short distance to the northwest of the bridge and operated a blacksmith shop at that location.

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The bridge's donor, Anne A. W(agner) Boardman, was the wife of Rev. George Nye Boardman, a Pittsford native who became a prominent educator, author and theologian. Boardman, a graduate of Middlebury College, served as professor of English literature and rhetoric at Middlebury from 1853 to 1859. After leaving Middlebury, he was pastor of the First Presbyterian Church in Binghamton, New York. In 1871, he became a professor of systematic theology at Chicago Theological Seminary. In 1887, while retaining his professorship, he became president of the Monticello Female Seminary in Godfrey, Illinois. He retired in 1893.

The bridge's engineers, Thomas F. Chappell and E.L. Grimes, both practiced in Rutland, Vermont. T. F. Chappell was the chief engineer for the Rutland Railroad. E.L. Grimes maintained an independent practice as a civil engineer, surveyor, and builder. An advertisement in the 1899 Rutland City Directory lists his specialties as "Surveys, plans specifications and estimates for sewerage systems, water supply, bridges, railroads, dams, etc."

The Colburn Bridge is one of approximately 17 surviving masonry bridges in Vermont. Masonry bridges were expensive to construct, and Vermont had only a few stone masons with the skills required to construct the large arches used in these bridges. As a result, few masonry bridges were constructed after the turn of the twentieth century. When the State of Vermont Highway Commission began to provide funding for new bridges in 1915, funding was available only for concrete and metal truss bridges, not for the costlier masonry bridges. The few masonry bridges which were constructed in the twentieth century were financed by prosperous towns or wealthy individuals. Many of the masonry bridges extant in 1927 were washed away by the flood which occurred in that year. Because of the relative rarity of this bridge type and the physical integrity of the Colburn Bridge, it is significant on the state level.

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PROPERTY OWNER

State of Vermont
Agency of Transportation
Montpelier, VT 05602

Attn: William Sargent