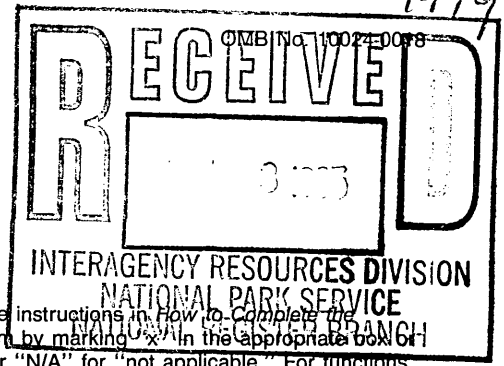


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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 Pawlet Town Hall

other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number School Street N/A not for publication

city or town Pawlet N/A vicinity

state Vermont code VT county Rutland code 021 zip code 05761

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.)
Elsa Gilbertson, National Register Specialist November 2, 1995
Signature of certifying official/Title Date
Vermont State Historic Preservation Office
State of 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 the 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): _____

Edson H. Beall Signature of the Keeper Date of Action 12.13.95
National Register of Historic Places

Pawlet Town Hall
Name of Property

Rutland County, Vermont
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>		buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
<u>1</u>		Total

Name of related multiple property listing
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

Historic Government Buildings of Vermont

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

Government/City Hall
Department Store

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

Government/City Hall

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

Italianate

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation stone
walls weatherboard

roof slate
other wood

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

United States Department of the Interior
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National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 1

Pawlet Town Hall
Pawlet, Rutland County, Vermont

DESCRIPTION -- PAWLET TOWN HALL

PAWLET TOWN HALL is located on the green in the center of this village in Rutland County in the southwest portion of Vermont. The village of Pawlet is built on a series of slopes, and wedged into a narrow valley where Flower Brook meets the Mettawee River. The town hall is at the center of the scenic vista as one approaches Pawlet from the north on Route 30. It is built directly upon a steep embankment which drops away to the river. The building itself is a wood four bay by two bay frame and clapboard 2 1/2 story structure, 60 feet long and 30 feet wide and designed in a high Victorian Italianate style. Prominent features include a cupola and porch that goes almost all around the building. The building sits on an ashlar foundation and, at the north rear under the town vault, a portion sits on concrete feet. The building has a slate gable roof with central cross-gable with a round-arched window. Pawlet Town Hall meets National Register criteria A and C, and the requirement for integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association.

A major exterior feature is a hip-roofed porch that wraps around the structure on all four sides. On the front, it is at ground level, but on the rear and sides, where the ground drops away from street level toward the Mettawee River, it becomes a balcony. The hefty structure housing the town vault interrupts the porch at the building's east rear corner. At the west end of the building, a stairway providing egress from the upstairs meeting room rises from the wall side of the porch into a clapboard shed-roof enclosure that projects into the porch roof from the west end of the second floor. The southeast-facing front part of the porch has a standing-seam metal roof. The west and north sides, which underwent repairs in 1990, have an asphalt roof.

The square, symmetrical cupola is used today to accommodate a signaling device for the fire department and the civil defense warning system.[1] It is detailed with arch-topped vents. It has chamfered corner pilasters, and a bracketed open pediment cornice on the square first stage. A polygonal spire sits on top of the cupola. There are brick chimneys at either end of the building.

On the facade, the recessed entrance, offset slightly to the

1. Town of Pawlet, State Historic Preservation Grants Application, 1988, p.1.

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National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number 7 Page 2Pawlet Town Hall
Pawlet, Rutland County, Vermont

DESCRIPTION -- PAWLET TOWN HALL (continued)

east of the building's center, consists of matching, narrow two-panel doors each with single-pane window. There is a transom above the pair of doors. Either side of the door there is a single-pane window on the canted panels that form the reveal. This door was once the entry to the store that occupied the centre of the building, and is now one of two entrances to town offices. Directly east of the entrance is a four-pane store window.

A second, four-panel door with segmentally arched top, and cornice molding flared at the base, is located on the front of the building at the west end. This doorway is today the entrance to the west portion of the town hall which is now used as Pawlet library. A third entrance, on the front of the building at the east end, consists of a pair of two-panel doors, their tops forming a segmental arch at the top when closed.

Fenestration on Pawlet Town Hall consists mainly of two window types. On the ground floor there are two over two double hung units, with segmentally arched lintels. Three such windows are located asymmetrically on the front, two at the west end, and two on the back. On the second floor, the tall sash consists of narrow four over four double-hung units with wood sills and surrounds and hoodmoulds around half-circle tops. There are four such windows located symmetrically on the front and back of the town hall, with two more on each second-floor end wall.

What historically was and today remains the clerk's office, on the east end of the building, has a modern, rectangular Chicago-type 3-pane window facing northeast. Additional bays, asymmetrically located on the basement floor, and visible from the sides and rear of the building, are boarded up. Other fenestration consists of two small square windows lighting the vault, and a small round-arched window in the cross-gable on the front of the building. A wide door on the basement floor is also boarded up.

Inside, the building has four large rooms on the first floor, and a second floor consisting of a meeting hall with stage flanked by two small rooms. On the first floor, the clerk's office is located at the east end of the building. It is entered via a foyer which also serves as the landing for the main stairwell serving the upstairs meeting room. In the clerk's office, walls are panelled in 4 x 6-foot thin wood sheets, which have been applied over existing walls. The room has modern carpeting. In the north corner of the office, there is a large free-standing metal

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National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Pawlet Town Hall
Pawlet, Rutland County, Vermont

Section number 7 Page 3

DESCRIPTION -- PAWLET TOWN HALL (continued)

vault, marked "Town of Pawlet" and dated 1895. Sitting on a thick slab of slate, it is black with gold lettering, accented by graphics in two shades of green and in blue. It is marked, "E.C. Morris Safe Co., Boston." A pair of exterior doors open from the center, followed by a set of interior doors, revealing an interior divided with thin wood partitions into shelves and vertical spaces. At the rear, north end of the office, there is a large walk-in vault which is integral to the building. No make or date is listed on the heavy metal door. Both vaults continue to house town records.

To the west of the rectangular clerk's office is the second large interior space. This area was once a store. More recently it served as a meeting room. In 1990 its configuration was changed to meet the town's need for additional administrative space [2], and it is now subdivided into two rooms. The front room is itself subdivided into sections through use of partitions of beaded panelling that are about four feet high. The back room now serves as the selectmen's meeting place, a public meeting space, and polling place.[3] Floors are of strips of wood, diagonally laid. Ceiling boards in these spaces are tongue-and-groove. Four parallel lines are inlaid, lengthwise, into the boards. The beams and struts that serve as structural supports for the building's second floor are exposed.

At the west end of the main floor, running the width of the building from front to back, is the public library. This library has modern carpeting.

Pawlet Town Hall's second floor consists of a large, open auditorium with a stage at its west end and two flanking dressing rooms. The big room continues to be used for large public gatherings, including town meetings, cub scout and girl scout meetings, dances, and meetings of farm organizations.[4] The room is normally reached along the north wall via a panelled stairway from the foyer, but has a second egress at its south end behind

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2. Town clerk Joanne Waite to author, March 4 1991.
 3. Grants application, p. 1.
 4. Ibid.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 4

Pawlet Town Hall
Pawlet, Rutland County, Vermont

DESCRIPTION -- PAWLET TOWN HALL (continued)

the stage.

The meeting hall appears to have changed little through the years. In 1991 a wood stove of unknown vintage was stood in the northeast corner of the room at the top of the stairs. The high ceiling, covered in pressed tin, remains and is typical of town halls of this period.[3] Lower portions of the walls have two tiers of wood wainscotting. Upper portions are pressed tin. A picture rail circumvents the walls just below the ceiling. Lighting in the upstairs meeting hall is incandescent.

3. Staff, Vermont Division for Historic Preservation, CG Prototypes, June 7, 1989, p. 5.

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.

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 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.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

- Architecture
- Politics/Government
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Period of Significance

1881 - 1945

Significant Dates

1881

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Unknown

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:

Pawlet Town Hall
Name of Property

Rutland County, Vermont
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property less than 1 acre

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1

1	8
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6	4	7	5	4	0
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4	8	0	0	6	0	0
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Zone Easting Northing

3

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Zone Easting Northing

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Alfred Holden
University of Vermont
organization Historic Preservation Graduate Program date May 4, 1991; reviewed 7/1995
street & number Wheeler House telephone (802) 656-3180
city or town Burlington state Vermont zip code 05405

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name Town of Pawlet, c/o Board of Selectmen
street & number P.O. Box 128 telephone _____
city or town Pawlet state Vermont zip code 05761

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 1

Pawlet Town Hall
Pawlet, Rutland County, Vermont

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE -- PAWLET TOWN HALL

The Pawlet Town Hall is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places under the multiple property submission, Historic Government Buildings of Vermont, and clearly meets the registration requirements for the town hall property type. The building, significant in the history of local politics and government in Vermont, has been in continuous use as a town hall since it was built in 1881. It is somewhat unusual in that it was built as a joint venture between the Town and businessman Marcellus Wheeler, who used part of the first floor for his store. With its Italianate style design and interior features such as town offices, meeting hall, and a stage, the building also is a good example of a town hall.

The Pawlet Town Hall possesses features both unusual and typical for Vermont town halls of its time. The Italianate style gradually became popular in Vermont after the Civil War. This building shows the return to prosperity following economic depression during the 1870s. The design included a large second floor meeting hall and stage similar to other town halls of the time in Vermont, reflecting the importance of town halls in village centers as a place for civic and social gatherings.

Town meetings in Pawlet were held at many different locations, prior to the construction of this building. The first town meeting was held in 1764, the year the town was chartered. Early meetings took place in taverns, like that of innkeeper Jonathan Willard, where "most of the townspeople transacted their business ...over a mug of beer or glass of flip."^[1] By 1782, the town voted to build a "town house," which was also used for worship. But pressing matters were still adjourned to Willard's, to be resolved "over

1. Dorothy Offensend, The Hub of a Community, the Pawlet Town Hall, Pawlet Historical Society, Pawlet Vt., 1981, p.1.

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Continuation Sheet

Pawlet Town Hall
Pawlet, Rutland County, Vermont

Section number 8 Page 2

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE -- PAWLET TOWN HALL (continued)

some liquid refreshments."^[2] And in 1807, a rift between townspeople over where meetings ought to be held resulted in the town house in the village being sold, with meetings alternating between a number of denominational religious "meeting houses" in different geographical areas outside the village, including West and North meeting houses. After 1818, they would be held at the West, South, and Baptist meeting houses for the next 63 years, until the town voted again to construct a town hall.^[3]

This occurred at the town meeting on March 1, 1881.^[4]

Pawlet town hall was unusual in that it was built co-operatively by the town of Pawlet and a local businessman. The meeting areas and the town offices were housed in a building specifically designed to also accommodate stores on its ground floor. Under the contract, Marcellus E. Wheeler and his wife Julia sold the building lot to the town for \$800. They were then responsible for erecting "a good substantial foundation" on the sloping lot for the 40 by 60 foot building, and for erecting the first floor. The town then built everything above, including floor joists but not beams, and up to the attic and slate roof.^[5] In addition, because the town was to use 16 feet of the 60 foot-long first floor for the clerk's office, the contract specified that 16/60ths of the first floor was to be "finished up" by the town.^[6] The town's portion contained the stairway to the second floor. The total cost was \$1802.76, an \$800 cost overrun. Town voters approved a tax to pay the extra amount.^[7]

Earlier in the 19th century, Pawlet was a busy farm and manufacturing centre. By 1840, it was home to no less than three sawmills, a grist mill, four woolen factories, a cotton factory

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2. Ibid, p. 6.
 3. Ibid, p.7.
 4. Ibid, p.8.
 5. Ibid, p. 8.
 6. Ibid, p. 10.
 7. Ibid, p. 11.

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Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 3

Pawlet Town Hall
Pawlet, Rutland County, Vermont

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE -- PAWLET TOWN HALL (continued)

and a tannery, and it had seven stores and three taverns.[8] After the Civil War, Pawlet continued as a center for quarrying slate and dairy farming, which generated increased business for village merchants.[9]

After the town hall was completed, Wheeler immediately leased, and in September 1881 sold, his interest in the building to Charles E. Taylor. Taylor then leased the western most room to another merchant, and the basement storeroom to the town clerk, Carl S. Bushee, to run a "country store." [10] Under successive owners in the next four decades, tenants of these spaces would include the town post office, a tinsmith, and a millinery shop.[11] Meanwhile, elsewhere in town local Masons helped finance a commercial block [12], and a Victorian style hotel, the Crescent Valley House, prospered across the road from the town hall. Among those who worked there as a clerk in the 1890s was a young Upton Sinclair, who would later become famous as author of *The Jungle*, a novel exposing the awful conditions of labor in the Chicago stockyards.[13]

In 1920 the Mettawee Valley Grange bought the commercial portion of the building for \$650.[14] During this time, town meeting "was the society event of the year, far surpassing any

8. Zadock Thompson, "Gazetteer of Vermont," in History of Vermont, Chauncey Goodrich, pub., Burlington VT., 1842, p.136.

9. Curtis B. Johnson and Elsa Gilbertson, eds., The Historic Architecture of Rutland County, Vermont Division for Historic Preservation, Montpelier, VT., 1988, p. 183.

10. Offensend, p. 25.

11. Ibid, pp. 26, 29, 30.

12. Ibid, p.183.

13. Ibid, p. 38.

14. Ibid, p. 30.

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Continuation Sheet

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Pawlet Town Hall
Pawlet, Rutland County, Vermont

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE -- PAWLET TOWN HALL (continued)

other event..."[15] By 1943 the Grange had fallen on hard times. Unable to afford to meet its responsibility to make foundation repairs, it sold its interest to the town for a nominal sum, choosing to rent the former store, which it had converted into the middle downstairs meeting room.[16]

The building today retains features that testify to its former uses, and to changes made during more than 100 years. The prominent porch was added in 1912 by Frank Colvin, then owner of the commercial portion of the building, with the permission of the town.[17] Around the same time, \$149.19 was spent installing the pressed steel ceiling and walls in the upstairs meeting room, where 77 new chairs had just been added. New floor boards cost \$111.75. In 1915, the town paid artist W.H. Bailey \$100 to paint stage drop curtains. These were removed in 1948.[18] Remaining is the double, recessed main front door and the store window, designed to admit substantial light to the retail area.

In 1991 the building's ground floor contained the town's library at its west end, the historic town offices at its east end, and expanded town offices and a second general purpose meeting room in the middle space. This latter meeting room serves as the selectmen's meeting place, a public meeting space, and polling place. The second floor continues to be used for town meetings, Boy Scout and Girl Scout meetings, dances and farm organization meetings.[19]

The historic context of the Pawlet town hall has changed little since the 1930s, when the village was described as "one of the most picturesque and completely rustic village centers in

15. Ibid, p. 14.

16. Ibid, p. 34.

17. Ibid, p. 16.

18. Ibid, p. 16.

19. Town of Pawlet, State Historic Preservation Grants Application, 1988, p.1.

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Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 5

Pawlet Town Hall
Pawlet, Rutland County, Vermont

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE -- PAWLET TOWN HALL (continued)

Vermont: a crossroads settlement straight from the movie lots." [20] That was 50 years ago, but in 1991 so little had changed since the Federal Writers Project made the observation that it would seem to apply still. Old and current photographs show most of the 19th century buildings around the green and on the village's streets remain today, though in widely varying states of repair.

The town hall underwent major repairs in 1990, following a petition presented to selectmen by citizens concerned about deterioration of the rear porch. [21] The town paid \$16,750 of the cost. It also received a State Historic Preservation Grant for \$7,500. Inside, hardwood floors on the first and second floors were refinished. New furnaces and insulation were also added. [22] Recent repairs, generally sympathetic to the building's age and style, such as beaded boards used to build low office partitions, combine with the continued use of the Pawlet Town Hall for historic purposes to preserve and enhance its position as the center of town government and village life.

20. Vermont State Planning Board, Vermont: A Guide to the Green Mountain State, Houghton Mifflin Company, Cambridge MA., 1937, p. 321.

21. Grants Application, p. 1.

22. Ibid, p. 2.

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National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Pawlet Town Hall
Pawlet, Rutland County, Vermont

Section number 9, 10 Page 1

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

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Vermont State Planning Board. *Vermont: A Guide to the Green Mountain State*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1937.

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Verbal Boundary Description: The Pawlet Town Hall is located on the north side of School Street. Its lot extends six feet beyond its foundation on all sides. The lot is 72 feet long and 50 feet deep.

Boundary Justification: The boundary includes all the land historically associated with the building.