

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

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NATIONAL REGISTER

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 Wells Village School

other names/site number \_\_\_\_\_

2. Location

street & number Main Street (VT Route 30) N/A not for publication

city or town Wells N/A vicinity

state Vermont code VT county Rutland code 021 zip code 05774

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.)

[Signature] 8/20/93  
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): \_\_\_\_\_

[Signature]  
Signature of the Keeper

10/7/93  
Date of Action

Wells Village School  
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.)

Educational Resources of Vermont

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**

0

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

EDUCATION/school

**Current Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

EDUCATION/school

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

Colonial Revival

**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  
National Park Service****National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**Section number 7 Page 1Wells Village School  
Wells, Rutland County, Vermont

The Wells Village School, built c.1899 and located on Main Street in the village of Wells, is an imposing, symmetrical, wood frame building with a central projecting pavilion and stands two stories high on a raised rusticated marble basement. The hip roof, covered with slate, has an open bell tower atop the pavilion. The pavilion is further enhanced by a Syrian arch framing the recessed entry and an abstracted Palladian window in the gable peak. The side walls feature banks of windows, installed 1917-18, on the first floor. To the rear of the building is a long low addition built in 1987 to provide more classrooms. The school retains its integrity of location, design, setting, workmanship, materials, feeling, and association.

The location of the school is Wells village in the town of Wells, at the base of Pond Mountain, a shear fault near Lake St. Catherine. It is in the westernmost part of the village and has a north/south orientation.

The main block, built c.1899, is a wood frame, clapboard-sided building two stories high, seven bays wide and two bays deep, with a raised rusticated marble block basement and a slate-clad hipped roof. A wooden board stringcourse runs above the foundation, at the sill level of the first floor windows, and between the first and second floors. Windows have six over six sash, unless otherwise noted.

The main (south) facade is distinguished by its projecting three bay wide central pavilion with a central recessed entryway framed by a large Syrian arch. The leftmost (west) first floor window has been filled in with clapboards inside the window surround (interior stairs were installed here). The two second story windows on the east end (righthand side) were replaced in 1987 and have six over six clip-in muntins.

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## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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Wells Village School  
Wells, Rutland County, Vermont

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The entry pavilion has an arched central opening with deep reveal. This arched entry is encircled by the horizontal molding which continually runs underneath the windows. The arched entry is flanked by a bay of four over four elongated sash windows which are encased by a simple wood molding extending above the window one quarter the length of the window itself and touching the horizontal string-course which divides the two stories. A pair of doors with a three-paned window arrangement sits underneath a transom window approximately two feet behind the arched entry. Three bays of six over six sash windows run the length of the second level of the entry pavilion. Contained in the raking cornice of the end gable is an abstracted Palladian window. Here, a central one over one sash window is flanked by a single six pane window which is one third the size of the central unit. This window arrangement is enclosed by a simple wood molding.

Surmounting the entry pavilion is an open cupola bell tower. The tower rises from the ridge of the end gable and has a slate clad square base. A heavy wood molding, or cornice, caps the base. Directly above the base sits a two by two bay wood cupola, or bell tower, with a simple wood balustrade. The tower is topped by a pyramidal slate clad roof with a copper point.

The west elevation contains a bank of six, six over six windows on the first floor which were added in 1917 after a 1904 State law mandating additional light and ventilation in schools. A fire door was added between the bank of windows and the south west corner of the structure at the time of the addition and renovation in 1987. Two evenly spaced six over six sash windows are on the second floor. The east window is aligned with the last window of the bank of windows. The east elevation is similar to the west containing a bank of six windows on the first floor and two evenly spaced windows on the second floor. The east elevation does not contain a fire door.

A one story addition was constructed on the rear of the building in 1987 somewhat altering the exterior north elevation of the historic structure which contains a central chimney c.1911-12. The addition contains approximately six large classrooms and a gym. The one story addition is sensitive to the historic structure and contains several similar features. The addition is covered with clapboarding and incorporates both a slate clad pitched roof as well as a bank of windows on its west elevation. This addition cannot be seen from the front elevation and does not alter the plan of the original historic structure.

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National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places  
Continuation SheetSection number 7 Page 3Wells Village School  
Wells, Rutland County, Vermont

The plan of the original structure contains a central hallway flanked by a large room on each side. The second floor is reached by an interior stair, which runs up the west side wall. The second floor was originally open and contained a stage on its east end. This floor was used by the town for Town Meeting and for other civic functions. The second floor was converted into two classrooms and several small offices, and the stage was taken out during the 1987 renovation. The downstairs, which retains its original plan, was also renovated in 1987.

A caption for an undated photograph in the book, A Historical Scrapbook: Wells, Vermont (published in 1976), says the original building "was changed sometime after the fire in the 1940's." The fire was in 1936. It appears that the fire did damage to the second floor and attic level of the central pavilion. The photo shows that the first and third bay windows in the second floor were originally four over fours. The gable peak window looked more like a Palladian window with a round-arched louvre over the middle window. The tympanum was lined with small modillion blocks. The bell tower appears to have had a sloping base, rather than the straight sides it has now, and was ornamented with brackets on each side of the posts. On the first floor main wall to the left of the pavilion, there was another entry to the building covered by a gable-roofed hood supported by open brackets. The entry was a paneled double door. Between the first and third bays was another six over six window (since removed).

**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

Education

**Period of Significance**

c. 1899

**Significant Dates**

c. 1899

**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:

\_\_\_\_\_

Wells Village School  
Name of Property

Rutland County, Vermont  
County and State

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreege of Property less than one acre

### UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 

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

3 

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Zone Easting Northing

2 

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4 

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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 Nadine Miller; Vermont Division for Historic Preservation

organization UVM Historic Preservation Program date 5/8/1990; revised 7/1993

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 Wells School Board

street & number Wells Village School telephone \_\_\_\_\_

city or town Wells state Vermont zip code 05774

**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.

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1

Wells Village School  
Wells, Rutland Co., Vermont

Section number \_\_\_\_\_ Page \_\_\_\_\_

The Wells Village School, located in the town of Wells, was built c.1900 and is a good Vermont example of a turn of the 20th century more than one room schoolhouse. A large two story building with a projecting central pavilion, recessed entry framed by a Syrian arch, and an open bell tower, it shares design features with contemporary large schools being built throughout the state, including nearby in East Poultney village and Hydeville in Castleton. Built to replace an earlier one room schoolhouse for District #1, the Wells Village School reflects the concerted effort at this time to construct better school buildings in Vermont. The building makes use of local building materials--slate, marble, and clapboard. It is being nominated under the multiple property submission, "Educational Resources of Vermont," and clearly meets the registration requirements for the property type school.

The town of Wells was settled after 1768 and by the time of the first Federal census in 1791 there were 622 people living here. The village of Wells began developing about 1800 at the intersection of the Rutland to Bennington stage road and a road along Wells Brook. It was a small commercial and milling center for the surrounding agricultural area, and by 1840 had a store, church, several mechanics' shops, and a tavern. By the 1860s it had about thirty houses. The 1869 Beers Map of Wells shows seven school districts, with the District #1 schoolhouse in Wells village not far from the intersection. The District #1 school had one room and was a small gable-front building with cornice returns and a central door with a Greek Revival style entablature. In the late 1800s slate quarries were opened up in town, but the population in town dropped, going from 713 residents in 1870 to 606 residents in 1900.

Despite the drop in population, the Town of Wells decided to make improvements to their school facilities at the turn of the century and replaced their old district school with the current Wells village school. There was a significant effort in Vermont at this time to improve upon the old school buildings and erect new facilities. An 1892 Vermont law passed to make Towns, rather than individual town school districts, the basic unit of educational control often led to the consolidation of school districts, but in Wells the other district schools remained in use after the new village school was built.

The Wells Village School was built c.1899. The State of Vermont school reports, published yearly or every two years, provide evidence for when the school likely was built. The 1900

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Wells Village School  
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school report shows an indebtedness in the town of Wells for repairs and new buildings of \$2,497.64 and an amount paid for new buildings of \$1,179.93. Two of the six operating schoolhouses were repaired, but it reports that no new schoolhouses were built. The 1898 report also notes that no schools were built, so it is likely that the new village school was built in 1899. In 1898 average daily attendance at the seven schools in town was 70 pupils in seven schools, with two schools serving six to twelve students and five serving 12 to 20 students. Since the number of schools in town decreased from seven to six between the 1898 and 1900 reports, it appears that either a very small district school was closed or two districts merged to use the village school. By 1904 one of the six schools maintained in town had become a graded school. This was likely the village school, which in 1929-30 was rated a standard school.

The Wells Village School has design features that are similar to those in the c.1896 East Poultney Elementary School, the 1898 Hydeville School in Castleton (listed in the National Register 11/21/78), and the 1904 Middletown Springs School. The Hydeville School was designed by N. S. Wood, described in the 1898 Castleton Town Report as a competent architect. Frank Davis was the builder. It may be speculated that Wood also designed the Wells Village School. Nelson S. Wood and Davis were among a number of architects and buildings who lived and worked in the nearby town of Fair Haven during this time period. These local architects made fine use of local building materials--slate, marble, and wood--and often used wood to ornament buildings in unusual or innovative ways.

This school fits squarely into the turn of the century movement for the construction of better schools in Vermont. In the state 32 new schools were constructed in 1899, 45 in 1900, 22 in 1901, and 26 in 1902. Many pictured in the Vermont school reports of this time were large buildings, often two stories and with at least several classrooms. A number were like the Wells school, with two classrooms on the first floor and an open room on the second floor that was used for both school and Town functions.

The building has undergone some changes over the years. A chimney was installed on the rear wall of the school in 1911-12 and most likely ventilated steam heat. In 1904 the State Board of Health gained greater control over health and safety issues and began mandating better lighting and ventilation in Vermont's public schools. In 1917-18 large banks of six windows were installed in both first floor classrooms. The interior received

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Wells Village School  
Wells, Rutland Co., Vermont

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some renovations and repairs in 1930 and in 1936 after a fire in the belfry. In 1987 the compatible addition was constructed on the rear of the building.

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Continuation Sheet**

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Wells Village School  
Wells, Rutland County, Vermont

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9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Hiland, Paul and Robert Parks. History of Wells, Vt. for the First Century After Its Settlement. Wells, Vt.: Wells Historical Society, 1979.

Vermont Division for Historic Preservation. The Historic Architecture of Rutland County. Montpelier, Vt.: 1988.

Vermont Board of Education. Annual Reports, 1898 - 1910.

Wood, Grace. Wells, VT -- 200 Years. Wells, Vt.: Grace E. Wood, 1955.

Wells Bi-Centennial Committee. A Historical Scrapbook: Wells, Vermont. Wells, Vt.: 1976.

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Verbal Boundary Description: The lot is on the north side of VT Route 30 in the village of Wells. A long rectangle, it is 144' long and 492' deep.

Boundary Justification: The boundary includes all the land historically associated with this school--the original school lot and a parcel to the rear added in 1937.

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**National Register of Historic Places  
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Section number        N/A Page   1  

Wells Village School  
Wells, Rutland County, Vermont

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PHOTOGRAPHS

This information is the same for all photographs:

Wells Village School  
Wells, Vermont  
Credit: Nadine Miller  
Date: February 1990  
Negative filed at the Vermont Division for Historic Preservation

Photograph 1

Description: Context view. View looking northeast, southwest side of school and playground with mountain in the background.

Photograph 2

Description: Context view looking northeast. Close-up view of southwest side of school and playground with mountain in the background.

Photograph 3

Description: View looking north. Southeast side of school.

Photograph 4

Description: View looking southeast. Northwest side of school.

Photograph 5

Description: Detail of east bank of windows.

Photograph 6

Description: Interior. Southeast room on the first floor.