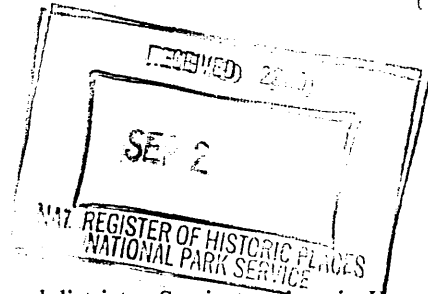


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service



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 any 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 Giroux Furniture Company Building

other names/site number City Feed Company Building

2. Location

street & number 10-18 Catherine Street

not for publication

city or town St. Albans vicinity N/A

state Vermont code VT county Franklin code 011

zip code 05478

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this x 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 X meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide x locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Suzanne C. Jamelle, National Register Specialist 9-28-06
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

Vermont State Historic Preservation Office
State or 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 commenting or other official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this 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): _____

Elson H. Beall 11.8.06

per
Signature of Keeper Date of Action

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	buildings
_____	_____	sites
_____	_____	structures
_____	_____	objects
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

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

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: <u>AGRICULTURE/SUBSISTANCE</u>	Sub: <u>Storage</u>
<u>TRANSPORTATION</u>	<u>Road-related</u>
<u>COMMERCE</u>	<u>Specialty store</u>
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: <u>WORK IN PROGRESS</u>	Sub: _____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

Commercial Style

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Stone
roof Rubber
walls Brick

other Glass
Wood

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

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 a 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)

COMMERCE

Period of Significance 1896-1955

Significant Dates ca. 1896
1905
1955

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: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Less than one acre

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
1	18	651367	4963699	3	_____	_____	_____
2	_____	_____	_____	4	_____	_____	_____
_____ 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 Kempton T. Randolph

Organization _____ date _____

street & number 1193 Lovely Road telephone 802-426-3134

city or town Marshfield state VT zip code 05658

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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 the SHPO or FPO.)

name Americanadian LLC

street & number P. O. Box 30 telephone 802-527-2300

city or town St. Albans state VT zip code 05478

=====

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 the 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 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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Giroux Furniture Company Building
St. Albans, Franklin County, VT

The Giroux Furniture Co. building is a large two-story, brick veneered, wood frame commercial and warehouse block located at the intersection of Lake, Catherine and Market Streets in St. Albans, Franklin County, Vermont. The structure consists of two distinct halves built nearly ten years apart, and intended for different purposes. The older half of the building, which originally housed a feed store, dates from circa 1896 and features 6/6 sash and numerous large loading bays. The newer half of the building, first constructed as a carriage and wagon repair shop, dates from 1905, has 1/1 windows and a 1955 projecting glass storefront that houses the building's main entrance. In style the building is a rather austere vernacular commercial structure. A corbelled cornice, hinged brickwork at the corners and splayed brick lintels make up its few architectural embellishments. The building is located adjacent to the St. Albans railroad yard in a dense urban commercial/light industrial district with similar buildings of its condition. The building retains its original windows and doors and a hand-operated freight elevator, but most traces of its historic interior appearance have been removed. Deterioration and neglect have severely impacted the structure, and the many boarded up openings in the facade obscure its original appearance. Despite this, the Giroux building retains its integrity of location, design, setting, materials, feeling and association.

The Giroux building is roughly triangular in shape and presses tightly against the boundaries of the lot it occupies, which are defined on three sides by city streets. Lake Street, a major thoroughfare, runs east to west and bounds the northerly extent of the building. Catherine Street runs south from Lake Street at a right angle, and the Giroux building's east facade defines the street edge along its 115 foot length. The building's west facade is separated from the railroad yard by Market Street, which initially runs southwest from Lake Street before turning south and running parallel with Catherine Street near the southerly end of the building.

The building is two stories tall, wood balloon framed and covered in a brick veneer of running bond except for its southerly facade. A shallow pitched gable membrane roof covers the southern half of the building, while that covering the northern half is hipped and punctured by rotating turbine-topped air vents. A mortared rubble stone foundation supports both sections of the building. Numerous window openings with splayed brick lintels pierce the brick facade along the north, east and west sides of the building. The main facade of the building facing Lake Street is dominated by a single-story projecting storefront that stretches from the corner of Catherine and Lake Streets to over half way down the westerly facade fronting Market Street. This modern style 1955 addition sits on a concrete slab foundation and is faced with large abutting plate glass

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windows. It also houses the main entrance to the building along the short Lake Street facade. The storefront is topped by a large overhanging flat roof with recessed lights in the soffit.

The northern (front) half of the building dates from 1905 and was originally constructed as a wagon and carriage repair shop. This addition features 1/1 double hung windows on both floors, with those on the first floor being larger than the second storey windows. This half of the building has four distinct exterior facades that form a triangular shape pointing northward. The door and window bays are supported by splayed brick lintels, and a corbelled cornice runs underneath a metal gutter around the addition's roofline. The corners of the addition, none of which are right angles, feature hinged brickwork. Although the masonry is now painted, in areas where paint has worn away, the original red-tinted pointing mortar is visible. Gold leaf lettering applied by the Giroux furniture store adorns many of the first and second storey windows with words such as "Lamps, Tables," and "Giroux."

The 1905 addition's east facade along Catherine Street is approximately 50 feet long with five window bays perforating the brick exterior on each floor. All but one of the first floor windows are boarded over, however the original sash remain in place. A small side entrance is located between the second and third window bays from the left on the first floor. A large pane of glass fills the upper half of this three-paneled wood door, and the entrance is topped by a large single-paned transom light. Two concrete steps lead up to the entrance from the street. The foundation along this stretch of the building is perforated by four small window openings, each centered under first floor window bays 2, 4, 5 and 6. The electric utilities enter the building along this facade, with the meter located to the right of the side entrance.

The building turns the corner from Catherine to Lake Streets in two segments. A single bay wide facade runs at a 45 degree angle from the east elevation. The upper floor houses a single window centered in the facade. It is on this face of the building where the approximately 15 foot deep 1955 glass storefront addition that winds around the majority of the northern portion of the building begins. The storefront, which runs parallel with Lake Street across this portion of the building, is deepest here due to the difference in angles between the northeast facing wall segment and the north facing storefront. Behind the storefront, a large opening remains in the masonry wall where historic photographs show the original entrance to the building was located. The north-facing facade along Lake Street is slightly wider, with two window bays in the second storey. The building's main entrance is centered in the storefront addition. Double glass doors open onto a vestibule housing a short flight of steps that lead up to another double glass doorway

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St. Albans, Franklin County, VT

that opens onto the first floor. Behind these doorways in the masonry wall is a large opening that formerly housed a large plate glass display window.

The addition's northwesterly facade runs approximately 55 feet along Market Street before adjoining the older portion of the building. Six window bays perforate the masonry wall along the second storey. A large wooden sign the height of the second floor that read "Giroux" stretched across the facade during the period when the building housed Giroux Furniture, blocking window bays 2, 3 and 4. However, the sign was recently removed. Behind the glass storefront, four large openings in line with the upper storey window bays puncture the masonry wall. Historic photographs show these bays originally held large plate glass display windows. The glass storefront ends between bays 4 and 5. A 1/1 window with a steel I-beam lintel occupies bay 5 to the right of the storefront along the first floor. A large loading entrance with original glass filled wood-paneled double doors opens into the first floor loading area and freight elevator. A double-paned transom light tops the doorway, which is supported by a steel I-beam lintel. Several feet in from the right corner of the facade, a clear vertical break in the brickwork is visible, marking the intersection of the old and new halves of the Giroux building.

The older half of the Giroux building dates from circa 1896, and was originally erected by the City Feed Company as a warehouse and retail store. In its current form, this southerly half of the Giroux building is roughly rectangular in shape with a projecting bay half the width of the building along its western facade. The windows in this older half of the building are 6/6 double hung sash, many of which have been boarded up. In detail, this portion of the building is almost identical to the northerly half. The brick veneer features splayed window lintels, interlocking angled corners, and a corbelled cornice that is several courses wider than that on the 1905 addition due to the half-foot greater height of this portion of the building. A shallow-pitched hipped membrane roof tops the building, and a brick single-flue chimney projects through its southwestern quarter.

A vertical seam in the brick veneer to the far right of the northwestern facing side of the building marks the corner of the 1896 portion of the Giroux building. Although the sliver of older brick facing along this facade is devoid of bays, a boarded over opening is visible in the foundation. Several feet past this line, the building face turns 45 degrees and faces west. The left half of this facade is two bays wide. Boarded up window openings fill the second storey bays and the southernmost bay on the first floor. Centered in this half of the facade is a large loading bay on the first floor, which is also boarded up. To the right of the window bays, the building projects westward approximately 17 feet out to Market Street, creating a sheltered loading area paved

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Giroux Furniture Company Building
St. Albans, Franklin County, VT

with gravel. Centered in the northern facade facing the loading area is a single boarded up doorway on the first floor. Just to the right of this door is a grated opening in the foundation. At the right edge of this facade, the building turns the corner to Market Street at a 45 degree angle, creating a narrow northwest facing one-bay-wide facade before the western facing facade along Market Street. A single 6/6 window fills the second storey bay, a 3/1 double-hung window fills the first floor bay, and a boarded up opening pierces the foundation. The three bay wide westward facade fronting Market Street is approximately 30 feet long. Boarded up windows fill the second storey bays. A single 3/1 window fills the left most bay on the first floor, while the other two bays are twice as wide and each house a pair of 3/1 windows. Floating brick door and window lintels several feet above the first floor windows are evidence of previous changes in the fenestration. Two window-sized lintels float over the outer-most bays, and a wider, loading door sized lintel floats above the middle bay. Early 20th century Sanborn Fire Insurance maps show a railroad spur running up Market Street to this portion of the building, and the large lintel is evidence of what was most likely a loading bay for rail deliveries.

The 100 foot wide southern facade now faces an empty gravel lot where a building stood until recently. Beginning several feet in from the left side and stretching nearly the entire length of the elevation, a building-shaped scar devoid of exterior finish mars the rear of the Giroux building. Grayed horizontal sheathing boards are visible along this portion of the wall, and vinyl siding covers the remainder of the space above the shallowly peaked outline of the building's former neighbor. A strip of brick veneer roughly ten feet wide remains on the right side of the facade. Silver paint and half of a black-painted mural advertising "washers" from the early period of the Giroux Furniture Co. remain visible where formerly protected by the now demolished neighboring building. The stone foundation is unpainted along this elevation and is in very poor shape with many stones missing or out of place. Several boarded up door and window bays are visible on the first floor. Two thirds of the way to the right of the facade sits a doorway, which formerly led into the now demolished building, and roughly ten feet beyond it is a larger sheathed over loading bay. Several feet beyond that is a sheathed over window bay similar in size to those on the remainder of the older portion of the building. This elevation is the only without a flat roofline and corbelled cornice. Here the roof peaks to form a very shallow gable.

The east facing facade fronting Catherine Street extends roughly 50 feet from the building's southeast corner to the 1905 addition. This elevation is six bays wide and punctuated by numerous boarded over loading doors, remnants of its original use as a feed store. Boarded over

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windows fill bays 1, 3, 4 and 6 on the second storey and bays 3 and 6 on the first. A boarded up loading door level with the street surface sits in the far left corner of the facade. Its steel I-beam lintel indicates this door was a later modification to the building. Just to its right, two loading door stacked one on top of the other fill the second bay. The first floor loading door is covered up with sheet metal up to the base of the second floor. An exposed pair of two-paneled sliding doors that open onto the second floor sits directly above it. These doors are topped with a wide splayed brick lintel. Centered several feet above these doors, a section of railroad tie with an iron loop through it projects roughly a foot out from the building to serve as a pulley hook. The fourth bay on the first floor extends from the foundation to the sill of the second storey window bay. Another loading door most likely filled this space, which is now covered by plywood paneling. A fourth loading door, similar in size to the series of doors in the second bay, fills the fifth bay and butts up against the smaller loading bay to its left. This 1 and 1/2 storey tall loading bay is also covered by plywood paneling. A brick lintel and railroad tie pulley hook similar to that over the second bay doors top this doorway as well. A grilled opening in the foundation is located underneath the third window bays.

Inside the Giroux building, little remains of the original interior finish. However, the space does retain its open floor plan and an unaltered warehouse space on the second floor in the older portion of the building. Through the double glass door main entrance along Lake Street, an open showroom floor extends rearward and occupies nearly the entire first floor space of the 1905 portion of the building. The space is punctuated only by boxed steel support columns. Modern materials had covered all of the wall and floor surfaces, but original beaded board wall paneling was uncovered throughout this portion of the building during recent remodeling. In the southeast corner of this showroom by the side entrance along Catherine Street is a simple flight of stairs leading to the second floor. In the opposite corner of the showroom, a doorway leads to a loading area behind the double exterior doors along Market Street. Here, a large hand-operated freight elevator original to the building remains in working order. A large opening in the southern wall of the main showroom leads to the 1896 half of the building and another open showroom space completely covered in modern finish materials. A doorway in the west wall of the rear showroom leads into an office area housed in the westward projecting bay at the southwest corner of the building. A kitchen area with an old porcelain sink and a bathroom are also located in this space.

The stairs to the second floor lead up to a large open showroom that occupies the entire footprint of the 1905 portion of the building. A sliding metal door along the southern wall of the showroom leads to an open warehouse space in the 1896 portion of the building. The materials and finishes original to this space still remain in tact. Softwood floors extend throughout the

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space, and square wood posts run in east-west rows down the length of the building. The walls have no interior finish other than white paint applied to the studs and sheathing. Many of the original 6/6 windows boarded over on the exterior are visible from inside the space. The ceiling consists of the painted undersides of the original roof sheathing, which have a pitch that alternates back and forth between the rows of support beams forming a repeated shallow W shape. This roof was capped over by a new roof on trusses several feet above the old roof, and now simply serves as a ceiling for this second floor space. Metal lighting conduits run along east-west horizontal support beams with lights hung from porcelain fixtures spaced evenly between each post. Each light is enclosed by a delicate ribbed bell-shaped glass shade with a fringed lower edge. The backsides of several of the loading doors visible from Catherine Street can be seen from inside. Overall, this portion of the second floor is a beautifully preserved turn of the 20th century commercial warehouse space.

The basement of the Giroux building is full height underneath the entire structure and contains the gas-fired boiler and incoming water line. The steps descending into the basement are located underneath the stairway to the second floor. The basement floor is both poured concrete and bare earth in places.

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Giroux Furniture Company Building
St. Albans, Franklin County, VT

The Giroux Furniture Company building at 10-18 Catherine Street, St. Albans, Vermont, was constructed circa 1896 and expanded in 1905. It is a utilitarian commercial structure, which gains its significance through its long relationship with commerce and the Central Vermont Railroad. Located adjacent to the railyard and across a main thoroughfare from the passenger depot, the building has housed businesses throughout its history that thrived on the intersection of rail freight and people. The choice of the Central Vermont Railroad to locate their headquarters and shops in St. Albans in the 1850s proved to be a monumental decision that drastically altered the fortune of the city. Fueled by readily available employment, the city's population boomed in the second half of the 1800s, as did industry and commerce, which benefited from the luxury of rapid and inexpensive shipping. While Main Street businesses that prospered from the railroad remain well preserved in St. Albans, the Giroux building represents an entirely different class of commercial growth that flourished in the back alleys and streets near the rail yard. Feed and grain stores, a wagon repair shop, fruit wholesalers and a large volume grocery store all at one time or another operated out of the Giroux building. These varied businesses all benefited from close proximity to the tracks, and in many respects represented the gritty commercial underbelly of the city. The Giroux building is being nominated to the National Register under criterion A for the story it tells about this largely forgotten, but once vibrant sector of the local economy. Although neglect and time have not been kind to the building, nevertheless it still retains its original character and integrity of location, materials, setting, design, feeling and association.

By the time the older half of the Giroux building was constructed circa 1896, the Central Vermont Rail Road had been the dominant economic engine of St. Albans for nearly a half century. Built by Hiram B. Weeks to house his feed, grain and phosphates store, according to Sanborn Fire Insurance maps, the building was constructed by Weeks to replace several older structures his business had been located in. Interestingly, in 1895 the city had been absolutely devastated by a massive fire that had ignited less than a block from Weeks' store and leveled 75 acres of buildings, narrowly missing his feed store. This may explain the choice Weeks made to add a brick veneer to his wood framed building, in hopes of insuring his building from a fate that befell many of his neighbors. The original address of Weeks' feed store was not on Catherine Street, which runs to the east of the building, but on Market Street to the building's west. At the time this area between the rail yard and the buildings along Catherine Street was known as Market Square, and was lined with wholesale merchants that benefited from their proximity to the main freight depot at the southern end of the square. Before the days of internal combustion powered trucking, this location so close to the freight house was invaluable for moving the huge quantities of grain and other agricultural supplies by wagon needed to stock Weeks' store. The

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Giroux Furniture Company Building
St. Albans, Franklin County, VT

entire enterprise was based on the ability to acquire large quantities of supplies by rail, store them in the building, and then transfer those supplies in smaller, but still quite large, quantities out of the building and to consumers. Since all of these transactions had to be accomplished through hand and horse power, Weeks engineered his building to facilitate the simultaneous movement of large goods both in and out of his store. Evidence of this remains plainly visible today, especially along Catherine Street, what was at the time the backside of the building. Numerous loading doors, now covered over by paneling, pierce the facade of the building, with some stretching up to the second floor. Weeks' business was so intertwined with the railroad that he even recycled sections of track to use as arms above his loading doors to hook pulleys to. These bits of track can still be seen projecting out from the brick facade of the building today.

By 1907, Weeks' feed store had either been renamed or otherwise transformed into the City Feed Company. The business would continue to operate out of the building until 1936, before moving one building south on Catherine Street and resuming operations.

With the completion of a large triangular-shaped addition to the north of the existing feed store building in 1905, the structure took on the general shape and appearance that it retains today. The addition, similar in style and ornamentation to the original building, was constructed not to expand the feed store, but to house a separate business. Bedard and Carlisle wagon and harness makers and repairers were the first tenants to move into the newly constructed space. According to city directories, Frederick S. Bedard and Henry Carlisle were already firmly established carriage and wagon makers in St. Albans when they moved from their shop on Lake Street to this new location at the corner of Lake and Catherine Streets where they would stay from 1905 until 1915. Although the pair no doubt repaired items for the general public, their decision to locate their business so near the railroad tracks in the heart of the city's freight and wholesale commercial district was no coincidence. Even as the automobile began to replace the horse and buggy for civilian transportation, the movement of heavy freight, especially over short distances, remained dominated by horse teams and wagon well into the 20th century. A bustling rail freight yard in the early 1900s would have provided a steady stream of busted sleighs, broken wagons, and worn harnesses for Bedard and Carlisle to repair. A very large hand-operated freight elevator, big enough to carry heavy equipment and possibly a wagon, as well as an open floor plan are the major remaining testaments to their presence in the building. Although the era of horse drawn freight is long past, the early tenants of this portion of the Giroux building played a crucial role in keeping the gears of St. Alban's commerce machine well oiled and running.

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Giroux Furniture Company Building
St. Albans, Franklin County, VT

After Bedard and Carlisle vacated the building in 1915, a string of tenants, including a contractor and offices of the Central Vermont Railroad occupied the space for the following five years. In 1920, two similar businesses established themselves in the space, E. E. Aseltine Wholesale Fruit, and Contee's Store House. Contee's was a retail shop on Main Street specializing in fruit and candy, and their operation on Catherine Street was a warehouse to stock supplies for their main store. E. E. Aseltine sold large quantities of fruit to retailers and grocers in town. Sometime around 1920, a rail spur was constructed running up Market Street and terminating at the City Feed portion of the Giroux building. Most likely this spur also brought in produce for the two fruit dealers, and was probably influential in choosing this location for their businesses. The two wholesalers continued to operate out of the Giroux building until sometime in the 1930s, when A & G Grocers briefly moved into the location. At around this time, powered by the penny pinching mentality brought on by the Great Depression, grocery retail underwent massive changes. Small, low volume grocers were being replaced by large volume discount retailers that dealt in bulk and passed the saving onto consumers. A & G was one of these novel "super markets," and the amount of retail space they would have had in the northern half of the Giroux building would have seemed enormous to the consumer of the 1930s. The building also was a good location for a grocery retail shop, as large displays could be setup in the plate glass windows along heavily-trafficked Lake Street.

By 1937, both portions of the building at 10-18 Catherine Street had been taken over by the Giroux Furniture Company. Giroux took advantage of the new mobility and purchasing power of people emerging out of the great depression and their desire to enrich their lives with material goods. P. F. Giroux established what was claimed to be the largest furniture retailer in the state of Vermont during the 1930s. Furniture, mass-produced in various other parts of the country, was shipped via rail and delivered directly to the rear of the building along the rail spur. Gold leaf window stencils advertising various items of furniture remain on many of the 1/1 windows in the front half of the building, and a photograph from that period shows advertising murals painted on the brick walls of the building and parked cars lined up in front of the showroom windows along Lake Street. The company was evidently successful, as it remained in operation for nearly 70 years. The largest alteration made to the building during the company's tenure was the addition of a one-storey modern plate glass storefront and entrance addition along Lake Street built in 1955 according to historic photographs and Vermont State Register files. Although the Central Vermont Railroad began to reduce the scale of its operations in the city during the 1950s, St. Albans was able to retain its status as the commercial hub of Franklin County. Thus competition for established large retail operations, such as Giroux Furniture, was limited,

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Giroux Furniture Company Building
St. Albans, Franklin County, VT

allowing the company to survive the city's economic post-war slump. The glass storefront, a costly addition to the building made during a period of economic decline, is evidence of the company's flexibility in continuing to attract customers. The storefront, unaltered since its construction, is a wonderful example of modernist architectural design intended to dress the building with an up-to-date face to present to potential consumers. The addition, with its enormous windows pressed against the street edge, also hints at the changing nature of retail in a post-war America dominated by the automobile. Clearly aimed at motorists whizzing past along Lake Street, the storefront addition served as a kind of changeable three-dimensional billboard for furniture displays meant to be noticed at 30 miles-per-hour. Over time the Giroux Furniture Company became somewhat of a local institution and the building a local landmark. Nearly all residents of St. Albans continue to associate the two together.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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Giroux Furniture Company Building
St. Albans, Franklin County, VT

Bibliography:

Armstrong, Margaret B., Caldwell, Pamela J., and Steele, Dorothy C. eds., St. Albans, Vermont, Through the Years, 1763-1963: a Bicentennial History, St. Albans Historical Society, St. Albans, Vt. 1977.

St. Albans City Directories, 1886-1939.

St. Albans Historic District Nomination, National Register of Historic Places.

St. Albans Historic District Nomination, Vermont State Register of Historic Places.

Maps:

Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps, 1884-1940.

Photographs:

Bedard and Carlisle Company, circa 1905, Jim Shaughnessy.

Giroux Building, circa 1940, Jim Murphy.

Giroux Building, 1955, St. Albans Historic Society.

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National Park Service

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Giroux Furniture Company Building
St. Albans, Franklin County, VT

Geographical Data

Verbal Boundary Description

The property at 10-18 Catherine Street, St. Albans, Franklin County, Vermont, is the city lot associated with the building. It is recorded in the St. Albans Tax Lot Map 19, as lot 26018010.

Boundary Justification

The boundary is the land historically associated with the building.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number Photo Log Page 1 Giroux Furniture Company Building
St. Albans, Franklin County, VT

Photograph Information

Date taken: July 13, 2006
Photographer: Kempton Randolph
CD on file at Vermont Division for Historic Preservation

Photograph #1
file name: VT_FranklinCounty_Giroux1.tif
view: Looking southeast at Giroux building from the St. Albans passenger railroad depot

Photograph #2
file name: VT_FranklinCounty_Giroux2.tif
view: Looking south at Giroux building main entrance from Lake Street

Photograph #3
file name: VT_FranklinCounty_Giroux3.tif
view: Looking northeast at Giroux building from Market Street

Photograph #4
file name: VT_FranklinCounty_Giroux4.tif
view: Looking northwest at Giroux building from Catherine Street

All photographs were printed on HP Premium Plus Glossy Photo Paper using an HP Photosmart 7850 printer equipped with Vivera 95 tri-color and Vivera 99 photo ink cartridges.

Please see attached sheet from Wilhelm Imaging Research showing 108 year fade resistance of this paper and ink combination