

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

For NPS use only

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

received APR 10 1985

date entered MAY 21 1985

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

1. Name

historic Amos Lawrence House

and/or common name same

2. Location

street & number Richville Road N/A not for publication

city, town Manchester N/A vicinity of

state Vermont code 50 county Bennington code 003

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	N/A in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name J and J Land

street & number P. O. Box 1204

city, town Manchester Center N/A vicinity of state Vermont 05255

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Office of the Town Clerk

street & number N/A

city, town Manchester Center state Vermont 05255

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title None has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date N/A federal N/A state county local

depository for survey records N/A

city, town N/A state N/A

7. Description

Condition

excellent
 good
 fair

deteriorated
 ruins
 unexposed

Check one

unaltered
 altered

Check one

original site
 moved date _____

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Amos Lawrence House is a good example of an early Greek Revival style Vermont farmhouse. Located in the fertile Batten Kill River valley, it exemplifies the modestly successful status obtainable in this former rural agricultural district during the middle nineteenth century. The two-and-one-half story, wood-framed and clapboarded house with a slate-shingled gable roof possesses a Georgian plan with five-bay, eaves-front orientation. The east facade displays a high-style, sidelighted central entrance whose enframingent is embellished with fretwork on the paneled pilasters that support an entablature. The house's exterior retains intact its historic appearance. Two fireplaces, one with a bake oven, survive on the interior. The house has been sympathetically rehabilitated and adapted to contain two apartments.

Situated about one mile south of Manchester Depot village, the Amos Lawrence House stands on the west side of the Richville Road surrounded by the former fields of the Lawrence farmstead. The track of the Vermont Railway passes behind the house, paralleling the Batten Kill River slightly farther west. Across the road (southeast) from the house, an extensive gravel excavation has disfigured the once pastoral landscape. Another nearby field has been converted in recent decades to a residential subdivision.

The Lawrence House consists of a two-and-one-half story main block of rectangular plan oriented parallel to the road. The gable roof is shingled with slate of reddish-gray color; a low interior chimney rises from each end of the ridge. The foundation is veneered with marble slabs mortared in place. The main (east) entrance incorporates marble slab steps and door sill.

The house's decorative features are concentrated on the symmetrically arranged five-bay east eaves facade. The central entrance forms the stylistic focus, being enframed by paneled pilasters inset with Greek Revival fretwork applique and carrying a full entablature. Slightly recessed within the entrance surround, pairs of attenuated channeled pilasters inset with half-length sidelights flank the cross-and-bible seven-panel door. The window openings are fitted with new two-over-two sash that duplicate previously existing, but irreparable, later nineteenth-century sash. A full entablature follows the horizontal eaves and returns on the gable ends. Narrow cornerboards with simple cap moldings rise to meet the entablature.

The cornice and a scaled-down frieze and architrave continue on the raking eaves of the two-bay north and south gable elevations. A left corner entrance augments the arrangement of the north elevation; its cross-and-bible seven-panel door is enframed simply by a smooth surround. The rear corners of the main block are marked with fragments of the full entablature that rest like over-scaled capitals on the narrow cornerboards.

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Aligned with the south gable elevation, a one-and-one-half story shed ell with rubblestone foundation projects from the main block's rear (west) eaves elevation. The ell may predate the main block. A center chimney rises from the ell's slate gable roof. The windows consist of smaller-scale two-over-two sash and fixed lights. The three-bay north eaves elevation includes a rear entrance with a paneled door with an upper glass light. The interior of the shed is unfinished.

Arranged around a central stair hall, the Georgian plan interior of the house has been preserved in the creation of an apartment on each story. (The central stair provides access to the second floor apartment; a door has been placed at the head of the stair.) The historic interior fabric was damaged by vandals while the house was allowed to fall derelict during the 1970s. The walls and ceilings are now sheathed with gypsum board in place of the irreparable plaster-and-lath. An original fireplace with a simple enframingent and hearth of pinkish marble remains intact in the northeast room. It had been walled over and was uncovered during the rehabilitation.

The cellar of the house contains a much larger fireplace incorporating a beehive oven, again a design holdover from the Federal period. Also built against the north wall, this fireplace possesses a marble lintel, fire-jamb, and hearth, and the brick oven to the left of the firebox is trimmed with marble. The fireplace and oven have been stabilized during the rehabilitation of the building.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

Specific dates c. 1840 Builder/Architect unknown

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Amos Lawrence House is a good example of an early Greek Revival style Vermont farmhouse. Combining a form and interior plan popular in the earlier Federal period and decorative detail of the then modern Greek Revival style, the structure represents the modest economic success and architectural aspirations of rural Vermont in the second quarter of the nineteenth century. Recently rehabilitated, the house continues to convey the historic rural agricultural character of the area which in recent years has been subject to mounting development pressures.

In 1826, Amos Lawrence, a Massachusetts native, acquired land along the Batten Kill River in Manchester. Circa 1840, he constructed the present house as the home for his large family, which then included six children. (Perhaps the current rear ell of the house originally sheltered the family before construction of the main block.) The 1840 Census notes that three members of the family, presumably Amos and his two eldest sons, were employed in agriculture. The Lawrence farm then consisted of seventy acres. In 1850, Lawrence's real estate was valued at \$2,500.

Mr. Lawrence's agricultural prosperity found expression in his residence. Although the house's five-bay eaves-front form and interior Georgian plan harkened back to time-proven Federal precedents, the dwelling was sheathed in a cloak of then modern Greek Revival detail. The door surround exhibits remarkable sophistication for a rural farmhouse. The inset Greek fretwork applique on the door surround's pilasters is a bold gesture toward high-style interpretations of the style. Visitors arriving at the Lawrence House would surely have been impressed with the elaborate nature of its entrance portal.

Also catching the eye of passersby would have been the crowning entablature on the front facade. Deep and full, in a true expression of Greek Revival design, it nevertheless bears the naive touch of a builder working in a new design vocabulary in a rural area. The narrow cornerboards visually strain under the weight of the heavy entablature. On the rear corners of the main block, the entablature appears as drastically overscaled capital-like fragments above the narrow cornerboards.

Scant record exists of Lawrence's specific farming and building activities. Since his possession ended in 1879, the house has generally not been the residence of subsequent owners. Its

9. Major Bibliographical References

1. Beers, F. W. Atlas of Bennington County, Vermont. New York, 1869.
2. Rice, E., and C. E. Harwood. Map of Bennington County, Vermont. New York: C. B. Peckham at H. F. Walling's, 1856.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property 1

Quadrangle name Manchester, Vt.

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References

A

118	6582180	4781071910
Zone	Easting	Northing

B

Zone	Easting	Northing

C

Zone	Easting	Northing

D

Zone	Easting	Northing

E

Zone	Easting	Northing

F

Zone	Easting	Northing

G

Zone	Easting	Northing

H

Zone	Easting	Northing

Verbal boundary description and justification

See Continuation Sheet.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state N/A code county code

state code county code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Hugh H. Henry

organization Historic Preservation Consultant date January 1985

street & number Green Mountain Turnpike telephone 802-875-3379

city or town Chester state Vermont 05143

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer signature

Eric Gilbertson

title Director, Vermont Division for Historic Preservation

date 4/3/85

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

Ronan [Signature]
Keeper of the National Register

date 5/21/85

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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occupancy by tenants probably accounts for the lack of significant additions or alterations during the following century. The succession of absentee ownerships concluded in the 1970s when the house was virtually abandoned to deterioration and vandalism. A barn on the property ultimately collapsed from the effects.

The land historically associated with the Amos Lawrence farm has been subdivided in recent decades and mostly converted to non-agricultural uses. In 1983, the house and one-acre lot were separated from the remaining farm land and acquired by the present owners. Excepting only the windows, the nineteenth-century exterior fabric of the house was nearly intact although the interior had suffered substantial damage. An extensive rehabilitation was undertaken the same year; the exterior fabric has been repaired wherever possible or replaced where necessary by elements duplicated from the original. The house was adapted to contain two apartments although the exterior does not reveal this internal division.

The building provides an instructive case of a deteriorated historic resource being restored to economic viability. At the same time, the significant Greek Revival character of the house has been preserved as a tangible expression of historic rural Vermont material culture. Although its agricultural setting has been altered by recent development, the Amos Lawrence House continues to convey a strong sense of its nineteenth-century origin.

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The property being nominated consists of the Amos Lawrence House and its one-acre lot of highly irregular form abutting the westerly edge of the Richville Road right-of-way and extending westerly to the Vermont Railway right-of-way. The present lot has been subdivided from the original Lawrence farm of approximately seventy acres. The deed to the property is entered in Book 90, Page 331 of the Manchester Land Records.