

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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RECEIVED	MAY 19 1979
DATE ENTERED	JUL 9 1979

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC

Turner Town House

AND/OR COMMON

LOCATION

ME 117

STREET & NUMBER

Rt. 117

___ NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Turner Center

VICINITY OF Turner

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Second

STATE

Maine

CODE

23

COUNTY

Androscoggin

CODE

001

CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE <input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL <input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL <input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT <input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Town of Turner

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Turner,

___ VICINITY OF

STATE

Maine 04282

LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Androscoggin County Registry of Deeds

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Auburn,

STATE

Maine

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

DATE

___ FEDERAL ___ STATE ___ COUNTY ___ LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

EXCELLENT DETERIORATED
 GOOD RUINS
 FAIR UNEXPOSED

CHECK ONE

UNALTERED
 ALTERED

CHECK ONE

ORIGINAL SITE
 MOVED DATE 1831
(see significance)

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Turner Town House of Turner, Maine, is a distinctive example of its type, constructed in 1831.

The one-story building is of frame construction with field-stone foundation, gabled roof, central brick chimney, and clapboard siding. The east and west ends of the town house, in the gable-ends, are two bays wide, while the facade, which faces south, is five bays long. All windows are covered with single board and batten shutters, mounted externally.

There are two symmetrically-spaced facade entrances. These each contain a simply enframed panelled door. Traditionally, one entrance was for men and one for women.

In fact, the most distinctive element of the building is internal, for the doors lead to a large meeting room, the floor of which was built to slope from each end of the building toward the center, as in a theater, to give the audience at the ends of the room as clear a view of the town meeting moderator and selectmen as possible, located in the center of the room. This feature is rare in Maine town houses.

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES

1831

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

One of the oldest town houses in Maine, having been in continuous use since 1831, this building in Turner is also of unusual design and has a history of strange political strife.

The first Turner town meeting was held in 1787, a few months after incorporation, in the church meeting house on Upper Street. Later, from 1822-1830 meetings were held in the local school.

On September 25, 1830, a meeting was called "to see what measures the town will take to provide themselves with a town house." It was voted that such should be erected on an isolated little hill about a half mile west of the "center", the area of earliest settlement. There followed a series of five acrimonious town meetings and endless but fruitless votes of reconsideration of the location.

All this controversy lay in the fact that the bulk of the more recent settlement had taken place along the western edge of the township around a nucleus called the "Village." Thus, when the question arose over the location of the town house, although the Village was ruled out as not central and convenient, its residents were not willing to give the prestige of the building to the Center and insisted on the exact geographical center of the township as the site.

The Center adherents felt that this made no sense and was done out of pure spite. And so on a winter's night shortly after construction of the town house, men from that part of town gathered, took down the town house (the frame timbers had been pegged and could be taken apart) and re-erected it near the Center burying ground. Weeks later men from the Village took it down again and put it back on its original site. A short while after that the Center adherents took it down for a third time and put it where it now is, taking the precaution of fixing the timbers with long spikes so they could not easily again be taken apart. There the town house remained.

The peripatetic Turner Town House is significant as well because of its unusual interior arrangement. From either end of the structure benches in tiers descend to a flat section in the center where is located the moderator's platform and a large cast iron stove. The only other town house in Maine known to

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

French, W. R., History of Turner. Portland, 1897.

Russell, Francis H., "The Turner Town House". The Turner Chronicle, Vol. 1, No. 1, November, 1977.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 1/4

QUADRANGLE NAME Turner Center

QUADRANGLE SCALE 1:24000

UTM REFERENCES

A 19 | 402230 | 4902565

B | |

C | |

D | |

E | |

F | |

G | |

H | |

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Assessors Map A3, Lot 15

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Frank A. Beard, Historian/Robert L. Bradley, Architectural Historian

ORGANIZATION

Maine Historic Preservation Commission

DATE

April, 1979

STREET & NUMBER

242 State Street

TELEPHONE

207/289-2133

CITY OR TOWN

Augusta,

STATE

Maine

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.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

Charles S. Feltworth

TITLE

S. H. P. O.

DATE

5/18/79

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

Bill Lebovich
KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

July 9, 1979

ATTEST: *Thomas H. Drake*
CHIEF OF REGISTRATION

DATE

7/5/79

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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 2

have such an arrangement is that in Wayne (NR-1/ 1/76), of 1840, and there the seating slopes from the side walls rather than the ends.

Its long use, its strange history and its interesting interior combine to make the Turner Town House a highly significant public building.