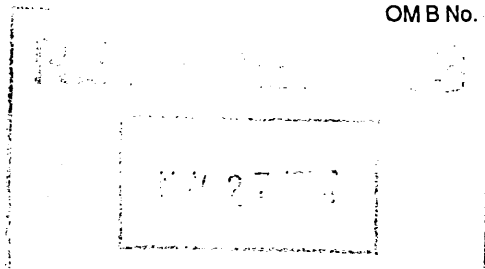


1523

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 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 Grand Isle County Courthouse

other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number U.S. Route 2 not for publication

city or town North Hero vicinity

state Vermont code VT county Grand Isle code 013 zip code 05474

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 20, 1995
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

Vermont Division for Historic Preservation
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 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

Entered in Date of Action
National Register
1-11-96

Grand Isle Co. Courthouse
Name of Property

Grand Isle County, Vermont
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

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

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

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
2	0	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
2	0	Total

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

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter Categories from instructions)

Current Functions
(Enter Categories from instructions)

GOVERNMENT/courthouse

GOVERNMENT/correctional facility

GOVERNMENT/city hall

RELIGION/religious facility

DOMESTIC/single dwelling

LANDSCAPE/plaza

GOVERNMENT/courthouse

GOVERNMENT/correctional facility

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter Categories from instructions)

Materials
(Enter Categories from instructions)

Federal

foundation Limestone

walls Limestone

Weatherboard

roof Slate

other Limestone

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 the 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 _____
- SOCIAL HISTORY _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Period of Significance

1824-1945

Significant Dates

1824 _____
1867 _____
1903 _____

Significant Person

(Complete If Criterion B is marked above)

N/A _____

Cultural Affiliation

N/A _____

Architect/Builder

Mott, Strong & Mott _____

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:

Grand Isle Co. Courthouse
Name of Property

Grand Isle County, Vermont
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Approximately 1 acre

UTM references

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1

1	8	6	3	5	2	0	0	4	9	6	4	0	0
Zone	Easting				Northing								

2

Zone	Easting				Northing								

3

Zone	Easting				Northing								

4

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 Joanna Oltman

organization University of Vermont date May 9, 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 Grand Isle County c/o Sherry Little

street & number U.S. Route 2 telephone (802) 372-8350

city or town North Hero state Vermont zip code 05474

Paper 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 7Page 1

Grand Isle County Courthouse
North Hero, Grand Isle County, Vermont
INTERAGENCY RESOURCES DIVISION
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

SUMMARY OF NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION

The 1824 Grand Isle County Courthouse is set-back amply from U.S. Route 2 in North Hero, Vermont, overlooking City Bay on the east shore of the island. This well-preserved example of a Federal style county courthouse is sited upon a prominent hill, fronted by a semi-circular paved driveway and historic maple trees. The courthouse is flanked on the south by the Methodist church, formerly a joint town house and church, and a parking lot to the north. Portions of the former town commons that surrounded the town house and courthouse also remain, as does a mature hedgerow delineating the northern property line. The main block of the courthouse is a five by three bay, two story, rectangular structure with a slate hipped roof. All of the main block's facades and foundation are constructed of random coursed Isle La Motte limestone. The east and south facades are smooth, while the north and west facades have a rough-faced cut. A two by three bay, two and a half story, flat roof addition spans the main block's west facade. A one story, metal gable roof ell connects a six by two bay, two and a half story American four-square style house to the middle of the main block's south facade. A small two by two bay, one story ell extends from the house's west facade. The property retains its integrity of design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.

MAIN BLOCK (1824)

The main courthouse entry is on the main block's east facade. Wooden Tuscan entry pilasters and in antis columns flank the slightly recessed door surround with paneled reveals and 2/3-length, twenty-one light sidelights of textured yellow glass over molded recessed panels. A glazed aluminum storm door covers a naturally finished wooden door with ten molded recessed panels and brass hardware on the exterior. An elaborate one story, one by one bay projecting pedimented wooden portico with an asphalt tab gable roof shelters the main entry. This Colonial Revival style portico appears to date from a 1903 renovation. Poured concrete steps on all three sides lead to the portico's concrete floor, giving way to a slab of pecked limestone at the threshold. Single Tuscan columns at the portico's front corners are set upon small limestone plinths, and support a full entablature with a denticulated cornice and a painted frieze inscription reading "COURTHOUSE." Above the entablature rises a denticulated pediment

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Grand Isle County Courthouse
North Hero, Grand Isle County, Vermont

Section number 7

Page 2

whose tympanum bears the painted commemorative inscription, "1824-1903," over a wooden sunburst motif. Historic one over one, double-hung windows with one over one aluminum storm windows flank the portico on the first floor. The construction contract indicates that all standard windows were originally twenty-four light. These windows have large, slightly projecting limestone sills, and massive, splayed limestone lintels. Four identical windows are regularly spaced across the second story. Directly above the portico is a one over one, double-hung sash modified Palladian window behind a permanent single pane that is crowned with a semi-circular keystone arch. The construction contract indicates that this "surcler" window originally had thirty lights. Under the first story end windows are rectangular basement window openings: A louvered vent and plywood obscure the opening to the north, while the one to the south is covered by a metal sheet punctuated by a protruding metal pipe. A wooden cupola, whose base is sided with clapboard and framed by cornerboards and a molded cornice, rises from the center of the hipped slate roof. Each face of the octagonal cupola is framed by pilasters, and holds paired louvered shutters over a recessed panel. A molded cornice skirts the flared metal dome at the cupola's apex, crowned with a round finial.

The main block's north facade has evenly placed windows on the first and second stories similar to those on the main facade. However, in lieu of a regularly placed window on the west end of the first story, there are two smaller windows. Both have limestone sills on a slightly higher level than the others and flat limestone lintels. The first story west end window is unique, with a two over two sash behind wrought iron bars. The construction contract specified that this window originally had six lights. The south facade of the main block has windows on the first and second stories similar to those on the main facade, however the first story center and west end windows are obscured by the clapboard ell. An exterior brick chimney rests between the center and east end windows, the only survivor of the four brick chimneys, two on each side, called for in the original construction contract.

MAIN BLOCK ELL (c. 1867)

The one story, gable roof main block ell, constructed as additional accommodation for the jailer's family, serves to connect the American four-

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetGrand Isle County Courthouse
North Hero, Grand Isle County, VermontSection number 7 Page 3

square style house to the main block. The aluminum-sided east facade is punctuated by a one over one, double-hung window with no trim, offset closer to the house. Historic photographs reveal that the east facade was once sided with clapboards and had a door offset closer to the main block. The clapboard-sided west facade has a window similar to the one on the east facade, although it is centrally placed. On both facades, a wooden molded boxed cornice runs along the line of the sheet metal roof. A slightly raised foundation of coursed Isle La Motte limestone of a different cut than that on the main block is also visible.

HOUSE (c. 1901-1903)

The six by two bay, two and a half story American four-square style house has three entries on its east facade. The center and right doors are similar, with a single glazed pane above three molded recessed panels, crowned by flat board lintels with a single beaded molding at the top. The left door appears to be of later construction, as it has three glazed panes above three recessed plain panels and no lintel. A simple one story, four by one bay, flat roof projecting wooden porch shelters all three entries, but does not span the full length of the facade. Wooden stairs flanked by wooden aprons lead to the porch's plank floor. From the clapboard-sided rail, single turned posts at the front corners and on either side of the east-facing stair rail opening support the tongue and groove ceiling and wooden molded boxed cornice. The porch's interior corners have engaged turned pilasters matching the supports. Single two over two, double-hung windows behind one over one aluminum storm windows flank the porch, and a similar window punctuates the facade between the center and left entries. These windows have wood sills, no trim, and flat board lintels with a single beaded molding at the top. Under the first story left end window is a three light rectangular basement window with no trim. Three windows similar to those on the first story are regularly spaced across the second story. There is a slate hipped roof dormer directly over the second story center window. The dormer has paired windows similar to those on the lower stories, but these do not have storm windows. The south facade has two irregularly spaced windows on each story similar to those on the east facade, although the second story windows do not have lintels.

The west facade has a central door with a single glazed pane over three molded recessed panels. On the first story, the left window near the ell is one

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Grand Isle County Courthouse
North Hero, Grand Isle County, Vermont

Section number 7 Page 4

over one with no lintel or trim, while the right window is similar to those on the east facade. The second story has three irregularly spaced windows of differing appearance. The left window is two over two with no trim or lintel, the center window resembles those on the east facade, while the right window is six over six.

A one story, two by two bay gable roof ell with cornice returns and clapboard siding projects from the center of the house's west facade in the rear. The ell's south facade has a single, plain wooden door sheltered by a recessed wooden entry porch. Three narrow, square supports rise from the clapboard-sided rail that is punctuated by south-facing wooden stairs. Clapboards extend into the gable end of the ell's west facade. Below this gable, there is a sliding plank door on metal runners on the main level of what was historically a wood shed. The ell has two windows: A south-facing window to the right of the door similar to those on the house's east facade, and a north-facing, one over one window near the juncture with the house. A large metal radio tower extends from the ell's west facade.

MAIN BLOCK ADDITION (1988)

A two and a half story, two by three bay flat roof addition sided in aluminum projects from the main block's rear, west facade, flush with the north facade, but slightly recessed from south facade. Offset to the left of the addition's north facade is the main entry, a glazed door with a wood frame flanked to the right by a full length pane of glass half as wide as the door itself. A low dry wall of massive limestone blocks borders the west and north sides of the small poured concrete patio fronting the entry. A metal gable roof door hood supported by square wood braces, with a painted gable inscription, "1988," shelters the entrance. There is a one over one, double hung window with no trim behind an aluminum storm window on the second story, directly above the hood. The west facade has a composition door, offset to the left, that extends from the poured concrete basement level to the first story level due to the slope of the land. To the right of the door are two basement level, one over one windows. Directly above these windows, triple one over one windows punctuate the first and second stories. The center of the west facade's roof line crests to a low-pitched gable. The addition's south facade has two one over one windows on the first and second stories. The left windows

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Grand Isle County Courthouse
North Hero, Grand Isle County, Vermont

Section number 7 Page 5

align vertically, while the right windows are smaller in dimension than those to the left, and are irregularly spaced.

COURTHOUSE INTERIOR

The monumental front door enters into a ten by thirty foot central hall with a ten foot high ceiling. The original construction contract indicates that this hall was flanked by two, ten by twelve foot rooms to the north. To the south, one ten by eighteen foot room, one six by seven and a half foot room, and a three by seven and a half foot buttry completed the layout of the jailer's living quarters. The rooms retain their original configuration and today house court offices. The original contract stipulates that the partition walls were to be two feet wide throughout, with two and a half foot wide exterior walls, providing for ample interior sills. The floor, now covered with carpeting, is apparently made of two inch thick pine planks. There is no mention of interior trim in the original contract, and it is likely that the molded pedimented wooden door and window surrounds were added in the 1903 renovation.

To the rear of the hall, a large doorway with no door bears a metal frame with bolts. Through this doorway were the original jail facilities, consisting of an eight by twelve foot debtors' room in the northwest corner, a ten by twelve foot prison room in the center, and a seven and a half by ten and a half foot criminal room in the southwest corner. The criminal room's walls were an additional half a foot wide on all sides, and it had a six light window with three rows of iron grates. This window is now obscured by the ell addition, and the room is used for the county vault. The prison room had a one foot thick oak ceiling, no windows, and a two foot wide iron door, (whose remains presumably account for the metal door frame,) that was faced with a secure, hardwood plank door. While the exact layout is unclear from the records of the 1903 renovation, the prison room was modernized for continued use as a jail with the addition of several cages, and a judge's stairway was added. The stairs and cages were removed in the 1988 renovation. The debtors' room had a six light window with one row of iron grates and a three inch hemlock or pine plank ceiling. This room was converted to a lawyers' room in the 1903 renovation, and to restrooms in the 1988 renovation. The grates remain intact.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Grand Isle County Courthouse
North Hero, Grand Isle County, Vermont

Section number 7 Page 6

Rising from the northeast corner of the main entry hall is an ornately carved naturally finished wooden stairway leading to the courtroom. This stairway is a 1903 replacement of the original stairway, that the 1824 contract described as a "good frame plain stair with railing." The existing stairway has a square post at the first landing with a fluted shaft, topped by a circular Eastlake design and a semi-circular crown. The banister itself has turned posts culminating in a conch motif on the second story. In the southeast corner of the second story is a small lawyers' room that retains its original trim.

At the top of the stairs, double naturally finished wooden doors with brass hardware and five recessed panels open in the center of the courtroom's east wall. The courtroom remains essentially intact from the 1903 renovation, and spans the entire width of the building. A chair rail circles the perimeter. The north and south walls are punctuated by three windows with molded pedimented wooden surrounds, wooden sills, and paneled reveals. The bench itself is on the west wall, raised on an elliptical platform placed before a semi-elliptical recessed alcove supported by in antis wooden Ionic columns on paneled pedestals. Brass heating vents are obscured behind the alcove's false front. The coffered solid wooden rail running before the bench is flanked by single doors similar to those on the east wall with surrounds similar to those of the windows. Directly before the bench is a raised platform bordered by a turned balustrade with square columns resembling those on the stairway. Raised jury boxes with coffered wooden witness seats span the front half of both the north and south walls. Two rows of four wrought iron benches with folding wooden seats bearing the imprint "Buffalo, New York" occupy the remainder of the floor to the rear of the courtroom. The courtroom also has original triple glass globe light fixtures suspended from metal chains and several ornately cast radiators. To the rear of the courtroom is a hallway flanked by the original judge's chamber and lawyers' room that retain their original molding, although both rooms are used for storage and mechanical systems today.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Grand Isle County Courthouse
North Hero, Grand Isle County, Vermont

Section number 8 Page 7

SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANCE

The 1824 Grand Isle County Courthouse is architecturally significant as an outstanding example of a courthouse. It is the second oldest county courthouse in Vermont, built in the Federal style of Isle La Motte limestone. The courthouse possesses the characteristics distinctive to its property type, including a monumental appearance, prominent site, bell tower, portico, and courtroom spanning the width of the building. The subsequent addition of a jailer's house in the early 1900s and historic interior renovations are also typical of the evolution of this property type. The courthouse is the only remaining stone county courthouse in Vermont and one of only two stone buildings on North Hero island. The Grand Isle County Courthouse is also eligible for its associations with the broad patterns of history on both the state and local levels. As the physical embodiment of the ideals of a justly governed society envisioned by early Vermont legislators, the courthouse represents the growth of government in Vermont. The courthouse has also been instrumental in the social history of the shire town of North Hero, where its construction represented the prosperity, respectability, and stability of the early 19th century community. Upon completion, the courthouse served as the community's political and spiritual center, and generated activity that contributed to the development of the town's commercial center. The building's retention of its historic location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association has preserved these trends in state and local history. The courthouse continues to serve its original judicial function, housing the superior, family, district, and probate courts.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The construction of the Grand Isle County Courthouse in 1824 represented the achievement of stability, respectability, and prosperity in the remote community of North Hero, Vermont, one of the Lake Champlain Islands approximately thirty miles north of Burlington. Although the County of Grand Isle was incorporated in November 1802 and North Hero was named the county seat in November 1804, it was not until November 1805 that the Vermont state legislature passed an act formally establishing the time of court

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Grand Isle County Courthouse
North Hero, Grand Isle County, Vermont

Section number 8 Page 8

sessions. While this act was in keeping with legislature's establishment of the County Court system in 1782, no provisions were made for the construction of permanent structures dedicated solely to judicial activity. As was common in many early Vermont settlements, judicial business in North Hero was originally conducted in a privately owned building. Jed Ladd's North Hero tavern and hotel, built in 1803, had a meeting hall that served as a courtroom and a strong room that held prisoners.

As North Hero's population increased in the decade following the shire designation, so too did the general prosperity of the region. Settlers gradually cleared the wooded island, converting the wood ash by-product of their land clearance into potash, the area's most bountiful trade product. The flat, fertile land that was revealed produced plentiful crops of grain, fruit, and vegetables, and agriculture continued to dominate the local economy because the lack of inland waterways ruled out water-powered manufactories. Several ferries plied the lake, connecting the islands with one another and the mainland, and a main north-south thoroughfare was established along the route of present-day U.S. Route 2.

Evidence of the county's growing prosperity came in 1823 when a committee was formed to superintend the construction of a permanent courthouse and jail facility. The committee was comprised of a representative from each of the five towns within the county. The upstanding character of those chosen to oversee the project reflects the importance of the undertaking in the eyes of the community. Judge Lewis Sowles of Alburg, Judge Charles Carron of Vineyard (Isle La Motte), Judge Samuel Adams of Grand Isle, North Hero Assistant Judge Joel Allen, and South Hero Sheriff Calum Fletcher laid a tax on their respective towns to pay for a combined courthouse and jail facility. Based on the predominance of Joel Allen's handwriting on construction records, he appears to have taken on the primary coordinating role, probably due to his home's proximity to the project site.

On January 4, 1824, the local building concern of Mott, Strong, and Mott was awarded a \$2,800 contract to build the courthouse, although the total cost of construction rose to \$3,197 by the project's completion in the end of the same year. The courthouse possesses many characteristics distinctive to the prevailing civic architectural style of the time, and it served as a prototype

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Grand Isle County Courthouse
North Hero, Grand Isle County, Vermont

Section number 8

Page 9

that went on to set the standard for Vermont county courthouses throughout the first half of the 19th century. These characteristics include an overall monumentality of appearance, prominent site, bell tower, portico, and a courtroom spanning the entire width of the building. The site chosen is the highest point on the island, a prominent rise overlooking City Bay. The fine materials stipulated in the original contract are a testimony to the community's pride and affluence, particularly the decision to construct the building of imposing Isle La Motte limestone procured from Joseph Bowman. The courthouse was the first masonry structure on North Hero Island, and remains today one of only two masonry structures on North Hero Island surveyed by the Vermont Division for Historic Preservation.

Records of payment to Mr. Bowman for the stone on February 19, 1824 illustrate the expediency with which this important commission was undertaken. The master workmanship on the exterior is still evident, including varied tool marks on the limestone and grapevine mortar courses. Further research may reveal whether James Ritchie, the skilled Scottish architect of most contemporaneous masonry structures on neighboring Isle La Motte and of Joel Allen's c. 1830's limestone house just down the road from the courthouse, was in fact the architect of the Grand Isle County Courthouse. The belfry crowning the courthouse was suggested by "sundry inhabitants," and the \$132.50 additional expense was paid for by public subscription, illustrating community pride in the project. The belfry remains the tallest point on the horizon, a physical landmark as well as a symbol of this civic pride. The distance from the courthouse was often referred to in the 19th century when describing locations of other structures on the island, further verifying its role as a local landmark.

One detail in the courthouse's construction is particularly instructive regarding the role it played in community development. The east main entry facade and south facade are of smooth, coursed ashlar, but the north and west facades have a more rough-cut appearance. The committee clearly wished to impress the visitors that were expected to arrive from the direction of the more refined facades. Indeed, court-related business appears to have contributed to the growth of the town. In the decade of the courthouse's construction, North Hero's population increased dramatically and peaked at its all-time high of 736. Several prominent homes were built in the area, and

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Grand Isle County Courthouse
North Hero, Grand Isle County, Vermont

Section number 8 Page 10

commercial concerns such as hotels and taverns flourished with the patronage of attorneys, judges, and other court-related visitors. The terms of the County Court were held only twice a year. Typically, twenty to forty cases were heard in a given term, but an 1871 source complained of a slow term, with only fourteen cases on the docket. Despite the dearth of cases, the same source provided an extensive list of attorneys from all over the region who did business at the courthouse.

The courthouse itself served as the primary community gathering place, the political, cultural, and spiritual center of the town. The Town of North Hero raised \$500.00 by subscription to apply towards the initial building costs in turn for, "the privilege of using the Court House as a Church and probably for Town Meetings." That this multi-faceted use of the building did in fact occur is confirmed by an 1865 notice that the town received county funds to, "relinquish all right and title to the use of the Court House for town and church purposes." In the following year, a new joint town house and church was built on the southern edge of the courthouse property. The courthouse was surrounded by a substantial public commons, much of which survives today, that served as the community's shared leisure grounds. Several mature maples also survive around the property to speak to the original park-like quality of the commons. Along the northern property boundary, a mature hedgerow survives as a testimony to the area's agricultural heritage.

In 1867, during this second period of construction activity on the commons, a small ell was built to provide additional accommodation for the jailer's family who inhabited the front portion of the courthouse's ground floor. Throughout Vermont, it was common for jails and jailer's houses to be located near the courthouse. In the case of the Grand Isle County Courthouse, the jail as a representation of the correctional function of Vermont counties was made all the more explicit by the presence of these facilities within the confines of the courthouse itself. The jail appears to have been a very unpleasant place, as indicated by superintendent's reports that record "dark, damp, unwholesome" conditions throughout the 19th century. An 1871 report noted that the debtor's room was not secure, and was therefore being used by the county clerk as a store room. As prison reform movements spread throughout the country towards the end of the 19th century, the Grand Isle County Courthouse's facilities were modernized. In a 1903 renovation,

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Grand Isle County Courthouse
North Hero, Grand Isle County, Vermont

Section number 8 Page 11

several cages were placed in the old jail space, and a separate women's cell was constructed. The growth of the bureaucracy of the county court system necessitated more space as well. The ground floor of the courthouse was given over exclusively to court-related activities when, between 1901 and 1903, an American four-square style house was built between the ell and the town house to house the jailer's family.

The 1903 renovation appears to have been spurred by a Supreme Court announcement that the condition and comfort-level of the building as a whole was so poor that judges were finding it difficult to follow due process: Court sessions at North Hero would be discontinued if the situation were not remedied. Within a matter of months, the St. Albans Weekly Messenger noted that a renovation was underway. The changes included officially transforming the dungeon into a records vault, introducing a modern heating apparatus, creating a county clerk's office, turning the debtor's room into a lawyers' room, completing the aforementioned jail modernizations, and redecorating the interior. Most importantly perhaps, modern toilet facilities were installed. North Hero's ability to rise to the occasion in a timely fashion, and the quality of the renovation itself are testimony to continued community pride in the building and the town's position as county seat. The 1903 renovation also indicates the continued growth of government in Vermont.

The 1988 renovation will help the courthouse retain its original function well into the 21st century. In the face of increased space requirements, Grand Isle County chose to build an unobtrusive addition to the original courthouse, rather than construct a new courthouse. The decision to place the addition on the rear, west facade of the original courthouse retains the building's historical integrity, while providing much-needed room to house the superior, family, district, and probate court activities that take place on site.

The Grand Isle County Courthouse stands today as a well-preserved example of a Federal style Vermont county courthouse. While all other original Vermont county courthouses are either of brick or wood construction, the Grand Isle County Courthouse stands as the sole original masonry example of this property type. Although many other courthouses have burned, deteriorated, or outlived their original function, the Grand Isle County

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Grand Isle County Courthouse
North Hero, Grand Isle County, Vermont

Section number 8 Page 12

Courthouse retains its original site, appearance, and function, thereby providing insight into early Vermont courthouse design. The Vermont Court Administrator has recently recognized the significance of county courthouses as "intrinsic symbols of justice" that "reflect the spirit and direction of the Vermont judiciary." In addition, the Grand Isle County courthouse is a permanent reminder of the civic pride, social history, and development of the shire town of North Hero.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Grand Isle County Courthouse
North Hero, Grand Isle County, Vermont

Section number 9 Page 13

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Aldrich, Lewis Cass. History of Franklin and Grand Isle Counties. Syracuse:
D. Mason & Co. Publishers, 1891.

Atlas of Franklin and Grand Isle Counties, Vermont. New York: F.W. Beers
& Co., 1871.

Boone, Nancy. Unpublished research notes and lecture notes on Vermont
county courthouses. (Available at State of Vermont Division for
Historic Preservation Office, Montpelier, VT.)

Child's Franklin and Grand Isle County Directory. 1882-1883.

Dixon, D. Webster. "Grand Isle County - Introductory Chapter," in The
Vermont Historical Gazetteer. Burlington: A.M. Hemenway, 1871.

Historic postcards. University of Vermont, Bailey Howe Library,
Special Collections.

Inventory of Vermont County Courthouse Facilities. State of Vermont.
December 30, 1989. (Available at State of Vermont Division for
Historic Preservation Office, Montpelier, VT.)

"Review and Assessment of the Role of Assistant Judges as Superintendents
of Court Buildings." State of Vermont Court Administrator. Draft,
January 1994. (Available at State of Vermont Division for Historic
Preservation Office, Montpelier, VT.)

Robenstein, Warren. "Plat of Survey Showing Boundary Line Agreement
Between K. Kinsbury and Grand Isle County, North Hero, Vermont.
April 4, 1992." (Available at Town of North Hero Town Clerk's Office.)

St. Albans Weekly Messenger. August 20, 1903.

Stratton, Allen. History Town of North Hero Vermont. Burlington: George
Little Press, 1976.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Grand Isle County Courthouse
North Hero, Grand Isle County, Vermont

Section number 9 Page 14

Vermont Historic Sites and Structures Surveys, for Towns of Grand Isle,
South Hero, North Hero, Alburg, and Isle La Motte. (Available at State
of Vermont Division for Historic Preservation Office, Montpelier, VT.)

Walling, H.F.. Map of the Counties of Franklin and Grand Isle. 1857.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Grand Isle County Courthouse
North Hero, Grand Isle County, Vermont

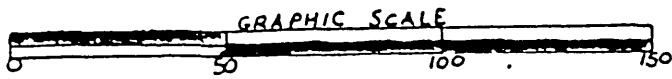
Section number 10 Page 15

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

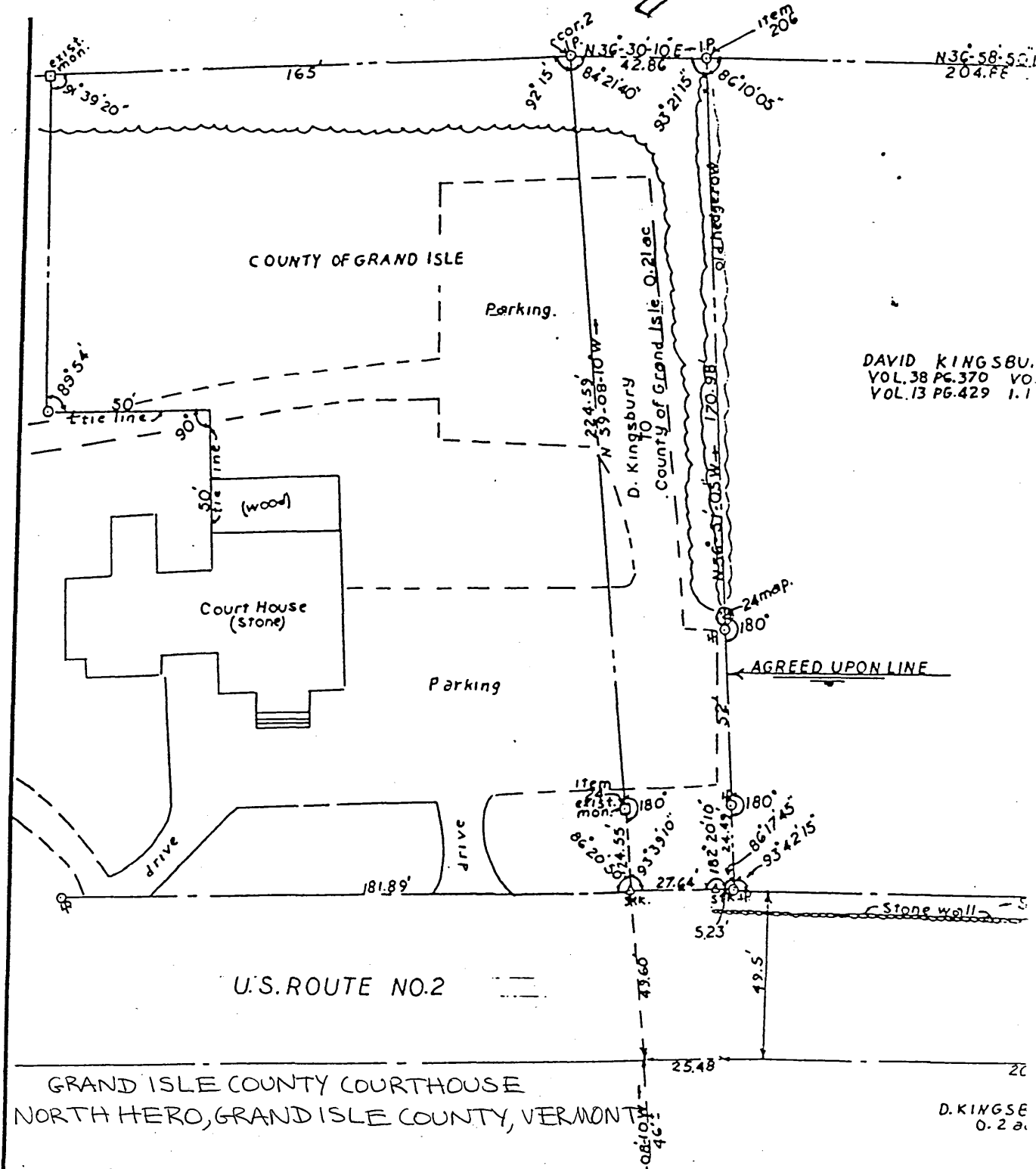
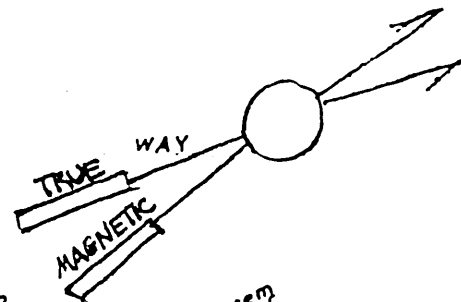
The property is a rectangular parcel measuring approximately 210 x 250 feet. Approximately 24 feet east of the stone marker on the north boundary line, begin at the west side of U.S. Route 2 and proceed in a generally southerly direction along the roadside for approximately 210 feet. Turn and proceed in a generally westerly direction approximately 250 feet to the ravine. Turn and proceed in a generally northerly direction approximately 210 feet to the old hedgerow. Turn and proceed in a generally easterly direction approximately 250 feet to the point of origin.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The boundary of the nominated property includes the courthouse, the jailer/sheriff's house, all appendages, and the surrounding land historically and currently associated with the Grand Isle County Courthouse.



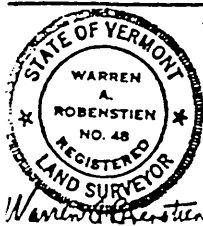
THIS PRINT HAS BEEN
REDUCED



DAVID KINGSEBURY
VOL. 38 PG. 370 VO.
VOL. 13 PG. 429 1.1

GRAND ISLE COUNTY COURTHOUSE
NORTH HERO, GRAND ISLE COUNTY, VERMONT

D. KINGSEBURY
O. 2 a.



TOLERANCES (EXCEPT AS NOTED)	REVISIONS			PLAT OF SURVEY SHOWING BOUNDARY LINE AGREEMENT BETWEEN D. KINGSEBURY AND GRAND ISLE COUNTY NORTH HERO, VERMONT
	NO.	DATE	BY	
DECIMAL ± / ✓	1			DRAWN BY WAR. SCALE 1" = 30' DATE APRIL 4, 1992 APP'D WAR. MATERIAL CHECK'D TRACED
FRACTIONAL ± / ✓	2			
ANGULAR ± / ✓	3			
	4			
	5			

edge of lake Aug. 89 224.3'

LAKE CHAMPLAIN
(city bay)