

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

SEP 15 1989

National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form

NATIONAL  
REGISTER

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Emlden Town House  
other names/site number \_\_\_\_\_

2. Location

street & number Cross Town Road  not for publication  
city, town Emlden  vicinity  
state Maine code ME county Somerset code 025 zip code 04958

3. Classification

|  |   |                                     |                  |
|--|---|-------------------------------------|------------------|
| Ownership of Property                            | Category of Property                            | Number of Resources within Property |                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> private                 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s) | Contributing                        | Noncontributing  |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public-local | <input type="checkbox"/> district               | <u>1</u>                            | _____ buildings  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> public-State            | <input type="checkbox"/> site                   | _____                               | _____ sites      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal          | <input type="checkbox"/> structure              | _____                               | _____ structures |
|  | <input type="checkbox"/> object                 | _____                               | _____ objects    |
|  |   | <u>1</u>                            | <u>0</u> Total   |

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A  
Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, 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.  See continuation sheet.

*Carol A. [Signature]* SHPO 9/8/89  
Signature of certifying official Date  
Maine Historic Preservation Commission  
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.  See continuation sheet.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of commenting or other official Date  
\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

5. 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:) \_\_\_\_\_

*Arlene Byrum* Entered in the National Register 10/16/89  
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

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**6. Function or Use**

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Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Government/City Hall

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Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Government/City Hall

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**7. Description**

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Architectural Classification  
(enter categories from instructions)Federal

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Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation Other

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walls Wood: Weatherboard

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Wood: Shingle

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roof Asphalt

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other 

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**Describe present and historic physical appearance.**

The Embden Town House is a modest one-story five-bay frame building covered by a gable roof. It is sheathed in weatherboards and wood shingles and rests on wooden posts.

Facing southeast, the front elevation has a symmetrical fenestration pattern composed of a central door flanked by twelve-over-eight double-hung sash windows. Wooden shutters cover the windows when the building is not in use. A narrow boxed cornice carries across the facade.

On both the east and west gable ends a single twelve-over-eight window is located in the middle of the wall at the same height as those on the facade. A later brick flue is attached to the west end of the window. Both gables have flush eaves. A small shed roofed privy with one window is attached to the building's northwest corner, and three windows, the middle one of which is higher than the others, punctuate the rear wall. This elevation, as well as the east gable end, are covered with wood shingles. A photograph of the building which appeared in a 1926 history of Embden shows that it was sheathed entirely in wood shingles at that time.

The interior has suffered few changes in its long history of use. The plaster over lath walls meet a horizontal board wainscot that connects the window sills. A portion of this wainscot shows a deep red paint color of considerable age. Simple wooden benches are attached to the wainscot surrounding an open floor and a stove located at the west end. Attached to the middle of the rear wall is the rectangular, partially enclosed podium and seating for selectmen. Surviving grained finishes on this element suggest that it is an original feature. Wooden voting booths attached to the northwest part of the wall, as well as the narrow tongue and groove ceiling boards, are twentieth century additions.

**8. Statement of Significance**

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally  statewide  locally

Applicable National Register Criteria  A  B  C  D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions)  A  B  C  D  E  F  G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Politics/Government  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Period of Significance

1848-1939  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Significant Dates

1847-48  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Cultural Affiliation

N/A  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Significant Person

N/A  
\_\_\_\_\_

Architect/Builder

Walker, Elisha, Builder  
\_\_\_\_\_

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

Constructed in 1847-48, Embden's town house is significant as the seat for more than 140 years of the town's governmental functions. The well preserved building is without question one of Embden's landmarks. For this reason it is eligible for nomination to the Register under criterion A.

Although it was first settled in 1779 and incorporated on June 22, 1804, Embden did not erect a town building in which to hold its public business until the mid-nineteenth century. However, the debate about the need for such a meeting hall preceded the event by some fifteen years. Local historian Ernest George Walker described how prior to 1848 the town's free holders "had roamed east and west for a meeting place", finding them in residents' dwelling houses and schools. It was at one such meeting held on March 2, 1846, that it was voted to hold the ensuing year's gatherings on the Ford Hill, a centrally-located place upon which the existing building was later raised.

Discussion about the need to build a town house had begun in 1832 when one of the articles in the warrant proposed whether such a structure would be built, for what sum and where it might be located. Upon approval a committee was appointed "to draw a Draft for said house and report it to the town." The issues of cost and location were tabled until the committee presented its report. Despite this favorable action no further word was recorded of the idea until 1839 when the September warrant again raised the issue of building a town house. The entire issue was tabled at this time. It was presented once again at the September 8, 1845, meeting, but it was again defeated. However, the determined supporters presented the articles once again the following year and approval was finally won. It was voted that the hall be 30 feet by 36 feet and that Jonathan Stevens, Jr., John Caswell and Elisha Walker be appointed to a committee to estimate the expense and plan the furnishings of the building. Despite the apparent willingness to commence the project its opponents achieved a reconsideration at the subsequent meeting causing another delay until the March, 1847 meeting when approval was again granted. At this time the site was chosen, a new committee consisting of James Y. Cleveland, Joseph Walker and Cyrus Boothby

See continuation sheet

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

Walker, George Ernest. Embden Town of Yore. Skowhegan, ME: Independent-Reporter Company, 1929. Reprinted by Bunkhouse Books, Gardiner, ME and New England History Press, Somersworth, NH, 1984.

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 # \_\_\_\_\_

See continuation sheet

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository: \_\_\_\_\_

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreeage of property Less than 1

UTM References

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Zone Easting Northing

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See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The Embden Town House occupies the Town of Embden tax map 5, lot 11.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The nominated property of less than one acre embraces the entire lot historically associated with it.

See continuation sheet

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Kirk F. Mohney, Architectural Historian  
organization Maine Historic Preservation Commission date June, 1989  
street & number 55 Capitol Street telephone (207) 289-2132  
city or town Augusta state Maine zip code 04333

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

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was appointed to "draft, superintend and direct the building of said house," and \$300 was voted to be raised to pay for it.

The building contract was awarded to Elisha Walker, a farmer by occupation, and construction apparently commenced soon thereafter. Controversy continued to swirl around the issue and it was not until the March 6, 1848, meeting that the voters agreed to authorize a third building committee to:

buy the House built by Elisha Walker on Ford Hill [so called] on the lot owned by the town if said house can be obtained at the just value thereof in its present state. If so to cause the said house to be finished up and completed in a proper manner and if it can not be obtained on such terms to cause its removal forthwith and another house to be built without unreasonable delay.

This committee was apparently satisfied by the work for Elisha Walker was paid \$250.15 on March 18<sup>th</sup> and the next town meeting was held in the new building. The town house continues to serve as the community's gathering place for public meetings, although its function as a polling place has recently been eliminated.

Embden's town house was erected a decade before the community reached the peak of its population. In 1860 there were 1,042 persons counted in the census, a rise of 71 people from 1850. However, in each of the subsequent census years this figure dropped substantially and now stands at less than 500. The town's antebellum economy was agriculturally oriented and this probably remained the case throughout the remainder of the century although lumber and the manufacture of lumber products assumed increased importance.