

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 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 Irassburg Town Hall

other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number Creek Road (T.H. 2) N/A not for publication

city or town Irassburg N/A vicinity

state Vermont code VT county Orleans code 019 zip code 05845

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.)

Erin Seltzer - deputy - SHPO - 10/12/94
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

Vermont State Historic Preservation Office
State of 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 the National Register 11-21-94 Date of Action

Irassburg Town Hall
Name of Property

Orleans County, Vermont
County and State

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

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1		buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
1		Total

Name of related multiple property listing

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

Historic Government Buildings of Vermont

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Government/city hall

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Government/city hall

Social/meeting hall

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

No style

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation granite

walls weatherboard

roof asphalt

other wood

Narrative Description

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

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Irassburg, Orleans County, Vermont

The Irasburg Town Hall is a two-story, wooden, 40' x 80' structure located in Irasburg, Vermont, a town in the northeast section of the state at the junction of Route 14 and Route 58. Built in 1911, the domestic-style hall was the center of activity in the community for many years until it fell into disrepair. The town hall is located on Creek Road near the northeast corner of the town common, which is surrounded by mainly wooden and some masonry buildings ranging from Greek Revival to more recent (within the last 50 years) construction. The town hall is 120 feet south of Route 58 and 25 feet east of Creek Road. Designed by C.D. Story of Newport, Vermont, and built by master workman, A.L. Boothman of Derby, Vermont, the town hall is clad in wooden clapboards and has a flat hip roof with several dormers. The 40' front west three-bay facade has regular fenestration and a centrally located pedimented one-story, one-bay porch and a centrally located dormer. Both side facades are 7 bays wide with irregular fenestration and symmetrically located dormers. The town hall's interior features a 40' x 48' first floor meeting hall and a 40' x 48' vaulted theatre on the second floor. A driveway on the south side of the building leads to a small parking lot shared with two buildings (one located at the town hall's southeast corner, and the other on the south side of the hall). The Irasburg Town Hall retains its integrity of location, setting, design, materials, workmanship, feeling and association.

The town hall rests on a foundation of large rock-faced granite slabs, surmounted by a simple wooden water table. All windows, except the dormer windows, are large two-over-two double hung windows with simple molded wooden surrounds and wooden sills. The dormer windows are one-over-one double hung windows with plain wooden surrounds and wooden sills. The eaves of the roof have a box cornice with a partial entablature, and another cornice projects out slightly at the top of the flat hip roof. The roof is covered with asphalt shingles in an interlocking T pattern.

The front 3-bay west facade has a centrally located entrance porch with two Tuscan-like columns supporting a gable pedimented roof that was built in the late 1940s or early 1950s replacing a three-bay one-story porch with a shallow hipped roof supported by four Tuscan-like columns with a wooden deck and steps. The current porch has a concrete deck, four concrete stairs and a metal railing added in 1986 with a 20 foot concrete handicapped entrance ramp with a metal railing beginning on the south side of the deck and ending just past the southwest corner of the building. The porch leads to a double door entrance with two rectangular fixed light transoms. Each of the doors has a rectangular window in the upper half of the door and

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Irassburg, Orleans County, Vermont

three panels (one horizontal rectangular panel over two square panels) in the lower half of the door. Symmetrically located windows are found in the first and third bays on the first floor, and in the first, second and third bays of the second floor. A centrally located hipped roof dormer with two windows is located on the roof of the front facade.

The south facade foundation has vents in the second, fourth and sixth bays encircled with molded plastic sheets. Windows are located in bays two through seven on the first floor. The windows in bays two through six are evenly spaced, while there is a wider space between bays six and seven. The windows on the second floor follow the same pattern, except there is a window located in the first bay. Three hipped roof dormers, each with two windows, are located symmetrically on the roof of the facade.

The north facade foundation has vents in the first, third and fifth bays encircled by molded plastic. Windows are located in bays one through six on the first floor. The windows in bays two through six are evenly spaced, while there is a wider space between bays one and two. The second floor has windows in bays one and three through seven, spaced (except in the seventh bay) at the same intervals as those on the first floor. A metal fire escape leads to a metal door on the second floor located in the second bay. Three hipped roof dormers, each with two windows, are symmetrically located in the roof of the west facade.

The back east facade has a door with vertical wooden planks near the southeast corner leading to a storage area at ground level. A modern metal back entrance door leading to the first floor interior is located between the first and second bays and is reached by a wooden stairway with two steps and a plain wooden railing. A small double hung window with plain wooden surrounds and wooden sill is located in the second bay of the first floor. The second floor has windows symmetrically located in bays one through three. A brick outside end chimney with a stretcher bond is located just right of center and extends up past the cornice by eight feet.

A one story 12' x 15' ell with a shed roof was built in the late 1980s on the north side of the back east facade to serve as a furnace room. Clad in wooden clapboards and an asphalt shingle roof, the structure encloses the bottom section of the outside end chimney. The 12' north and south facades both have a metal louvered vent near the point where the roof meets the main structure, and the south facade has a door located on the east side of the facade. The 15' east facade of the ell has no fenestration.

The major interior spaces of the town hall remain largely intact. There is maple hardwood flooring and hard pine wainscoting located throughout the first and second floors. The first floor has a 10' x 12' foyer

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flanked on the north and south by two sets of wide stairs leading to the second floor. Currently, the ticket booth and coat room located in the foyer under the stairs are being converted to bathrooms. The main room on the first floor has been renovated to meet fire code by removing the original hard pine ceiling. Posts supporting the ceiling are located at approximately ten foot intervals. In the 1940s the walls of a furnace room and a storage room located near the southeast corner of the building were removed, enlarging the main room. In the southeast corner is a narrow stairway leading to the second floor. A kitchen, intact with hard pine ceiling, wainscoting and cupboards, is located in the back of the hall just north of the middle of the building. A bathroom is located in the northeast corner of the building.

The second floor 40' x 48' theatre remains intact with an arched paneled ceiling finished in hard pine and lit by the second floor and dormer windows set in the arches, creating a vaulted ceiling. At the back of the theatre is a raised 21' x 40' stage with two dressing rooms with windows at each of the back corners.

There are five existing painted theatre curtains that are all approximately 10 feet high and 15 feet wide constructed of cotton fabric seamed horizontally in approximately three foot sections. The curtains include scenes of Lake Willoughby, Lake Memphremagog, Church Street, a porch with a mountain in the background, and an interior with a doorway and window. At least three of these curtains (the lake scenes and Church Street) were painted by Charles Andrus, a well-known local artist from Enosburg Falls who painted curtains for other Vermont theatres, including the Howard Opera House in Burlington. For Irasburg's stage, Andrus painted two local lake scenes and the Church Street scene. One of the lake scenes is a view looking down on Lake Memphremagog with mountains in the background. A frame with a "Lake Memphremagog" label surrounds the scene, and elaborate burgandy and white curtains are painted on the backdrop. The other lake scene depicts Lake Willoughby with pasture land and farms in the foreground, and huge mountains on either side of the lake. An elaborate frame is painted around the scene and has a "Willoughby Lake" label. Simple, painted orange-red curtains are draped on each side of the backdrop. Andrus' painting of Church Street depicts the street with street car tracks running down the center and commercial buildings on either side. The street terminates with a church. Another artist (or artists) was probably responsible for the porch scene with a mountain in the background and an interior with a doorway and window, which also includes four freestanding panels.

Irasburg Town Hall
Name of Property

Orleans County, Vermont
County and State

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 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.

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 # _____

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Entertainment/Recreation

Politics/Government

Period of Significance

1911 - 1944

Significant Dates

1911

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Story, C. D.

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

Irasburg Town Hall
Name of Property

Orleans County, Vermont
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property less than 1 acre

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1

1	8	7	1	5	2	2	0	4	9	6	4	4	0	0
Zone			Easting				Northing							

2

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

3

Zone			Easting				Northing							

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 Lisa Hartmann
University of Vermont
organization Graduate Program in Historic Preservation date May 5, 1991/revised 1994
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 Town of Irasburg, c/o Board of Selectmen
street & number Irasburg Town Offices telephone _____
city or town Irasburg state Vermont zip code 05845

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 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.

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Irassburg, Orleans County, Vermont

The Irasburg Town Hall, built in 1911 facing the village green, is significant architecturally as a good example of an early 20th century town hall. Its blocky shape, hip roof, and dormer windows is similar to the design of a contemporary American Foursquare house but writ large. The simple exterior and first floor dining room belie the more dramatic second floor--a large theater space with a beaded board panelled ceiling that arches up into the dormer lit roof, a deep stage, and five painted theater curtains. The town hall is also significant historically under the themes of "Entertainment and Popular Culture" and "Growth of Government in Vermont" in the Vermont State Historic Preservation Plan. The building was used for many purposes, including town meetings, dances, movies, plays, and dinners, and its prominent location on the green symbolizes its importance as the governmental, cultural, and social center of the town of Irasburg. The building is being nominated under the multiple property submission, Historic Government Buildings in Vermont, and clearly meets the registration requirements for the town hall property type.

Like other Vermont town halls, the Irasburg Town Hall reflects the economic and social conditions of the town during the time it was built. Early in its history Irasburg was a bustling county seat for Orleans County, but activity slowed after the 1860s, in part because the railroad bypassed the town, and in 1884 the county seat was moved to the more prosperous town of Newport. By 1911, the year the town hall was built, Irasburg was a quiet, relatively small, primarily agricultural community. The simple exterior style of the wooden town hall reflects the character of the town during that time.

The town of Irasburg chose to build its town hall on the site of the old court house after it was destroyed by fire in 1910. The site is located on a prominent position of the town green between a masonry library built in 1926 and a commercial building which today houses a general store. The other buildings on the town green are a mix of commercial, religious and residential structures.

The town hall played a prominent part in Irasburg by acting as its political and cultural center. Like other town halls in Vermont, the Irasburg town hall was used for multi-functions, including town meetings, socials and fund raising dinners on the first floor, and dances and theatre on the second. Around the turn of the century many new town halls built stages and existing town halls added them. Irasburg was no exception. In contrast to its plain exterior, Irasburg built a grand theatre, which is lit dramatically with an unusual combination of second story windows and dormer windows set in arches within a vaulted, pine-paneled ceiling. This theatre provided a place for everyone in the community to come for entertainment. Local and professional itinerant groups performed on the

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Irasburg, Orleans County, Vermont

stage, which is complete with foot lights and two dressing rooms. Movies were also shown at one time in the theatre.

Painted backdrops enlivened the theatre productions. Five of these curtains are still extant in the Irasburg theater. At least three of these were painted by Charles Andrus, a locally well-known artist from Enosburg, Vermont, who painted similar curtains for several other stages, including the Howard Opera House in Burlington. For Irasburg's stage, Andrus painted two local lake scenes and the Church Street scene. One of the lake scenes includes a view looking down on Lake Memphremagog with mountains in the background. A frame with a "Lake Memphremagog" label surrounds the scene, and elaborate burgundy and white curtains are painted on the backdrop. The other lake scene depicts Lake Willoughby with pasture land and farms in the foreground, and huge mountains on either side of the lake. An elaborate frame is painted around the scene with a "Willoughby Lake" label. Simple, painted orange-red curtains are draped on each side of the backdrop. Andrus' painting of Church Street depicts the street with street car tracks running down the center and commercial buildings on either side. The street terminates with a church. Another artist (or artists) was probably responsible for the porch scene with a mountain in the background and an interior with a doorway and window, which also includes four freestanding panels. These curtains are significant not only as pieces of a type of folk art, but as an indication of the kind of productions held in the theatre.

The architectural style of the Irasburg Town Hall is significant as an example of the eclecticism of the architectural styles of town halls in the beginning of the twentieth century. It is an excellent example of a domestic-style town hall with a theatre. Like many other town halls built during this time, Irasburg hired an architect to design its building. The town chose the architect C. D. Story of Newport, Vermont, who worked with A. L. Boothman, a master workman from Derby, Vermont, to build the town hall for a total amount of \$6,500, including a piano and furnishings. Together they built a wooden structure in a double four-square style. This style was typically used for houses and was defined by a two story, almost square structure with a hipped roof dormer and often a central dormer.

To accommodate multiple functions, the design of the town hall incorporated large meeting rooms and a kitchen on the first floor, and the theater already described on the second floor. Like many other town halls of the period, beaded board was used extensively throughout the interior.

The town hall was used continually until 1972 when the town stopped using it for the school lunch program. After 1972 it was used sporadically

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for a few functions, but was mainly vacant. In 1984 a group of Irasburg citizens formed a committee to renovate the building. To date the town hall renovation project has been awarded over \$10,000 in grants (including one for \$3,500 from the Vermont Division for Historic Preservation), town appropriations, and money from fund raising. Enough renovations have been completed on the exterior and first floor to allow weekly bingo games. Plans are to continue renovations on the structure, including the theatre, in order to bring the building back to its original status as the center of town activity.

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9. BIBLIOGRAPHY

Chronicle. 1 April 1987.

Orcutt, Marjorie A. and Edward S. Alexander. A History of
Irassburg, Vermont. Rutland, Vt.: Academy Books, 1989.

Orleans County Monitor. 6 March 1912.

Stelter, Tom. Interview by Lisa Hartmann. Irassburg, Vt.,
March 2, 1991.

_____. Letter to Vermont Division for Historic Preservation.
November 13, 1985 (on file at the Division office,
Montpelier, Vt.)

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Verbal Boundary Description: The boundary for this town hall
is the lot that is historically associated with the building.
The building is 40' x 60'. The front of the lot borders Creek
Road. The sides extend ten feet from each side of the
building. The rear line extends twenty feet from the back of
the building.

Boundary Justification: The boundary includes all the land
historically associated with the building.