



United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Multiple Property Documentation Form

This form is used for documenting multiple property groups relating to one or several historic contexts. See instructions in *How to Complete the Multiple Property Documentation Form* (National Register Bulletin 16B). Complete each item by entering the requested information. For additional space, use continuation sheets (Form 10-900-a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer to complete all items.

New Submission Amended Submission

A. Name of Multiple Property Listing

Historic Government Buildings in Vermont

B. Associated Historic Contexts

(Name each associated historic context, identifying theme, geographical area, and chronological period for each.)

Growth of Government in Vermont, 1777-1945

C. Form Prepared by

name/title Vermont Division for Historic Preservation
organization _____ date August 1994
street & number 135 State Street, Drawer 33 telephone (802) 828-3226
city or town Montpelier state Vermont zip code 05633-1201

D. Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this documentation form meets the National Register documentation standards and sets forth requirements for the listing of related properties consistent with the National Register criteria. This submission meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60 and the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Archeology and Historic Preservation. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Eric Roberts representing SHPO 10/12/94
Signature and title of certifying official Date
Vermont State Historic Preservation Office
State or Federal agency and bureau

I hereby certify that this multiple property documentation form has been approved by the National Register as a basis for evaluating related properties for listing in the National Register.

Signature of the Keeper _____ Date of Action _____

Table of Contents for Written Narrative

Provide the following information on continuation sheets. Cite the letter and the title before each section of the narrative. Assign page numbers according to the instructions for continuation sheets in *How to Complete the Multiple Property Documentation Form* (National Register Bulletin 16B). Fill in page numbers for each section in the space below.

	Page Numbers
E. Statement of Historic Contexts (If more than one historic context is documented, present them in sequential order.)	E 1 - E 7
F. Associated Property Types (Provide description, significance, and registration requirements.)	F 1 - F 9
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H. Summary of Identification and Evaluation Methods (Discuss the methods used in developing the multiple property listing.)	G/H 1
I. Major Bibliographical References (List major written works and primary location of additional documentation: State Historic Preservation Office, other State agency, Federal agency, local government, university, or other, specifying repository.)	I 1 to I 2
Primary location of additional data:	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> State Historic Preservation Office	
<input type="checkbox"/> Other State agency	
<input type="checkbox"/> Federal agency	
<input type="checkbox"/> Local government	
<input type="checkbox"/> University	
<input type="checkbox"/> Other	
Name of repository:	
<hr/>	

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 120 hours per response including the 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 Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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**Historic Government Buildings
in Vermont**

Section number C Page 1

This Multiple Property Documentation Form is based on the historic context, "Growth of Government in Vermont, 1777-1940," by Susannah C. Zirblis, in the Vermont Historic Preservation Plan, Vermont Division for Historic Preservation, Montpelier, Vt.

The town hall property type section is based, in part, on the work of the graduate program in Historic Preservation, University of Vermont, in the spring of 1991. (Credit: Elizabeth Pritchett, Lisa Hartmann, Lisa Phinney, Michele Praught, Lauren Stahl, Gene Barfield, Alfred Holden, Betsy Loftus)

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National Park Service

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HISTORIC GOVERNMENT BUILDINGS OF VERMONT

INTERAGENCY RESOURCES DIVISION
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

Growth of Government
in Vermont, 1777-1945

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Growth of Government in Vermont, 1777-1945

This multiple property listing will cover historic and architectural resources relating to town, county, state, and federal government in Vermont. Education is covered under the Educational Resources of Vermont Multiple Property Documentation form.

The area now known as the State of Vermont was the subject of a hot dispute in the mid 1700s between New Hampshire and New York, which both claimed this region. In January 1777 delegates of the area met at a convention in Westminster, and declared the independence of the new state of "New Connecticut." They petitioned the Continental Congress in April for admission to the Union. Congress denied the state's admission, largely at the insistence of New York, which guarded its jurisdiction in the area. In July a group of delegates met in Windsor (at what is now called the Constitution House, listed on the National Register on March 11, 1971) to draw up a constitution for the "Free and Independent State of Vermont." The constitution, adopted on July 8, 1777, was a liberal document for its day, partly modelled on the Pennsylvania constitution. It differed by including a series of such original, radical provisions as universal manhood suffrage, the prohibition of slavery, and a system of public schools. The constitution also provided for the annual election of a governor, lieutenant governor, treasurer, and Governor's Council (12 members).

Vermont's General Assembly met for the first time in March 1778. Thomas Chittenden was chosen as Vermont's first governor. During the fourteen years of the republic, Vermont issued its own currency, raised its own troops, ran its own postal service, and carried on diplomatic relations. In addition, common and secondary schools were established, the University of Vermont was founded, and the state judiciary was enlarged to provide for a county court system. Finally, on March 4, 1791, after a series of attempts to gain admission to the Union, Vermont was admitted by Congress to the Union. It became the fourteenth state--the first state to join the original thirteen colonies.

Political partisanship began developing in the late 1700s, paralleling the party system that was emerging at the national level. The power of the executive branch diminished and the legislature began to assume its larger, constitutional role in state governance. The legislature, which was made up of one

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representative from each town, met annually. Prior to the establishment of a state capital, the legislature moved about each year, meeting in fifteen different towns between the years 1787 and 1808. Montpelier was finally chosen as the state capital in 1805 and a three-story wood frame state house was constructed. It was replaced in 1833 by a significantly grander structure built of Barre granite and designed by Ammi B. Young. In 1857 this state house burned and was replaced by the present structure, designed by Thomas Silloway.

Early state institutions included the State Prison, built in Windsor in 1809 on the site of the present state prison. Funds for the building and lands were provided by the General Assembly. The first state banks were chartered in 1806 in the towns of Middlebury and Woodstock. A system of bank regulation was established in the 1830s.

In 1782 the county court system, the county's primary government function, was established. County seats became centers of considerable activity, with the courthouse and jail typically sited in a prominent location in the center of town. During the late 18th and early 19th centuries it was left up to the shire town (county seat) to provide its own courthouse. Before a courthouse was constructed, judicial hearings took place in whatever space was available, such as meetinghouses, homes, and taverns. Court buildings were being constructed by the 1780s and perhaps earlier. They looked somewhat similar to churches, but with belfries rather than steeples. Court houses, usually located prominently in the centers of the shire towns and facing greens, were built in Vermont throughout the 19th and into the 20th centuries in the popular architectural styles of the time.

The town was the principal seat of government throughout much of the 19th century. The constitution of 1777 delegated most responsibilities to the local level, and for the next century and more Town Meeting Day had more effect on the day to day lives of Vermonters than the convening of the state legislature. On the first Tuesday of every March, the citizens of each town voted on virtually all issues pertinent to its livelihood, ranging from care of the poor, to education, building schools and town halls, new roads, and other necessary public amenities. Prior to the erection of a town hall, town house, or meeting house (which served both religious and civic functions), town meetings were held in private homes, barns, inns, or schools. Town halls were built throughout the 19th and early 20th centuries, usually in the center of the main village in town, and ranged from simple, unadorned wood frame buildings to large masonry structures.

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Other buildings, usually churches no longer in use, were often remodelled to become town halls.

Towns were required by a 1779 law to set up poor houses. It is not known when the first Poor Farm was established; however, it appears that during the 1830s, the so-called "Age of Benevolence" when reform was sweeping the state, a number of towns organized Town Farm Associations and set up farms. Poor farms, otherwise known as "town asylums" or "city asylums", were lived on and worked by the local poor and generally were sited on back roads away from public view. Most poor farms were established on existing farms, and they occasionally had some kind of cemetery associated with them. Poor farms stopped operating when towns were no longer responsible for their poor, and state and federal welfare systems were instituted. Poor Farms were finally outlawed in the 1967 Social Welfare Act.

Among the federal government's early responsibilities in Vermont were commerce regulation and the establishment of postal service. It built some customs houses (no longer standing) at various Lake Champlain ports to inspect incoming and outgoing cargo. Starting in 1784 a limited number of post roads were constructed. Postal drop-off points and post offices were variously located in taverns, stores, and private homes. The federal government began building imposing post offices in some of the larger towns and cities in the early 20th century. Designed by federal architects, they were often relatively stylish (Colonial Revival or Beaux Arts, for example) and built of marble or brick with marble details. These post offices often housed the offices of other federal agencies, including customs and federal courts.

During the mid 1800s the arrival of the railroad to Vermont prompted the development of State transportation regulations. Although railroads were privately owned, their public function required some form of state regulation. The first railroad commission was established in 1855. Its recommendations were largely ignored, and it was not until 1906 that the commission was replaced by one with any real regulatory power.

Towards the end of the 19th century, local control was gradually, and sometimes reluctantly, transferred to higher levels of government due to reforms and also the lack of ability of towns to pay for all necessary services. (See the Education MPDF for educational reforms.) The "Good Roads Movement" placed Vermont among the first states to begin centralizing road supervision. Road building had been the responsibility of towns or private companies, so their extent, quality of construction, and

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maintenance varied considerably. During the late 19th century as Vermont dairy farmers and others began to demand better roads to facilitate the marketing of their products, a more centralized system of roads was clearly in order. In 1880 the state shifted the responsibility of road building from the town to the county level. State supervision of roads began in 1892 with the passage of the Highway Act, and in 1898 a state highway commissioner was appointed.

The latter decades of the 19th century were also years of greater state responsibility for social welfare. Aside from the county jails, the state prison in Windsor remained the only criminal institution in Vermont until the Civil War. Problems such as severe overcrowding and deplorable conditions led to reforms in state supervision and handling of criminals. In 1865 the Vermont Reform School was organized in Waterbury, and moved to Vergennes in the 1870s. In 1876 the Legislature provided for a house of correction for 16 to 20 year-olds. The House of Correction was originally built in Rutland as a "workhouse." In 1919 the institution was made a part of the state prison in Windsor, and in 1921 the Rutland building was turned into the Women's Reformatory. In 1886 legislation was passed to create a State Board of Health, one of the earliest such boards in the nation. That same year the care of indigent and insane was declared a State obligation and in 1888 the State Hospital in Waterbury was established by the General Assembly. It began operations in 1891. Also during this time the State began to appropriate funds for the mentally retarded, but the Vermont School for the Feeble-Minded (later the Brandon Training School) did not open until 1915.

During the 1890s the State embarked on a vigorous campaign to promote tourism, both in an effort to stimulate the economy, and to fill the growing number of abandoned farmsteads in Vermont's hill country. The Department of Agriculture and the state's railroad companies took the lead in the promotional crusade, encouraging more farm families to open their homes to tourists, and enticing out-of-staters to purchase old farms.

Vermont became the site of a U.S. military post in 1894 to protect the northern frontier as a result of the efforts of Redfield Proctor, U.S. Secretary of War and then U.S. Senator from Vermont. The U.S. Congress passed the Sundry Civil Act, which included authorization for establishing a military post within the northeast boundaries. In 1894 Fort Ethan Allen was built in Essex and Colchester. Established next door was Camp Johnson, the reservation for the state militia--the National

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Guard, which in 1903 became the country's official reserve force. By 1912 the State appropriated funds to build twelve armories around Vermont for the state militia. In smaller towns militias continued to train in rented space. Many troops, local and out of state, were trained in Vermont for the Spanish-American War and World War I.

The first half of the 20th century saw three major periods of government growth: the Progressive Era, the recovery time after the flood of 1927, and the New Deal. While the nation's industrial might strengthened markedly after the Civil War, the accompanying inequalities prompted an era of unprecedented reform.

The initial focus of progressive reform was political. Prior to 1904 there was no State supervision of elections. Consequently, most state officials and national delegates were chosen at mass conventions. In 1904 the Corrupt Practices Act was passed, along with a series of caucus reform laws. The second area of reform concerned social and labor issues and expanding government services. In spite of the gradual growth of government during the closing years of the 19th century, the state was a long way from providing many necessary services to the towns; as late as 1900 school and road taxes were the only claims on the grand list. However, in 1909 the state government took an important step forward in this direction when it created the Public Service Commission, an umbrella organization for all public utilities, making Vermont the fourth state to create such a commission. In 1912 a progressive wing in the Republican party challenged the status quo, and Vermont politics took a turn to the left as regular and progressive Republicans banded together to enact a sweeping series of reforms. In 1915 the Legislature passed progressive laws such as the establishment of the direct primary, workers' compensation, the institution of a state budget, reformation of the educational system, a revision of court procedure, and the establishment of bureaus for farm labor and agriculture.

Concomitant with the advent of World War I, the State took greater steps to increase administrative control. In 1917 a Board of Control and Committee of Public Safety were created for the war effort. That same year Vermont was among the first states to propose a state highway system under federal guidelines. In 1923 Gov. Redfield Proctor, Jr., instituted a major reorganization of state government, which he divided into six departments: agriculture, education, finance, public service, public welfare, and public health.

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Following the Progressive era the chief stimulant for expansion of federal and state government in Vermont was a natural disaster. The great flood of November 1927 devastated the Vermont countryside, destroying numbers of bridges, roads, railroads, and buildings on or near the rivers, especially water-powered mills. An emergency session of the General Assembly passed an \$8.5 million bond issue to rebuild roads and bridges throughout the state. The flood brought about an increased dependence on state funding for road and bridge building, and led to a greater reliance on federal funding. Vermont received more than \$2.5 million to repair bridges and highways in Vermont. In 1931 the State passed its first income tax law, and established a state system of highways. The resulting improved road system enhanced automotive travel in the state. (See also "Metal Truss, Masonry, and Concrete Bridges in Vermont" Multiple Property Documentation Form).

Vermont's success in coping with the aftermath of the Great Flood left it better equipped to face the worst economic depression in history and far more receptive than it otherwise might have been to federal intervention during the New Deal. While certainly suspicious of many of the New Deal policies, the state embraced projects like the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), the Public Works Administration (PWA), and the Works Progress Administration (WPA). During the ten year span of the New Deal, flood control dams, roads, bridges, and public buildings were constructed throughout the state; acres of parkland were reforested and park buildings built; skiing and hiking trails were cut; and electricity was brought to many rural areas for the first time. In addition, agriculture enjoyed a variety of benefits under the New Deal, with the Vermont Farm Bureau at the helm. The Rural Rehabilitation and Soil Conservation programs, the establishment of a federal milk pricing system, a production control payments program, as well as the growth of farmers' cooperatives and the expansion of state and federally funded highways helped Vermont through the Depression years and helped improve the business of agriculture.

With the advent of World War II, the state's industries provided many items and materials needed for the war effort. During the scrap iron drives many of the iron fences around public buildings, cannons, and fountains on local, county, and state government property were donated to the cause. In 1940 the federal government allocated \$1 million to build several forty-bunk barracks and other buildings between Camp Johnson and Fort Ethan Allen to house the National Guard units being sent to

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the fort to train for potential service in World War II. WPA workers built the new structures. In the next two years 5,000 men from all over the country were at the fort. In 1943 the installation was declared inactive, although it continued to serve as a storage depot for searchlights, generators, and other equipment. Many of the dwellings were allocated to the Federal Public Housing Authority for civilian occupancy.

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Historic Government Buildings
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Property Type: Town Halls

ASSOCIATED PROPERTY TYPES

I. Name of Property Type: **Town Hall**

II. Description:

Town halls, found in many towns throughout Vermont, are the symbol of local government. Nearly always built on small lots in the main village in a town, they were and still are important structures in the streetscape. These lots are generally not much larger than the footprint of the building. The function of the town hall developed from the 18th century meeting house, which served both sacred and secular functions. They may range in appearance from utilitarian vernacular to high style Greek Revival, Italianate, French Second Empire, Queen Anne, and Colonial Revival. Depending on the population of the town when built, they can be small one-story buildings or larger halls with two stories. Windows, doors, and often entry porches are important features. All town halls have at least one large meeting room traditionally used for town meetings, voting, other local government activity, community dinners, programs, theater, movies, dances, and other social events. This room usually takes up much or all of one story. Two story halls usually have a community dining room with lower ceilings and a kitchen to the rear on the first floor and a meeting room with higher ceilings and often a raised stage on the second floor.

In the early years of the state of Vermont, town meetings were held in taverns, houses, barns, and schools. One of the earliest items of business for many towns was the erection of a meeting house, to be used for both church services and public functions such as town meetings. In Rockingham for instance, citizens voted in 1773 to build "a small house 35 feet long and 25 feet wide--till the town be able to build a Larger." What was built in 1774 was five feet wider and one foot ten inches taller than originally planned. Its replacement (entered in the National Register on 9/10/1979) was built 1787-88, and is the oldest still standing public building in Vermont. An excellent example of an early meeting house, it has the main entrance in the middle of the long eavesfront wall, a short center aisle, and the pulpit window in the middle of the rear wall. A low two story "tower" at the gable end has a staircase to provide access to the second story gallery.

The style of meeting houses gradually evolved over the next

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decades into the common church form. The Strafford Town House, built in 1799 and used for church and government functions, is a good example of the transitional period. It has the same rectangular shape as the Rockingham Meeting House, but the entrance and traditional square tower is on the gable front. By the early 1800s new churches usually incorporated the tower or belfry into the main body of the building.

Buildings constructed specifically for the purpose of town meetings and other town business date from the early 1800s to the present. Some of the old meeting houses were no longer suitable because they had deteriorated beyond repair or had been torn down, while others began to be used solely for religious purposes. What may be among the earliest town halls still standing (Fairfax, 1807 and Fairfield, 1809) do not retain their original appearance, but it seems they were simple 1 or 1-1/2 story wood frame halls with gable roofs. The perhaps earliest known town hall that retains its architectural integrity (Marlboro, 1822-23) makes use of a domestic form--the high kneewall Cape Cod--but has only one large room inside. Around the walls are raised seats. Outside the windows are placed higher up than is usual on a Cape Cod to fit above the backs of the seats.

By the 1830s and early 1840s the town halls built solely for that purpose clearly had a "public" appearance. They were one story, gable front buildings, and perhaps had a fanlight in the gable peak. Many were three bays wide and three long bays deep. Most were wood, but at least one (Sharon, c.1830) was built of brick. Some were relatively plain while others, such as the Woodbury and Tunbridge town halls (both 1840), were Greek Revival in style with pedimented gable fronts, corner pilasters, fully treated entryways, and eavesline entablatures. Both Woodbury and Barnet (c.1840) have two front entrances. Inside these town halls was one large room heated by a wood stove or stoves. The walls often had wainscoting below and plaster above, and the trim was relatively plain.

During this same time, buildings were constructed in some towns with two separate purposes--town hall and usually either a church or school. For example, in 1838 Starksboro voters agreed "raise a tax of Four Hundred dollars for the purpose of furnishing a town room in the basement story of a meeting-house contemplated to be built in the village." The basement room, furnished with wooden benches, could only be reached from the outside (a clear separation of church and government). In Royalton the Town and Royalton Academy agreed to construct a building together to

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replace the old Academy and meeting house that had burned. The 1840 Town House, with its distinctive Greek Revival domed belfry, has the town meeting room with an elevated podium and stationary benches like pews on the first floor and on the second floor the academy with a small room for the town office. This trend of dual purpose buildings continued later into the century (ex. Leicester, c.1858, combination school/town hall; Clarendon, 1868, school/town hall; and Addison, 1872, school/town hall).

By the late 1840s and the 1850s new town halls still were one floor, but some were taller than had been built previously--presenting a grander exterior appearance and a loftier interior space. Examples include the brick 1850 Charlotte Town Hall, and the wood frame 1850 Lunenburg Town Hall, 1853 Topsham Town Hall, and 1859 Monkton Town Hall. In 1859 what appear to be the first two story town halls were built in Springfield and Arlington.

It appears that by the 1850s belfries were being put on new town halls. This feature gave them a church-like appearance. Examples include the Williamstown Town Hall (1857), the Monkton Town Hall (1859), and Londonderry Town Hall (1860).

Some of the most architecturally significant Greek Revival style halls were not built until the 1860s. The brick Brandon Town Hall (1861) on its high stone basement is the most outstanding, with a full pediment, monumental portico held up by massive brick columns covered in stucco, corner and wall pilasters, and a full eavesline entablature. Inside, the thirty foot high meeting space has a gallery supported by fluted cast iron columns. The 1869 wooden Salisbury Town Hall, as originally built, had an entryway with columns in antis.

The Italianate style slowly gained favor for new town hall construction in the very late 1850s and into the 1860s, although significant vestiges of the Greek Revival style (such as corner pilasters and eavesline and entry entablatures) persisted well into the 1870s. The brick Springfield Municipal Building (1859) may be the first town hall in Vermont built in the Italianate style. It has brick quoins, modillion blocks ornamenting the pediment and eavesline, and windows with footed lintels and sills. Halls in smaller towns, such as Roxbury (1865), used the traditional form but were dressed up with Italianate features such as scrolled wooden brackets under the roofline and entry cornice. The extensive Greek Revival style articulation of the Salisbury Town Hall (1869) is supplemented by rounded panels in the corner pilasters and the footed window sills, both features associated with the Italianate style in Vermont. The relatively

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simple Franklin Town Hall (1870) has the same rounded panels in the entry pilasters, while in Warren the two story town hall of 1872 is embellished with large dentils on all entablatures, peaked lintelboards, and an octagonal belfry (now gone). The 1872 Addison Town Hall and School and the 1880 Cornwall Town Hall also have peaked lintelboards, as well as wooden cornice brackets.

By the 1860s and 1870s, as some churches were losing or had lost their congregations, it also became fairly common for towns to either convert older church buildings into town halls or to divide churches with open two story sanctuaries into two separate floors and take possession of one floor. In 1859 the Town of Pittsfield bought the 1830 Methodist-Episcopal Church and moved it to a new location to serve as a town hall, while in 1867 Barnard bought the 1837 Methodist Church, in which they had been holding town meetings, for the sole purpose of a town hall. The Town of Newfane took over the 1832 Gothic Revival style church on the green in 1872, and in 1875 Dover bought the 1828 Gothic Revival style church at Dover Common. Examples of churches that were divided into two floors with the town hall on one level and the religious activities on the other include Athens (converted c.1860) and the elegant 1821 Federal style Weathersfield Center Congregational Church (divided in 1861).

During a brief period of economic prosperity in the early 1880s, several towns built monumental town halls, often breaking with the traditional symmetrical gable front form. Some hired architects to design these halls, which were often larger than those built in the past. The Town of Pawlet joined with a local businessman in 1881 to build a wood frame, eaves front town hall with Italianate and Queen Anne style features and an expansive porch. Half of the first floor was used as a store. In 1883 Middlebury architect Clinton Smith designed for his town a large brick hall with polychroming, a side tower, and eavesline corbelling. Smith was also the builder for the 1884 brick Queen Anne style hall in Bristol, where lumbering and wood products industries were booming. Chester used the gable front form in 1884 for its brick hall, which has an octagonal belfry, wall pilasters, and segmental brick window lintels. The Bethel Town Hall of 1893 is wildly eclectic, with keystone, round-arched entries and windows, arched corbelling under the eaves, and a massive projecting clock and belltower with a fanlight, brackets, and a balustrade with turned balusters. In Bloomfield the new town hall of 1891-93 is wood frame with open eavesline brackets and Stick Style trim on the walls. The Romanesque style was the inspiration for the brick Windsor Town Hall of 1888, designed by the Boston architectural firm of Appleton and Stephenson, has a

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recessed entry framed by a Syrian arch and other round arch details. The St. Albans City Hall, Vergennes City Hall (both 1897), and St. Albans Town Hall and School (1899), all designed by architect Arthur Smith of Rutland, share brick walls and Syrian arch entryways.

Beginning in the 1880s many towns began including stages in their new town halls, as well as adding them to existing buildings. In two story halls they were located in the main meeting room (usually the second floor). Sometimes these halls were called opera houses, as was the case in Barre City (1899). The stages were used as platforms from which to run meetings or to present plays, musical events, and later movies. They ranged from simple raised areas to theater stages with proscenium arches and dressing rooms to the side. The 1860 Londonderry Town Hall added an elaborate stage about 1890 with a decorative proscenium arch and painted stage curtains. The design for the 1893 Bethel Town Hall grand theater included proscenium arch, footlights, back drops, opera chairs, and chandeliers. A number of stages from this time and well into the first decades of the 20th century had painted curtains of Vermont scenes, European landscapes, and interiors. Some were painted by local amateurs, others were the work of professional artists who traveled around the state, others were done by traveling performing troupes, while yet others could be purchased from out of state companies. Professional painters included Charles Andrus, who painted two lake scenes and a street scene for the 1911 Irasburg Town Hall. The Henry family, a traveling troupe, often painted stage curtains for the halls in which they performed. Examples can be found in Huntington and Hardwick. The 1911 Reading Town Hall has backdrops purchased from Ol' Story of Boston, while the "Cape Wrath" curtain from Starksboro's stage (1911) is by L. L. Graham, a Brooklyn, New York, artist.

The design of town halls at the turn of the 20th century continued to range from straightforward gable-front buildings in rural towns to large halls in the latest styles in the larger towns and cities. Wood continued to be a popular building material, while brick was commonly used for halls in larger towns. In areas where marble and granite were quarried, these stones were used for trim. In 1901 Hinesburg, Middlesex, and Wilmington all built vernacular wood frame halls with upstairs meeting rooms and stages, as did Starksboro in 1911. The vernacular 1911 Whiting Town Hall is usual because it is built of concrete blocks. The Rutland City Hall, designed by Rutland architect Charles E. Paige and built in 1901 after a fire burned the old town hall, is high style Colonial Revival, with corner

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and wall pilasters, an entablature with modillion blocks and dentils, and keystone arched windows. Paige also designed the brick 1908 West Rutland Town Hall and school, which has a Palladian window and an entablature similar to Rutland City Hall. The 1909-1911 Beaux Arts style Montpelier City Hall, designed by George Adams of Lawrence, Massachusetts, is built of yellow brick with a tall clock tower and includes a large auditorium. The 1911 Reading Town Hall, a large shingled building with a Colonial Revival style doorway, is unusual for its gambrel roof. The wood frame Irasburg Town Hall (1911) is also unusual since its exterior appearance, with its hip roof and dormer windows, is that of a double Foursquare house. Later Colonial Revival town halls include the wooden, front addition of 1925 to the old Danville Town Hall; the 1927 brick Shelburne Town Hall; the 1928 Burlington City Hall, designed by W. M. Kendall of McKim, Mead, and White, and the 1939 the brick Tracy Hall in Norwich.

Some of these town halls were built through the generosity of native sons who had made their fortunes elsewhere and wanted to contribute to the welfare of their home towns or local patrons. Healey C. Akeley, a Stowe native who was a successful Minnesota lumberman, donated the money for Stowe's Memorial Hall, which was built in 1902 for a soldiers memorial and town hall. Wallace F. Robinson, born in Reading in 1832, made his fortune in Boston in the provisions and meat packing business and upon his retirement funded the construction of a number of institutional buildings in New England, including the Reading Town Hall (1911). In 1927 Electra Havemeyer Webb gave to Shelburne a new town hall in memory of her parents after the old hall burned. James Tracy, who had retired to his family home in Norwich after having worked most of his life as a cabinetmaker out of state, bequeathed his estate to the Town to build a fireproof town hall on the site of his home.

Early 20th century town and city halls and opera houses generally were two stories tall, but sometimes three floors if they served many civic purposes. Varnished beaded board wainscoting or panelling was a popular interior finish. Electric light, better heating, and indoor plumbing made these spaces more amenable for community use and, if the buildings were also used as municipal offices, libraries, or police stations, improved conditions for town clerks, police, and others.

During this time period towns also continued the practice of converting other buildings into town halls. Such was the case of Plainfield in 1911, which turned an old Greek Revival style church into a town hall. Other towns that reused old churches,

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schools, or other buildings for town halls include Readsboro (1911), Proctor (1920), Ripton (c.1920), Brunswick (1922), Sheldon (c.1925), Kirby (c.1930), and Lemington (1937).

Since 1940 there have been very few new town halls constructed in Vermont. Some towns have erected municipal buildings or town offices, an example being Georgia, which built a town office in 1953 after the old town hall burned down. Of the small number of towns without a town space, a few have continued the practice of making use of other old buildings. Waltham uses the old District #2 school for its town offices, in the early 1980s Weybridge restored an 1847 church for a town hall, and in the late 1980s Bridport restored the old masonic hall for use as a town hall. Yet other towns have moved their town meetings to the multi-purpose rooms or auditoriums of modern town schools or union high schools, either because the old town halls no longer can accommodate a much larger population or because many meeting rooms are on the second floors and are not accessible to the handicapped. Many of the historic town halls still stand however, important architectural and historical landmarks in their communities.

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III. Significance:

Town halls clearly reflect the development and importance of town government and local control in Vermont and the pride townspeople had in their communities. They were and continue to be important public buildings in their districts, villages, and towns. While their chief use was for town meetings, they also were used for many other public functions, such as dances, suppers, lectures, club meetings, theatrical and musical events, wedding receptions, parties, and graduations.

Town halls will be eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under criteria A and/or C for state and/or local significance. Most will be nominated under criterion C because they will embody the distinctive characteristics of their property type and perhaps a period. They may also represent the work of a master. Under criterion A, town halls likely will be eligible under the politics/government area of significance, because they will represent the development of local government. They may also be locally significant for their role in the social history of a town.

Because town halls are usually located in the major village in a town or in a prominent city location, they also often are eligible for the National Register as contributing resources in historic districts. The historic context of town halls is described more fully in section E, Statement of Historic Context, and in section F.II, description.

As discussed in the description section, the first buildings constructed specifically for local government use were often meeting houses or town houses that had both a political and religious function. In the early 1800s, with the growing desire to separate these two functions, town governments slowly began to construct halls for the purpose of town meetings and other civic and social activities. Because of the cost, some towns joined with other groups, such as schools and churches, to erect dual purpose buildings, which had clearly separate entrances and interior spaces for the different functions. Town halls continued to be constructed at a steady pace throughout the 19th and well into the 20th century. When towns built these halls depended on what other large buildings were available for holding political and other events, growing or declining populations, the local economy, and political trends.

Town halls are architecturally significant as a distinctive property type. Although they may vary widely in design and size,

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they all share the common characteristic of a large meeting room for gathering the local populace. They were built using the standard construction methods of their time and may be found in all the major architectural styles. The earliest town halls were modest vernacular structures, usually one story tall with a gable front. Over the course of the 19th century they became larger, often two stories, with the main meeting room and a kitchen and dining room downstairs. Their size, the building materials, and style depended on the local need for public meeting spaces, local natural resources (wood, clay for brick, stone, etc.), and what the local economy dictated for voter agreement on a construction budget. Town halls tended to retain the gable front orientation because they usually were located on small narrow lots.

Town halls may also be architecturally distinguished. A number of them are excellent examples of public architecture in the Greek Revival, Italianate, Queen Anne, Colonial Revival, and Beaux Arts styles. During the last three decades of the 19th century and into the 20th century, the larger towns and cities employed architects, either local or from out-of-state, to design their halls.

Town halls tend to retain their historic architectural integrity, as they were often well built and did not have the steady hard use of other public buildings such as schools. Outside they usually retain their original siding, windows, and porches, although the roofing may have been replaced. Inside these halls often have their historic flooring and wall surfaces, but may have been updated with the addition of electricity, indoor plumbing, and central heating. Most changes have taken place in the last fifty years to meet state and federal health, safety, and fire codes and to provide handicapped accessibility.

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IV. Registration Requirements:

Physical characteristics are as stated in the property type description.

Properties will meet the registration requirements for the town hall property type because they reflect trends and influences significant to the development of local government in Vermont and in many cases for their role in the social history of a town, and/or because of their distinctive architectural form and character. Town halls should retain the design features, form, materials, and fenestration patterns that reflect their historic use, period of construction, and, if applicable, later historic changes or modifications.

It is expected that town halls will remain on their original sites. It is acceptable if they were moved during the historic period of this context. Town halls moved after the historic period must either be in a nearby location with a similar setback, placement on the street, feeling, and association and/or muse meet National Register criteria consideration b for individual listing.

It is recognized that town halls regularly in use since the historic period will have been updated somewhat with the addition of modern plumbing, heating, and electricity. Town halls in active use in the past few decades may also have handicapped access ramps and second means of egress added. Porches, which are significant features particularly on the more vernacular town halls, may have been reconfigured or rebuilt to include ramps. Such changes are acceptable provided they do not significantly detract from the historic appearance of the building.

The main meeting room or hall is the primary interior element of town halls. It should maintain in large part its historic appearance. It is expected that some of the other rooms, if any, may have been altered somewhat over time. For example, cloak rooms may have been converted to rest rooms, and kitchens may have been updated and modified to meet fire codes.

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G. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

The geographical area for this multiple property submission is the state of Vermont.

H. SUMMARY OF IDENTIFICATION AND EVALUATION METHODS

This multiple property listing is based on the Vermont Historic Sites and Structures Survey (VHSSS), which was begun in 1971 to survey all the historic resources in each town that are eligible for the State Register of Historic Places. The survey, done on a town by town basis, was begun in the southern part of the state and moved northward. The earliest surveys are much less comprehensive than those done later, but often government buildings were recorded as they are usually prominent buildings in a town.

The historic context, "Growth of Government in Vermont, 1777 to 1945," is based on the historic context that was written by Susannah C. Zirblis for the Vermont State Historic Preservation Plan. The context was defined as a result of a public, state-wide planning process. The geographic area for the MPDF is the entire state of Vermont, since the State is the basic unit of government and state legislation has shaped the town and county units of government. The time period for the context is 1777, the date of Vermont's constitution, to 1945, the end of World War II.

The first property type to be documented in this multiple property listing is the town hall. The type is based on a specific function. The type was built from the early 1800s on. Many towns have town halls, which are used for annual town meetings, school meetings, and cultural and social events. Most of the property type information about town halls was gathered from the VHSSS, with other information from town histories.

The requirements for integrity are based on the National Register criteria and the knowledge of existing conditions.

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Vermont Division for Historic Preservation. "Vermont Historic Sites and Structures Survey." (on file at VDHP Office, Montpelier, Vt.).

_____. "Vermont State Historic Preservation Plan." (on file at VDHP Office, Montpelier, Vt.).