



STATE OF VERMONT
AGENCY OF DEVELOPMENT AND COMMUNITY AFFAIRS

DIVISION FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION
Preserving Vermont's historic, architectural and archeological resources

November 5, 1993

Board of Selectmen
Town of Woodbury
Woodbury Town Offices
Woodbury, Vermont 05681

Re: Woodbury Graded School, Woodbury

Dear Members of the Board of Selectmen:

On July 7, 1993, the Division for Historic Preservation sent you a letter notifying you that the Woodbury Graded School was being considered for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places. We are pleased to inform you that the school has now been officially entered on the National Register. Congratulations to the town of Woodbury on the national recognition of the historic significance of this building. This is the first building in Woodbury to be listed on the National Register.

If you have any questions regarding this action, please feel free to contact Elsa Gilbertson, National Register Specialist, in this office.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Eric Gilbertson", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Eric Gilbertson
Director/Deputy State
Historic Preservation Officer

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National Park Service

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Woodbury Elementary School
Woodbury, Washington Co., Vermont

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The Woodbury Graded School, a two story Colonial Revival elementary school located in the Town of Woodbury, Washington County, Vermont, is an example of school architecture in early twentieth century Vermont. This 1914 structure includes elements such as large banks of windows that were standard in Vermont schools after 1904. Standing approximately seventy-five feet south of Town Highway 22 and just west of Route 14 on the side of a hill that rises to the west, the building dominates the rural village of Woodbury. The school retains its integrity of location, setting, design, materials, workmanship, feeling and association.

This rectangular plan, nine by six bay, hipped roof structure has two massive, rectangular brick interior end chimneys at the north and south roof edges. The roof is covered with asphalt shingles. The walls have wood shingles on the second floor and clapboards on the first floor. There is a poured concrete foundation. With few exceptions, the east (main) and west facades are identical, as are the north and south facades.

A shingled hipped roof dormer containing a bank of three 8 pane fixed sash windows projects over the central bays of the 9 bay east and west facades. The deep eaves containing a cornice molding and modillions continue along the roofline of the second story. Two identical groups of four 20/20 4' x 9' double hung windows, each window in the group spaced several inches apart, are located approximately three inches below the cornice line and five feet towards the center from each side edge of these long facades. A bank of three 8/1 double hung 4' x 9' windows is located in the central bay. All the school windows are topped by a simple cornice molding projecting approximately one inch beyond the side of the windows. The lower three courses of the second story square shingles flare out slightly over the simple cornice molding belt course, approximately six inches high, that

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separates the second and first stories. Beginning just under the belt course in the first story, two groups of four 8/1 windows identical in appearance, size and placement to those described in the second story are located to either side of the central entrance bay that contains a wooden door with sidelights capped by a massive gabled, cantilevered pedimented entry hood. Simple wood trim appears at the side edges of the first story and as a water table between the first story and the exposed basement.

The roofline treatment, the belt course, the water table, the side edge trim and the exposed basement all continue on the southern and northern facades. On the second story of these short facades, two identical banks of three double hung 20/20 windows are located just below the roofline and approximately three feet in from the sides. The window treatment is exactly the same on the first floor except the windows are 8/1.

The central bay of both the east and west facades contains the most outstanding exterior feature of the school, the entry hood. The peak of the hood gable is located just below the second story central bank of three windows and its roofline begins at the belt course. The deep eaves with modillions of the school's roofline repeat around the hood roofline and in a raking position along the inclined edges of the gable end of the hood. Simple L-shaped brackets with rounded ends and a diagonal member support the hood. Under the center of the hood directly below the belt course is a pair of fixed sash transoms, each containing six panels divided up into eight panes in a Colonial Revival style pattern of a horizontal, a vertical and two diagonal muntins. Located just below this pair of windows is a simple rectangular plywood sign with wooden letters reading "Woodbury Graded School." A 6/1 double hung window is located under the hood to either side of the sign. The bottoms of these windows are at approximately the same level as the bottom

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of the sign. The main door on the eastern facade, located immediately under the sign, has a 9 paned window in its top half, a rectangular recessed wooden panel in the middle and two square recessed wooden panels in its bottom third. The main door on the western facade, located in the same place, has 3 vertical rectangular windows in its top half and three vertical rectangular wooden recessed panels in its bottom half. Two half length sidelights above rectangular recessed wooden panels frame the door.

Significant interior features include the relatively unaltered floor plans of the four classrooms on the first floor and the gymnasium/auditorium on the second floor. Original materials such as pressed metal ceilings, hardwood floors, wooden wainscoting, blackboards and basement coal bins are found throughout the school.

Stairs lead from each vestibule up to the first floor rectangular central hallway that the entire first floor plan is arranged around. Four large, virtually identical rectangular classrooms open off this space, one in each corner of the building. One long and one short wall of each classroom contain banks of windows. A blackboard and assorted cabinets appear on the other long wall and a small lavatory and supply closet are built into the other short wall. Two stairways to the second floor are located off the central hallway, along the east and west walls of the building. The entire second floor is open except for a stage and two flanking rooms against the south wall.

On the western corner of the southern facade a small (approximately 6' wide) half story gable roofed addition extends south from the main wall plane. This modern clapboard structure with an asphalt shingled roof was added in approximately 1970 to cover the bulkhead doors leading into the basement. In 1987 a modern, wooden handicapped access ramp was installed. It begins to the

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south of the main door, extends to the southern edge of the facade, doubles back on itself and ends at a modern door which replaced the original 6/1 double hung window located at approximately the same level and to the south of the plywood sign.

The roof was replaced approximately thirty years ago. In 1987 changes were made to comply with health, safety and access codes and to provide the school with more classroom space and a kitchen. Changes included the addition of the wheelchair ramp, constructing classrooms in the basement, enclosing the stairways to the second floor and converting one of small rooms flanking the stage on the second floor to a working kitchen so that the second floor could be used as a cafeteria in addition to a gymnasium and an auditorium.

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The Woodbury Elementary School, a two story hip-roofed building built in 1914 that dominates the village of Woodbury, is an outstanding early 20th century rural Vermont grade school in the Colonial Revival style. It is sided with a combination of clapboards and shingles and ornamented by elaborate door hoods and large modillion blocks under the rooflines. The interior is noteworthy for its four first floor classrooms with their beaded board wainscoting, wooden molded trim framing the banks of windows and doors, and the open second floor, which was used for multiple purposes. The building is also significant for exemplifying trends in education in Vermont during this time period. Woodbury, a small agricultural community, was transformed in the late 19th century when granite was discovered, and the town experienced a major economic and population boom that lasted into the early 20th century. The new school was built to replace the smaller district schools and also to serve the growing number of school children. This school is being nominated under the multiple property submission, "Educational Resources of Vermont." It clearly meets the registration requirements for the property type school.

The Woodbury Elementary School, like many others constructed in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, was, to some degree, an architectural product of state law. Regulations which clearly influenced this school were 1) an 1892 state law giving each town control over education and resulting in centrally located, larger schools replacing smaller, scattered district schools and 2) beginning in 1904, State Board of Health standards for adequate sanitation, ventilation and lighting. During its boom period Woodbury needed and could afford to build a substantial, modern school. As built, the Woodbury Elementary School was a relatively large, centrally located structure with large banks of windows, steam heat and indoor plumbing. Unlike many early Vermont district schools which resembled houses and were often located in areas such as swamps which could not be farmed, Woodbury Elementary is an early example of an architecturally distinguished school located on prime land in the town center. From this position, the school dominates the town landscape.

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The school architecture is a blend of styles and details. The hip roof, eight-paned transom windows, Georgian plan, and oversize cornice molding with modillions are all typical of the Colonial Revival style. The flare at the base of the shingled second story lends a Shingle Style feeling of fluidity to the building. The mixing of these stylistic details with such features as the projecting pedimented entry hood and combination of clapboard and shingle siding gives the building a formal yet vernacular feel.

The Woodbury school was a major village investment that served both the children and the adults of the community. The large second floor gymnasium/auditorium space doubled as a public hall. Its size and central location made it a convenient meeting place. The plan and original materials of both the first floor classrooms and the second floor multipurpose room are intact and retain their integrity.

The success of the granite industry in the Town of Woodbury was largely responsible for creating the need for a new school and the revenues necessary to build one. In the last quarter of the nineteenth century when the granite business began to grow, Woodbury had ten schools and ten school districts. Founded in 1878, the Woodbury Granite Company employed 1800 men by 1914. It was "said to be the largest building granite producer in the world and probably the largest granite concern in the world" according to Industrial Vermont, a guide to the industrial resources of Vermont published by the Vermont Bureau of Publicity in 1914. Many Woodbury Granite workers and their families lived near the Woodbury town center. The Woodbury Elementary School was a central community showpiece built to reduce the number of existing schools and accommodate the growing school population. The community continued to grow and

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attendance at the school increased until the late 1920s. In the past twenty years the population of Woodbury has grown. In the late 1960s approximately 50 children attended Woodbury Elementary; today the enrollment is approximately 90 students in grades K-6.

