

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 National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any 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.

1. Name of Property

Historic name: Harry O. Erikson Pavilion Hall

Other names/site number: _____

Name of related multiple property listing:

N/A

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

2. Location

Street & number: 17 East Shore Road

City or town: Washington State: CT County: Litchfield

Not For Publication: Vicinity:

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 at the following level(s) of significance:

___ national ___ statewide ___ local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

___ A ___ B ___ C ___ D

Signature of certifying official/Title:

Date

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official:

Date

Title :

**State or Federal agency/bureau
or Tribal Government**

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4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
- determined eligible for the National Register
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

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

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Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u> </u>	buildings
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	sites
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	structures
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	objects
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

SOCIAL: Meeting Hall

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

COMMERCE/TRADE: Specialty Store

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7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Recreation and Culture

Auditorium

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: Stone Foundation, Wood, Asphalt Shingle Roof

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

Summary Paragraph

The Harry O. Erickson Pavilion Hall is a two-story, simple Queen Anne-style building in the rural Northwest corner of Connecticut, constructed in 1897 by local property owners for use as a public recreational space. It has important associations with the Village of New Preston and nearby Lake Waramaug, located within the Town of Washington in Litchfield County. Situated on a rise as the State highway (CT Route 45) leaves the village, the building is a prominent feature on the street, serving as a terminus within the commercial center of New Preston. Pavilion Hall is a simple, two-story rectangular wood-frame building with a three-bay façade, wood cladding, a granite block foundation, and a front gable roof. A bell tower at the peak of the front gable end with a central projection below accentuates the front of the building. A shed roofed porch runs across the front of the lower level. Construction materials are wood with an asphalt shingle roof. The building is in good condition overall with many of its original features intact.

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Narrative Description

Setting

Pavilion Hall sits on a 0.25-acre lot at the end of the main street in the village of New Preston and faces south (Photograph 1). Connecticut State Route 45 runs along the east side of the building with virtually no setback. A parking lot for the building is located along the west side of the lot. It terminates at a wood railing at a stone-channeled section of the East Aspetuck River, the main outflow from Lake Waramaug, and the neighboring property to the north, a private home. There is no setback between the private home and Pavilion Hall. A small, grassy area behind a raised concrete retaining wall is in front of half of the front elevation; this feature starts at the corner of the building next to the state highway and wraps around two thirds of the front of the building. The third, west, bay is at grade, having been used as a garage for the village fire truck from 1937 until the 1960s.

New Preston is a small village within the township of Washington, Connecticut, is set on a hilly street that extends parallel to the East Aspetuck River, which flows from Lake Waramaug to the north through the valley and village of Marbledale below. It is located just north of U.S. Route 202. Nineteenth and early twentieth-century commercial buildings line the street on the west, river side of the street and scattered domestic buildings - now mostly used commercially, are set back from the roadway on the hilly east side of the street.

Originally settled in the 1730s, it was at one time a regular route between Albany, New York, and Boston, Massachusetts, and claimed importance as a way-station for Washington's troops during the American Revolution. It borders the East Aspetuck River which flows out of Lake Waramaug to the village of Marbledale, a drop of about 300 feet. There were allegedly twenty-one waterpower mills along a two and a half mile stretch of the river from the outlet to the valley.¹ Remnants of some mill buildings and the commercial buildings that supported them remain as defining features of the picturesque village.

Exterior

Pavilion Hall, a carpenter-interpreted Queen Anne public hall, dominates the streetscape of New Preston with an imposing three-story façade (south elevation). It is divided into three bays and has a projecting central bell tower at the top. An added open balcony is centered on the attic level of the tower (Photographs 2, 3). There are paired center doors at ground level, with a closed pediment

¹ Harwood, Mary "A History of Lake Waramaug", p. 7

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above and a full-facade shed roof supported by cross-braced brackets. There are two additional entrance doors on either side of the main center doors. A parking lot on the west side of the building ends at the stone-lined, channeled East Aspetuck River. Inside, the ground floor serves as a basement and utility space, having served multiple functions including the storage of a fire truck, a post office, and utility spaces and kitchen for the boys' club and entertainment venue. The second floor consists of one large auditorium-type room with a stage at one end. The attic is unfinished, with remnants of an embossed tin wall covering still remaining.

The walls are sheathed in clapboards with shingle trim between the windows, and the gable roof is covered in asphalt shingles. The building is sited on a gentle hill that slopes down to the south and the west.[Photo 4] The main floor of the building is at grade on the east side and on the second floor on the west side. The entrance doors on the gable end are at grade. The southeast corner was excavated to accommodate the parking of the village fire truck in the 1930s (Photograph 5). A concrete retaining wall that encloses a small grassy area in front (south) of the building wraps around from the east side to the facade and terminates in alignment with the center bay. Concrete and asphalt paving abuts the building on the east side, meeting the state highway. The building's foundation is comprised of large dressed granite blocks is visible on the east (side) elevation where it abuts the road (Photograph 6). The building is on its original site with no major alterations.

The projecting bell tower has a hipped roof and shallow arched openings with railings on all four sides. It is clad in shingles on the top level and fish scale shingles below. The rafter rails are exposed. There are decorative brackets at the corners of the bell tower below which wide boards lead the eye vertically to the projecting center bay at the main floor level. This bay has a hip roof that terminates in a flat section that is surmounted by a modern, unpainted railing. Fish scale shingles cover the gable end of the third, attic floor of the building. A single window is centered below the bell tower at this level.

The projecting center bay at the main, or second story of the building has a set of paired one-over-one wood sash windows that are visually joined by trim around them and a simple pediment shape above. Fish scale shingles decorate the center space between the windows. The flanking bays have the same paired windows (Photograph 7).

A full-width, shed roofed porch supported by cross-braced brackets extends across the ground level of the façade. It shelters paired center doors on the ground level center bay and single doors each with two by two windows on the end bays. There is a closed pediment projecting from the shed roof above the center door and just below the center bay. The building is decorated by a water table made of wide wood boards and wooden string course above the lower level windows.

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The west (side) elevation has three pairs of one-over-one windows with fish scale shingles between them on the upper, main floor level. Each pair is also united visually by a simple, pedimented trim. These windows are massed toward the south end (front) of the building. At the lower level (at grade on this side of the building) there is a short utility door with four panels. This door is now sealed. There are two short, two-over-two windows at the north end (back) of the building under an interior stage. The foundation is exposed stone with a wide baseboard trim. Taller two-by-two windows flank a modern door about midway on this side of the building, and there are additional paired windows toward the south end of the building. A modern sloped ramp with wood railings extends along the ground level of this elevation (Photograph 8).

The east (side) elevation is notable because of the large expanse of the modern asphalt roof that predominates the visual impact of the building. The lines of the roof are broken only by the relatively small brick chimney used for the heating system in the back quarter of the building and the bell tower at the front of the building. The building abuts State Route 45. There is a paved buffer between the building and the road of about ten feet. Leading back from this is a driveway to the neighboring property behind the hall. A non-functional utility door at the north end, stage area, is about three feet above the ground. It has three by three panels. Moving toward the south, a narrow window with two-over-two panes is next to a double exit door. The original doors were replaced with modern doors. It is reached by a concrete step. The hill drops away toward the south of the building. A paved trough used to channel water away from the highway and down the hill runs along the side of the building, but also carries water toward the building. There are two sets of paired windows with fishscale shingles and pedimented trim like those on the other elevations. The stone foundation is constructed of large granite blocks perforated by three windows, one of which has been blocked off.

The north (rear) elevation is obscured by plantings. There is virtually no setback between Pavilion Hall and the neighboring property. A board-and-batten privacy fence on the abutting property extends up to the northwest corner of the building. Two windows at the lower level have been blocked off. The foundation extends to a retaining wall along the roadway and neighbor's property line. The foundation at this end of the building appears to be cinder block. There are three two-over-two windows at the main floor level and a blocked-off window under the gable on this wall. The wide board trim that decorates the other elevations building is continued here (Photograph 7).

Interior

Pavilion Hall is a simple, 4,340 square foot building. The lower level, which consists of one main room, a small kitchen, two bathrooms, and a utility room that is also used for storage, is 1,756 square feet while the upper level, essentially one large room with a stage at one end, is 2,575 square feet. Because the building is built on a hill, the upper level is at grade on the east side and

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the lower level is below grade on that same side, while the upper level is on the second story on the west side and the lower level is at grade. The lower level is a kind of utility or basement space, with a large room that is accessible through the two doors on either side of the central bay of the building (Photograph 9). The central bay is not accessible from this floor. The room has a concrete floor throughout and a stone foundation wall on the east side. The west bay appears to have been excavated about 18 inches; presumably to accommodate the town fire truck that was housed in the space from 1938 until the mid-1960s when a modern fire house was built in another part of town. The stone foundation on the east wall consists of large dressed granite stones at the south end above-grade, from base to top. The foundation below grade is fieldstone of various sizes, some cut and some not. The foundation on the west side is cinder block. At the north end of the basement, two restrooms and a kitchen were installed on the west side, while a store room and mechanicals room are on the east side (Photograph 10). At the far north of the space a narrow set of stairs leads upstairs to a stage area (Photograph 11). There is a door to the outside on the east side of this floor that is accessible by a mid- to late-twentieth-century concrete and asphalt ramp.

The upper level appears unchanged from its original configuration as a recreational hall with a stage at one end. The stage encompasses the entire north end of the space (Photograph 12). There are doorways on each side of the stage with four-step staircases leading from the stage to the main room (Photograph 13). There are three windows at the back of the stage and access to the attic level through a hatchway at the center of the stage. The ceiling above the stage, as well as the main part of the room, appears to have been lowered, probably after 1940 when the building was acquired by the Town of Washington and used as the Boys Club. The main section of the upper level is one large room with beadboard wainscoting along each of the walls (Photograph 14). Above this the walls are unfinished, but had a pressed tin covering, a fragment of which remains in the attic. The central bay area is closed off from the main room and encases the main staircase up to this level. An 18-inch high platform leading to a very small space that holds the stairs to the attic is on the south west corner of the room (Photograph 15, 16).

The stairs from the upper level to the attic are very narrow. There are remnants of the pressed tin wall covering around the windows on this level (Photograph 17). There is a small space at the top of the stairs. The main floor of the attic is about four feet higher than this and accessible by a crude ladder. The attic space is non-functional, with large roof trusses (Photograph 18). The modern balcony on the outside of the central window at this level was completely non-functional, as the window to access it is about four feet above the floor of this space.

The main stairs from the ground floor to the main room are accessed on the left, or west side, of the room. The stairs are perpendicular to the wall, with a landing at the bottom (Photographs 19, 20). There is a large, somewhat elaborate turned baluster at the bottom landing, and the three steps below the landing make a turn to face the entrance. There is very little space at the base of the

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stairs between the stairs and the main doors of the building. The walls of the stairway are encased in bead board.

Integrity

Pavilion Hall remains essentially as it was built in 1897. On its original location, it retains its orientation as a focal point and terminus to the northern end of the village. Except that the streets around it and parking lot next to it have been paved, very little about the setting has changed. The historic mid- to late-19th-century, wood-frame buildings in the village are well-maintained and have also mostly retained their integrity. Pavilion Hall maintains the feeling and presence it projects in early photographs and its integrity adds to the overall character of the village. The building retains most of its original materials. Most changes that were made to the building are reversible, with the exception of some doors and windows that were installed according to code when the building was owned by the town and leased by the Boys and Girls Club. Other minor alterations include changes to the lower level to accommodate first a dining room in the early days of the hall, then storage of a fire truck for about thirty years, possibly the addition of a post office at some point in the mid-twentieth century, and the addition of a small modern kitchen for the use of the Boys and Girls Club. Few changes have been made to the building, either externally or internally and it retains its overall design and workmanship.

The feeling of the site is conveyed both by its position in the larger streetscape and the integrity and preservation of the materials used. The shingling and clapboards as well as most of the windows and the front entrance are original. It is easy to envision townspeople and visitors to the inns around Lake Waramaug entering the building for a play or concert, and the pride with which the townspeople would have regarded it. The Hall reflects the association with village improvement efforts, even in the absence of a specific Village Improvement Society. It also is a remnant of a period of time when entertainments were increasingly being sought in purpose-built structures for local audiences. "Every community with pretensions to gentility had an opera house, though they staged few operas in them...which became community centers for every sort of pageant and play."

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² Sutherland, Daniel E. "The Expansion of Everyday Life" Harper & Row, 1989

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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.)

- 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 old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

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Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Entertainment/Recreation

Architecture

Period of Significance

1897-1940

Significant Dates

1897: Building constructed

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Architect: Unknown/None

Holcombe, E.B. General Contractor

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Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

The Harry O. Erikson Pavilion Hall is eligible for the National Register at the local level under Criteria A and C in the categories of Entertainment/Recreation and Architecture. Under Criterion A, the building is significant for its role as the social center for the town, offering plays, dinners, and dances to residents and visitors to the inns and hotels along Lake Waramaug. It was constructed in 1897 by the Pavilion Club, a group of New Preston property owners for the purpose of building a building “for all proper uses for which Public Halls are commonly used”³. Under Criterion C, the building represents characteristics of a local, carpenter interpretation of the Shingle or Queen Anne style and is a key part of the nineteenth- through early-twentieth-century streetscape that defines the historic village center of New Preston. The period of significance extends from 1897 when the building was completed to 1940, when the entertainment use of the building ceased and it was acquired by the town.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

Criterion A: Entertainment/Recreation

The Harry O. Erikson Pavilion Hall is locally significant under Criterion A for its association with the development of regional tourism. Envisioned as a community center that would enhance the appeal of the village for the visitors who came to the inns and summer houses built around Lake Waramaug, Pavilion Hall provided opportunities for recreation, pleasure, and uplift beyond the offerings of the inns themselves.

Development of the lake as a tourist destination began after 1840, when the Housatonic Railroad opened a station in New Milford.⁴ Conveyances could be hired in New Milford to bring visitors eight miles to the lake, and visitors found it an attractive escape, less than 100 miles from New York City, with the railroad, a relatively easy trip to make. This was part of a trend that was occurring throughout New England and elsewhere, as roads were improving, travel for pleasure was becoming more common, and people sought to escape the urbanizing crowds, noise, smells and pollution that accompanied industrialization and immigration.⁵ Litchfield, eleven miles northeast

³ “Articles of Association of the Pavilion Club”, January 29, 1895, Washington Town Clerk Records

⁴ Harwood, Mary, p. 14 “A History of Lake Waramaug”, revised ed. c. 1997, Lake Waramaug Association

⁵ Larkin, Jack p. 221 “The Reshaping of Everyday Life” c. 1988

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of New Preston, had been a tourist destination since at least the 1840s⁶. Meanwhile, starting in the 1870s, Washington Green, over the hill from New Preston, was attracting wealthy businessmen and artists from Brooklyn, New York, who built grand houses near the Gunnery School, founded in 1850, which many of them had attended as boys.

Dona Brown describes the trend that romanticized and commodified Landscape. She writes “Scenic touring provided much more than a vacation for nineteenth-century travelers. It also helped them to stake claims to a genteel status by demonstrating their good taste and sensitivity. The pursuit of scenery linked a crucial air of nineteenth-century “isms”. For the consumer, scenic tourism softened the hard features of an industrializing society with a veil of romanticism... On the other hand, the business of scenery was capitalism, pure and simple. Indeed, it was the cutting edge of capitalism, marketed with the most advanced techniques, served by the highest of high-tech transportation systems and building methods. For the entrepreneur, scenic tourism offered an intangible but very real product, one that could be exploited as easily as lumber or farm acreage.”⁷

Following this trend, the Hopkins Farm became the first to welcome visitors, when the Edward R. Squibb family of Brooklyn asked for a room in 1846.⁸ By this time, whatever commercial prospects the town of New Preston had as a mill town were greatly diminished. Located on a hilly site with strong but limited waterpower, New Preston had been the site of many mills and factories. Starting in 1745 with the development of a blast furnace and iron works, industrial ventures had diversified into twine, cotton, sawmills and wagon factories, peaking in the 1830s following the discovery of a vein of soft, malleable, low grade marble. Fifteen quarries supplied about six stone cutting mills that were powered by the East Aspetuck River flowing out of Lake Waramaug. A lack of transportation options, the small size of the East Aspetuck River, and superior marble from Vermont and then Italy essentially undermined that and other industry, however, to the point that by the middle of the 19th century New Preston had returned to a sleepy backwater village mostly engaged in subsistence commerce for the local market, and primed for the new source of tourist income.

The Housatonic Railroad to New Milford provided a means to get to the lake in the early days. Chartered in May 1836, the railroad followed the Housatonic River valley from Bridgeport to the Massachusetts state line. Regular service from Bridgeport to New Milford began in February, 1840.⁹ At nearly eight miles from New Preston, visitors disembarking in New Milford could hire carriages to lodgings at the lake. The Shepaug, Litchfield and Northern Railroad was opened in

⁶ Carley, Rachel, p, 166, “Litchfield: The Making of A New England Town”, c. 2011, Litchfield Historical Society

⁷ Brown, Dona, pp 4-5, “Inventing New England”

⁸ Harwood, pps. 14 & 79

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1872. Originally an independent line connecting the Housatonic Railroad at Hawleyville, in Newtown, Connecticut with its terminus in Litchfield, the railroad provided a means for goods and passengers to travel to and from New York City. Visitors to Lake Waramaug were able to disembark at “New Preston Station” starting in 1873 and hire carriages to take them to the burgeoning resort community around the lake four miles away. Although never viable economically, the line helped to connect New Yorkers with tourist destinations in Litchfield and its neighboring communities to the south.

The New Preston reporter for the Litchfield Enquirer newspaper, Myron Cable, reported in 1874 that “Times are lively here. Boarders are almost as numerous as flies. They prowl the forests, clamber up the mountains, follow the little streams for trout...Every nook and cranny among these is being explored by health and pleasure seekers...Two or three times a day, they congregate at the post office, and we green country gawky stand staring, studying their style, watching them twirl their canes, and wishing we were New Yorkers with such fine manners and fine clothes.”¹⁰ By 1880 this same reporter reported that “three or four hundred people” spent the summers along the lake. By that point visitors weren’t just boarding in farmers’ homes, but found accommodation at inns and some of the wealthy visitors had constructed summer homes for themselves. By May, 1897, Cable reports that workers are installing side walks “and it (the village of New Preston) has become a veritable boulevard, a thing of beauty, and a joy forever. This is the greatest improvement New Preston has seen for years.”¹¹

Along with visitors came the need to provide entertainment, and George C. Hitchcock, a breeder of race horses, had a race track built circa 1850; a golf club was formed in 1898 and merged in 1916 with the Yacht Club to form the Waramaug Country Club.¹² Uplift in the form of lectures, religious revivals, amusements such as plays were frequently reported items in the local papers. For instance, in August, 1897, “A large tent has been erected and tent revival meetings are in progress and will be continued for ten days...at the mouth of the lake...A variety show with living pictures will be given Saturday evening August 29 under canvas for the village hall fund. All the star actors will take parts. The mammoth tent will be pitched on the grand plaza near Holt’s Block.”¹³ Another entry for January, 1898 notes that seventy five people gathered for a lecture at Upson’s Seminary, a private school near the town center.¹⁴

¹⁰ quoted by Mary Harwood, p 16

¹¹ Cable, Myron, Litchfield Enquirer, May 27, 1897, courtesy Litchfield Historical Society note: Cable’s writing is notably tongue-in-cheek as he reports about the little village in deliberately grandiose terms.

¹² Harwood, pp 54-55

¹³ Myron Cable, aka “Pendragon” writing for the Litchfield Enquirer, Aug. 27, 1897 Microfilm courtesy Litchfield Historical Society

¹⁴ Myron Cable, January 28, 1898, Litchfield Enquirer

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Articles in local newspapers make frequent reference to efforts to bring improved transportation options and other amenities to the Village. In May, 1897, there was a controversy over bringing a trolley line from New Milford to New Preston. Cable sums up his description of the conflict by writing “ ... I am able to gather that the wealthy people of this community who own horses and have time to drive whenever and wherever they listeth, and the city people who own residences here, and those other wealthy city visitors who come and bring their horses and carriages with them, look upon the electric road as something very undesirable while the great majority of people, the common herd of laborers, the city dry goods clerks who exist on seven dollars a week, sleep in some Garrett on some obscure street all winter and save up 25 or 50 dollars and then come up here and splurge as a Wall Street broker during their two weeks vacation, dazzling us with their splendor, our own numerous pedestrians who haven’t got a horse and never expect to be able to own one, and the “riff-raff” generally to a man, all look upon the electric road as very desirable and long for it with an exceedingly great longing.” The efforts to balance the desires of the visitors for a quiet, idealized, bucolic setting for their country vacations with the needs of local residents to have easier access to markets and modern conveniences is a tension that continues to define this small village.¹⁵ The building of Pavilion Hall apparently was an effort to bridge this divide.

The Pavilion Club was incorporated in January, 1895 for the purposes of “literary, dramatic, musical, social entertainments, public lectures, political meetings, religious services, etc., not intending by mentioning the above specific uses thereof to restrain ourselves from using said building for any proper and legal purposes.”¹⁶ A fundraising event for the building was held in August of 1896. A document dated June 25, 1897 amends the original incorporation to include making “improvement in the Village of New Preston, its streets, public grounds, and public buildings; and to purchase and maintain new ones, and to do all things incidental to said business and the proper management thereof.” The document goes on to state the intent of the Executive Committee of Pavilion Club to purchase property and erect a building and to raise money to enable the building to be built and maintained.¹⁷

The site had been selected before this amendment, however. In October, 1894 the land upon which the hall was to be built was deeded to William L. Hopkins, owner of The Sachem, an inn on the north shore of Lake Waramaug, who was identified as the Treasurer of Pavilion Hall. Mr. Hopkins held onto the land until July, 1897, when the deed was passed to the Pavilion Club. In August, 1896 the local New Preston news column in the *Litchfield Enquirer* had jokingly suggested that the site “be turned into a botanical garden”, describing the lot as languishing and overgrown. The

¹⁵ *Litchfield Enquirer*, 5/20/1897, Collection Litchfield Historical Society

¹⁶ Articles of Incorporation of the Pavilion Club, 1895, Washington, CT Town Clerk’s Office; *Hartford Courant*, 11 January, 1895

¹⁷ Pavilion Club Amendment June 25, 1897, Washington Town Clerk; *Hartford Courant*, 25 June, 1897

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foundation was laid “by a large force of men” starting in October 1896 and was completed in a month under the supervision of the Club president, Durward E. Graniss.¹⁸ No more action was reported on the building until April, 1897, when F.J. Hosford proposed to the executive committee that he draw the lumber *gratis* from New Milford to the site. Graniss, however, had a contract for \$125 for hauling the lumber, and until he could be paid off to the tune of \$50, nothing more could happen. This conflict having been resolved, the contract to build the building was given to E. B. Holcombe, who “has secured the services of several first class carpenters and joiners...”.

On May 27, 1897, Cable writes “ Contractor Holcombe and his fellow architects and builders have hustled, also, and that noble structure, the new hall, looms up in all its magnificent proportions, and is now ready for the clapboards and shingles. Projects are already on foot for placing a clock in the tower which shall toll off the quarters, halves and hours of swiftly fleeting time to all future generations of Waramaugers, and for placing an ornamental flag pole surmounted by a glistening golden ball, upon the same tower from which the Stars and Stripes may ever float in the breezes instilling patriotism into the hearts of all those self same future generations. It is confidently expected by the projectors that the hall will be completed in time for a grand Independence Day dedication celebration all in on the Fourth of July next.”¹⁹ The next report is dated July 8, 1897, and states that the hall is completed and ready for painters. In early August it is reported that “William H. Dougal, esq. ably assisted by Mr. Partridge of New Milford, is applying a new coat of paint to the Pavilion Club’s new hall. Work commenced Monday morning, so, probably before this is printed New Preston will glory in a new hall of magnificent proportions resplendent in brand new paint.”²⁰ By August a theater company from Troy, New York, were on site “setting the stage and arranging the scenery” in preparation for a staging of the play “Only a Farmer’s Daughter” to be performed on the 11th and 12th. The following week a performance of “Little Red Riding Hood” was to be performed by the local children, with forty voices, under the instruction of William F. J. Hosford. Cable writes “...the Pavilion Club has succeeded, and so much better than they expected, that financially we may say they have succeeded beyond the dreams of avarice. This success no one will deny is due in great measure to the ability and untiring labors of Mr. and Mrs. Denslow of Marbledale. Long live the Pavilion Club!”. There were more plays, dances and a minstrel show, the latter, however, bringing out “hooligans and drunks”. By December, 1897 a heater had been placed in the hall as well as a large kitchen and dining room in the lower level “complete with closets and sideboards, with a capacity to seat seventy-two persons”.²¹

¹⁸ Litchfield Enquirer, October 29, 1896

¹⁹ Litchfield Enquirer 5/27/1897

²⁰ Litchfield Enquirer 8/5/1897

²¹ Litchfield Enquirer 12/16/1897

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The hall, built as a community center and entertainment hall, continued to be used for that purpose until 1940, though with increasingly less success than in those early days. The building was acquired in 1940 by the Town of Washington as payment for back taxes, and thereafter was used for various other purposes including the storage of the town fire engine, the post office, and the Boys Club. Eventually even those activities ceased, and the building was largely vacant for a number of years.

Pavilion Hall represents two trends in the management of small towns by its citizens. The Club was formed expressly to “make improvements in the Village of New Preston, its streets, public grounds, and public buildings...”²², much like the village improvement societies that were forming throughout New England at this time. In addition, as a small town with a booming tourist business around Lake Waramaug, both the citizens and guests in the hotels, inns and summer houses had come to expect better facilities for entertainment than had previously been provided in the kinds of gathering spaces built above commercial enterprises such as Ford Hall, in the neighboring village of Marbledale or Upson’s Seminary in New Preston. As Dona Brown states in her book “Inventing New England: Regional Tourism in the Nineteenth Century”, “For the communities that became involved in this kind of tourism, the new image of New England made another kind of sense. Wherever they could, local promoters put their dilapidated buildings and grass-grown streets to work...”.²³ While Pavilion Hall was expressly built as an entertainment hall and was never a “dilapidated building”, the impulse to provide a picturesque center to the village was part of that entrepreneurial spirit.

The erection of Pavilion Hall also represents a trend of building more formal, purpose-built buildings for the entertainment and uplift of its residents, as well as amenities for visitors. Washington Club Hall, designed by architect Ehrick Rossiter and located on the Washington Green, was built in 1907 to replace Erastus Hurlburt’s general store, built in the 1850s with an auditorium on its second floor for the staging of plays and local entertainments. The Washington Club Hall provided a stage and other amenities for community events and socializing. On Washington Green, commercial enterprises, always fewer in number than in New Preston, were restored, converted, or replaced by buildings that signaled the greater refinement of its summer house community. The buildings of the Gunnery School, founded by Frederick Gunn in 1850, were also being renovated. The 1882 Schoolhouse, designed by Rossiter, hints at the kind of stylistic form of Pavilion Hall. Although we don’t know, the designers and builders of Pavilion Hall may have worked as carpenters for Rossiter or looked to him for inspiration and a design model.

²² Record filed with Washington Town Clerk, June 25, 1897

²³ Brown, Dona, p. 9, *Inventing New England: Regional Tourism in the Nineteenth Century*, Smithsonian Institution Press, 1995

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Criterion C: Architecture

Pavilion Hall is significant under Criterion C in the category of Architecture as a notable local example of hybrid late-nineteenth-century design. In using wall surfaces of differing textures and breaking up the plain flat wall of the façade through the use of the central bay and tower, and with features such as the porch supports and brackets, the building reflects a kind of watered-down Queen Anne-inflected style. The shallower pitch of the roofline, especially visible from the west elevation, however, as well as the flattened arch in the bell tower and the overall simplicity of the building, suggests influences from the Shingle Style and Adirondack-style houses that were being erected around Lake Waramaug and elsewhere in the Town of Washington.

There are no extant records to indicate that an architect was involved with the design, and certain elements of the building reinforce this.²⁴ Locally, the building has a great presence in the compact streetscape of this small village and is a strong symbol of the community. With the town's two other major centers, Washington Depot, which was rebuilt after the 1955 Flood, and Washington Green, significantly altered in the years around the turn of the 20th century to reflect the Colonial Revival aspirations of its affluent property owners, Pavilion Hall and New Preston Village are rare remnants of Washington's rural, working heritage. In addition, it is significant as the only remaining public Victorian-era building left in Washington²⁵.

According to architect Tom Witt, AIA, Pavilion Hall represents a local trades' interpretation of a meeting hall, with vestiges of Congregational Church, district schools, and railroad station design elements visible in its bell tower and the shed porch design and brackets, and overall design. Design elements such as the columns and brackets supporting the shed porch at the front of the building or the large bannister at the bottom of the main entrance stairs appear to be making use of what was expedient and easily available, as is the generous use of bead board throughout the interior spaces. The lack of a sophisticated design sense is further emphasized in the cramped and awkward foyer at the main entrance.

Unlike nearly contemporaneous, architect-designed public buildings in more affluent Litchfield County towns such as the building now known as Infinity Hall in Norfolk (1883), the National Register-listed Thomaston Opera House (1884), or the National Register-listed Scoville Library in Salisbury (ca. 1890), Pavilion Hall is defined more by its similarity to other buildings erected

²⁴ There are no extant records of the association. Research in the archives at the Gunn Memorial Library & Museum did not uncover any mention of an architect, nor did the very informative New Preston columns in the Litchfield Enquirer, which reported on many of the details of the building process.

²⁵ Conversation with Alison Gilchrist, Architectural Historian

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without the benefit of an architectural eye or practice such as the old National Register-listed Goshen Town Hall (1895) which contained a theater space in addition to offices for the town's administration. Buildings such as the Lebanon Grange Hall, built ca 1885 - 1899, listed as a contributing property in the Lebanon Green Historic District, though in the eastern part of the state, reflects the same kind of simple community social hall structure. In this Pavilion Hall represents both the community's commercial decline but also its aspirations to refinement and community uplift and its attempt to provide a draw to the community that would benefit businesses, residents, and visitors.²⁶

The commercial buildings of New Preston predate the Pavilion Hall. The Beeman/Woodruff saw mill (1875) due north of Pavilion Hall bears some resemblance to Pavilion Hall in the simplicity of its form and the incline of its roof. Master carpenter Oscar Beeman is said to have built it.²⁷ His son Henry, born circa 1858, lived with him according to the 1900 census, where they are both referred to as wood workers and repairmen. It is possible that they worked on Pavilion Hall.

The residences built around the lake vary in style, though most appear to be designed in the Colonial Revival and Adirondack styles. Houses listed on the State Register with stylistic similarity to Pavilion Hall include the 1860 Italianate Carter house that was renovated and updated by Mrs. O.J. Winan in 1893 and the 1897 house designed and built by Granville Breinig, a New Milford businessman, sheathed in shingles and board and batten. Listed domestic buildings in the village itself range from a grand Gothic Revival/Queen Anne house built around the corner for a Mrs. Wooster in 1867 to an 1874 Gothic Revival house next to it built for the Burnham family. Although none of these buildings specifically references the Pavilion Hall, together they form a kind of coherence of style and proportion.

²⁶ Conversation with Tom Witt, AIA, August, 2018

²⁷ Graney, Paul A. Ct Historical Commission Historic Resources Inventory "Woodruff Mill" 2/21/2000

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9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

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Bushman, Richard L. *The Refinement of America.* New York: Vintage Books, 1992

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Unknown. Zoning Districts Map: Connecticut Zoning District, 1984

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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 # _____
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
 - Other State agency
 - Federal agency
 - Local government
 - University
 - Other
- Name of repository: _____

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 0.25

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: _____

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

1. Latitude: 41 40' 37"N Longitude: 73 21' 22" W

2. Latitude: Longitude:

3. Latitude: Longitude:

4. Latitude: Longitude:

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Or

UTM References

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

NAD 1927 or NAD 1983

- 1. Zone: Easting: _____ Northing: _____
- 2. Zone: Easting: _____ Northing: _____
- 3. Zone: Easting: _____ Northing: _____
- 4. Zone: Easting : _____ Northing: _____

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The boundary of the nominated property is the same as the parcel identified as 3027 (Map 11, Block 5, Lot 2) in the Town of Washington, Connecticut assessor's records. It is bounded east by CT State Route 45 to the east, New Preston Hill Road to the south, the East Aspetuck River to the west, and property of Christine Adams to the north.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

This boundary encompasses the entire property.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Sarah K. Griswold Edited by Jenny Scofield, CT SHPO
organization: Sarah K. Griswold Consulting
street & number: PO Box 465
city or town: Washington Depot state: CT zip code: 06794
e-mail s.kilbourngriswold@gmail.com
telephone: 203-206-8147
date: February 15, 2019

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Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Photo Log

Name of Property: Harry O. Erickson Pavilion Hall

City or Vicinity: New Preston village, Washington

County: Litchfield

State: Connecticut

Photographer: Jessica Lewis

Date Photographed: August 18, 2018

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

- 1 of 20. View of Pavilion Hall Front from south.
- 2 of 20. Bell tower detail from east.
- 3 of 20. South middle bay and decorative balcony (modern replacement railing).
- 4 of 20. Façade (south elevation), view looking north.
- 5 of 20. South middle bay entrance.

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- 6 of 20. Detail of foundation on east elevation, view looking northwest.
- 7 of 20. South and west sides of building showing ramp.
- 8 of 20. North side of building from neighboring property.
- 9 of 20. Lower Level from north showing excavated section for fire truck storage, concrete floor, two entrances on either side of main doors (blocked).
- 10 of 20. Lower Level showing east wall and modern doorways at south side.
- 11 of 20. Lower Level stairs to stage at north end of building.
- 12 of 20. Upper Level – Stage.
- 13 of 20. Upper Level - Auditorium & stage. Looking north.
- 14 of 20. Upper Level - Bead board wainscoting (seen in various places throughout building).
- 15 of 20. Upper Level - Looking south.
- 16 of 20. Upper Level - South side, small room at front of building, stairs to attic.
- 17 of 20. Attic Level - Original tin sheathing.
- 18 of 20. Attic Level – Attic.
- 19 of 20. Main Stairway from Lower Level, South side of building.
- 20 of 20. Main Stairway from Lower Level, Looking up.

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.460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 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 Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

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GRAPHICS



Figure 1. Location Map, Pavilion Hall, 17 East Shore Road, Washington, CT.

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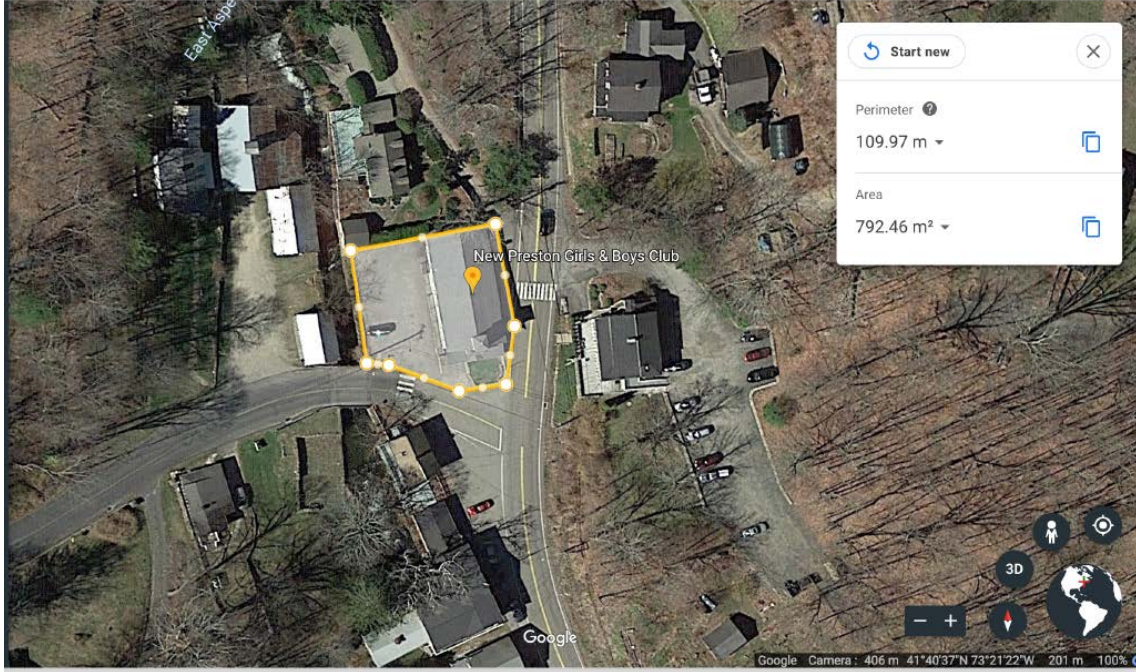


Figure 2. Pavilion Hall, 17 East Shore Road, Washington CT (Base Map: Google Earth, 2020).

Pavilion Hall Photographs



1 of 20. View of Pavilion Hall Front from south.



2 of 20. Bell tower detail from east.



3 of 20. South middle bay and decorative balcony (modern replacement railing).



4 of 20. Façade (south elevation), view looking north.



5 of 20. South middle bay entrance.



6 of 20. Detail of foundation on east elevation, view looking northwest.



7 of 20. South and west sides of building showing ramp.



8 of 20. North side of building from neighboring property.



9 of 20. Lower Level from north showing excavated section for fire truck storage,

concrete floor, two entrances on either side of main doors (blocked).



10 of 20. Lower Level showing east wall and modern doorways at south side.



11 of 20. Lower Level stairs to stage at north end of building.



12 of 20. Upper Level – Stage.



13 of 20. Upper Level - Auditorium & stage. Looking north.



14 of 20. Upper Level - Bead board wainscoting (seen in various places throughout building).



15 of 20. Upper Level - Looking south.



16 of 20. Upper Level - South side, small room at front of building, stairs to attic.



17 of 20. Attic Level - Original tin sheathing.



18 of 20. Attic Level – Attic.



19 of 20. Main Stairway from Lower Level, South side of building.



20 of 20. Main Stairway from Lower Level, Looking up.