

MEMORANDUM

TO: Vermont Advisory Council on Historic Preservation

FROM: Elizabeth Peebles, State Architectural Historian

RE: Brown's River Covered Bridge, Westford, Vermont
Request for Listing in the State Register of Historic Places

DATE: October 20, 2025

The Westford Historical Society formed in 1975 and led the effort to save and complete preservation work on the bridge. The ongoing preservation work of this bridge has included multiple Vermont Historic Preservation Grants including a grant in 2025 to address structural deterioration where the bridge sits on its abutments. The Town of Westford is the owner of the property. In an effort to formally recognize unlisted grant funded properties the Vermont Division for Historic Preservation is requesting that the Vermont Advisory Council on Historic Preservation list the property in the State Register of Historic Places.

The Brown's River Covered Bridge is a single-span modified Burr-arch truss bridge with multiple kingpost supports. On November 22, 1836, Westford voters resolved to build "... a single arch bridge where the old one stands near Halbert's Store ..." After being bypassed by a new bridge in 1965, the Brown's River Covered Bridge fell out of use. In 1987, the bridge was removed from its foundations and set on cribbing in a nearby field to await restoration. In 2001, the restored bridge was returned to its original site for pedestrian use.

The Brown's River Covered Bridge is recommended eligible for listing in the Vermont State Register of Historic Places under Criterion C for its significance as an example of a nineteenth-century covered bridge with a Burr-arch truss in Vermont. The period of significance is 1838, the date of construction. Of approximately 700 covered bridges that existed in nineteenth-century Vermont, this bridge is one of about 100 that remains extant in the state. There are only nine extant covered bridges in Vermont that feature the Burr-arch truss. This bridge is the second oldest in the state which utilizes the truss type. It is one of five extant historic covered bridges in Chittenden County and the sole extant covered bridge in the town of Westford.

