

**United States Department of the Interior**  
 National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in 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: Governor Hunt House

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: 322 Governor Hunt Road

City or town: Vernon State: Vermont County: Windham

Not For Publication:  Vicinity: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**

_____ <b>Signature of certifying official/Title:</b>	_____ <b>Date</b>
_____ <b>State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government</b>	

Governor Hunt House  
Name of Property

Windham County Vermont  
County and State

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

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<b>Signature of commenting official:</b>	<b>Date</b>
<b>Title :</b>	<b>State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government</b>

**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



Governor Hunt House  
Name of Property

Windham County Vermont  
County and State

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## 7. Description

### Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

COLONIAL/Georgian

**Materials:** (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: Foundation: Stone/Concrete

Walls: Wood

Roof: Asphalt Shingles

### 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.)

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### Summary Paragraph

The Governor Hunt House at 322 Governor Hunt Road in Vernon, Windham County, Vermont was built in 1779 and is a 5x4 bay, two-and-a-half-story Georgian style home. The house has a large front lawn with hedges and trees and is set back from the road by approximately fifty feet. The house sits on property that was formerly part of the Vermont Yankee Nuclear Power Station, which is currently being decommissioned. It faces west onto Governor Hunt Road. The power plant and Connecticut River are east of the house while residential buildings are present to the north, south, and west along Governor Hunt Road and nearby Vermont Route 142. The overall setting is semi-rural. The house rises off a stone foundation that has been reinforced with concrete. The walls of the heavy timber frame structure are clad in clapboard siding and the eaves-front roof is covered with asphalt shingles. A large central chimney splits the gable while the primary entrance has engaged pilasters, a multi-light transom, and non-original triangular Greek Revival pediment. Windows throughout consists of 12/12 double-hung wood sash. After Vermont Yankee purchased the home, the power company restored the building and erected a large addition off the rear elevation. The addition is connected to the house via a historic ell and is visually distinct from the original building mass. The addition sits on a concrete foundation, is clad with vertical board siding, and covered by a gabled asphalt shingle roof. The rear addition is masked by the original mass of the building and does not visually distract from the 1779 building's mass. Given this, the Governor Hunt House retains integrity of setting, location, association, feeling, materials, workmanship, and design.

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### Narrative Description

Governor Hunt House

Name of Property

Windham County Vermont

County and State

### *Façade (West)*

The Governor Hunt House's façade is symmetrically arranged and consists of a central entryway with paneled double doors and a seven-light transom. The doors are set between Doric pilasters set on wood pedestals that support a closed pediment. The entry to the Governor Hunt House has gone through significant change since the house's construction. Photos from the early twentieth century show the door sheltered beneath a pedimented portico which is believed to have been built during the mid-nineteenth century. Circa 1950 the portico was removed and replaced with a horizontal lintel. In 1987-1989 the Vermont Yankee Nuclear Power Company undertook a restoration campaign at the Governor Hunt House and added a triangular pediment atop the entry. Through these changes the oldest elements of the entryway appear to be the rounded pilasters flanking the entry, the divided transom light topping the doorway, both of which may be original or early modifications to the home and the doors themselves which are believed to be replacements from the early nineteenth century. Each of the other first story bays have individual window openings containing 12/12 double-hung wood sash topped by flat lintels. Five identical 12/12 windows are present on the second story. The windows have vertical symmetry with those on the first story and are tight to the eaves. Vertical corner boards are present as well. At the southern corner of the façade there is a large video surveillance unit set below the roofline.

### *Side Elevation (North)*

The north elevation of the Governor Hunt House faces onto a side lawn. There are three 12/12 double-hung wood sash windows on the first story. These windows have identical surrounds to those of the façade. An additional three 12/12 double-hung windows are present on the second story. These windows have vertical symmetry with those on the first story. In the gable end of the house's upper half story is a single 9/9 double-hung wood sash window. Metal vents are also present in the upper half story. The north elevation also has shallow gable end returns and vertical corner boards.

### *Side Elevation (South)*

The south elevation of the Governor Hunt House faces a side lawn along with a small driveway and parking lot which lead into the nuclear power plant. The southern elevation is identical to the northern elevation.

### *Rear Elevation and Ell (East)*

The rear elevation of the Governor Hunt House faces east towards the Connecticut River and the former nuclear power plant. Much of the rear elevation consists of the historic ell which connects to the rear addition which was constructed in 1970 by Vermont Yankee. The ell occupies the three southernmost bays of the rear elevation. The remaining first story bays feature a single 12/12 double-hung wood sash window and a wooden door. The second story has a pair of 12/12 double-hung wood sash windows which are tight to the eaves. Vertical corner boards are also present on the rear elevation.

Governor Hunt House

Name of Property

Windham County Vermont

County and State

### *Rear Addition*

The rear addition consists of a large multi-gable 3x6 bay one-story building. The rear addition's southern elevation contains the primary entrance which is accessed via a concrete walkway sheltered beneath a small, shed roof porch with square posts. The entry consists of a four-panel wood door with a transom flanked by narrow five light sidelights. The wing's southern elevation has four 12/12 double-hung wood sash windows. Directly over these windows are narrow three light casement windows which are set beneath the eaves. The walls are clad in wide plank siding. The wing's north elevation is similarly arranged with 12/12 double-hung wood sash windows and three light casements set beneath the eaves. The north elevation also has a small wood frame shed roof bump out that has another 12/12 double-hung wood sash window. Small metal vents are present on the wing's asphalt shingle roof.

The large one-story addition connected to the original house by the historic rear wing has a blank western wall apart from the entry previously described. The southern elevation consists of a blank wall with gable end returns and a pair of metal vents in the gable peak. The eastern elevation has a three-bay porch with square wood posts, engaged pilasters and wood arches spanning the posts. The porch shelters an entrance with a nine-light door and two 6/6 double-hung windows. Another entry with a nine-light door accessed by a small concrete stoop is present in the bay south of the porch. The bays north of the porch feature a large office bump out. The bump out has two large aluminum clad plate glass windows. There is another recessed entry with a metal door north of the office. The northern elevation consists of the gable end with large end returns and a metal vent in the peak. The wall plane is otherwise blank. Also present is a small gabled bump out with gable end returns and a single centrally placed 6/1 double-hung window.

### *Interior*

The interior of the Governor Hunt House can be accessed from the entry door on the southern elevation, at the junction of the historic ell with the rear addition. Past these doors is a lobby space. To the west the historic ell passes into the original mass of the home. To the east are a series of rooms built for workers at the nuclear power plant. The lobby itself features carpet flooring, drywall walls and ceilings, and decorative roughhewn wooden ceiling beams. Flat stock baseboards are present throughout the lobby. Moving east through the lobby leads to a large open volume conference room which constitutes the bulk of the one-story addition. This room features acoustic tile drop ceilings, carpeting, and drywall. Modern florescent lights illuminate the space. Along the eastern wall is a small room containing a kitchen. This room features tile flooring, concrete block walls, and a drywall ceiling. Modern cabinets and appliances line both walls. To the north are a series of smaller rooms which served as private offices and employee training spaces. As with the conference room these spaces feature limited adornment and have carpeting, dropped acoustic tile ceilings, baseboards, and drywall walls.

Moving back through the conference room and into the lobby one must walk up a gently sloping carpeted ramp within the historic ell to access the original mass of the house. The southern wall

Governor Hunt House

Name of Property

Windham County Vermont

County and State

of the passage has regularly spaced windows each of which have a decorative varnished wood surround. The passage's northern wall has a series of rooms including two bathrooms, a private office, an office for the lobby manager, and a utilities room. Finishes in the passageway are much more ornate than in the conference room. In addition to the window surrounds, the hallway has decorative varnished chair rail and varnished door surrounds. Light is provided by ceiling mounted fluorescent lights. The bathrooms feature tile floors and a mix of tile and drywall walls. Tile is also present in the utilities room.

At the western end of the passageway is a small room which is part of the original house. The room has unfinished broad plank wood floors and wide tongue and groove walls. The room has exposed ceiling joists and a bookshelf containing scientific literature left by the staff of the nuclear power plant. Past this is the Governor Hunt House's kitchen. The room is dominated by a massive brick fireplace with a beehive oven, a stone inner hearth and a brick outer hearth. The fireplace has a painted paneled wooden surround. The floor is covered by wide unfinished planks. Wide painted vertical planks cover the walls. These boards are a reconstruction dating from 1987-89. Multiple rooms branch off from the kitchen including the parlor and dining rooms which are west of the kitchen. Along the north wall is a staircase that leads to the second floor as well as a small pantry. The pantry is accessed by a four-panel wood door and features two large shelves with decorative scroll-saw-cut end details. Entering the parlor, changes to the level and sophistication of decorative detail are immediately visible. Varnished paneled chair rail and varnished crown molding is present throughout the space. Additionally, the windows have decorative wood surrounds. The ceiling has been lowered such that it touches the top rail of the windows. A finish has been applied to the wood floor and the room's massive fireplace has a varnished wood panel surround. This surround features several small built-in cupboards as well as a six-panel door which leads to the basement. The fireplace has another beehive oven as well as a brick pocket opening. The fireplace's inner and outer hearths are brick. A wooden door at the western end of the parlor permits passage through the house's entry vestibule and into the dining room. The entry vestibule provides access to the second floor via a narrow wooden staircase. The double doors of the entry features metal strap hinges. The vestibule also features a small wooden storage bench. The first floor's dining room is the most ornate room in the entire house. This space features similar finishes to the parlor with decorative wood surrounds on the windows, paneled chair rail, and crown molding. The room has a large fireplace along its southern wall with a brick inner and outer hearth and an ornate wooden surround featuring wooden Doric pilasters. The fireplace also has a massive pine mantelpiece purportedly made from a single piece of pine. Varnished wood paneling is present on either side of the Doric pilasters and one of the panels doubles as a cabinet. In the northwestern corner of the room is a large built-in cabinet with Doric pilasters resting on pedestals and an arched opening with recessed shelving. The base of the built-in cabinet has a small, paneled door and cabinet.

The Governor Hunt House's basement can be accessed from the parlor. The basement is a single large room with a concrete floor and concrete walls which reinforce the stone foundation. The basement is dominated by the massive masonry base of the central chimney. This chimney features a mortared stone base spanned by a large brick arch. The basement also has original

Governor Hunt House  
Name of Property

Windham County Vermont  
County and State

timber beams consisting of unfinished logs many of which still have bark. The ends of these logs have been shaped to fit into the joinery.

The second floor of the Governor Hunt House can be accessed from the back stair in the kitchen or from the front stair in the entry vestibule. Climbing the back stair, one enters an unadorned room that was reconstructed in 1987-89. The room features wide plank flooring, exposed ceiling joists, and wide pine plank walls. Past this is a similarly unfinished room which features a plank doorway that opens to reveal the chimney.<sup>1</sup> Past this is a third room which formerly acted as a bathroom. The room has a lowered plaster ceiling and plaster walls with exposed wood posts. Wide plank flooring is present in the room as are wooden baseboards. Past the former bathroom is a large room historically used as a bedroom. The bedroom is highly finished with painted chair rail and decorative painted window surrounds. The ceiling has been lowered such that it covers the top rail of the windows. Along the room's northern wall is a small fireplace with brick inner and outer hearths. The fireplace is set in a painted paneled wood surround. A single four panel closet is next to the fireplace. The floor is covered by wide varnished planks. Past the bedroom is a small landing with stairways leading back to the first-floor vestibule and a trapdoor into the attic. A plank door on the landing opens to expose the chimney as it rises through the house. The second floor's final room is a master bedroom. This bedroom features painted chair rail, varnished wood plank flooring, painted window surrounds, and a fireplace on the southern wall. This fireplace has a brick hearth and a paneled wood surround. Next to the fireplace are several paneled cabinets meant to blend seamlessly into the wall.

The Governor Hunt House's attic can be accessed from a trap door on the second-floor landing. The attic is completely unfinished and dominated by the central mass of the chimney as it rises through the house. Rafters and support beams are visible and throughout the attic. The roof is supported by widely-spaced common rafters that meet at the ridge with a pinned lap joint. Wooden collar ties have been installed on some of the rafters to counter the outward thrust of the roof. Supplemental support between the rafters is provided by split logs that are nailed to the underside of the roof in a random pattern. Light is provided by 9/9 windows on the northern and southern elevations. The floor is covered by wide wood planks.

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<sup>1</sup> Local consensus is that this room was used by the servants and the chimney door took the place of a fireplace.

Governor Hunt House  
Name of Property

Windham County Vermont  
County and State

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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

Governor Hunt House  
Name of Property

Windham County Vermont  
County and State

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

ARCHITECTURE

POLITICS/GOVERNMENT

**Period of Significance**

1779-1823

**Significant Dates**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Person**

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Hunt, Jonathan

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Cultural Affiliation**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Architect/Builder**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Governor Hunt House  
Name of Property

Windham County Vermont  
County and State

**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 Governor Hunt House at 322 Governor Hunt Road in Vernon, Windham County, Vermont was built in 1779 for Jonathan Hunt, Vermont's second lieutenant governor.<sup>2</sup> Hunt was an early Vermont settler, politician, and a significant local landowner who lived at the Governor Hunt House until his death in 1823. Following his death, the home passed to his son Arad Hunt who maintained the property until his death in 1833 at which point the Hunt House and its surrounding lands were sold. From 1833 to 1947 the Governor Hunt House passed through various local farm families. In 1947 the house was parted from its associated farmland and purchased by Florence Louchheim Stol, a New York City socialite who used the home as a summer retreat. Following her death in 1967 the recently incorporated Vermont Yankee Nuclear Power Company purchased the house. Vermont Yankee added a large addition off the rear of the house in 1970 to create office space but maintained the historic integrity of the main house, which they offered tours of. Presently the Governor Hunt House is being redeveloped as a community center. The Governor Hunt House is locally significant under Criterion C in Architecture as an excellent example of vernacular Georgian style architecture. From its construction in 1779 to the present the Governor Hunt House has been well maintained and largely unchanged. The house's massing with a central doorway and symmetrical fenestration remains intact. Additionally, the house retains major features such as the massive central chimney stack, the interior wood paneling around the fireplaces, and the decorative built-in-cabinet are original to the house.

The Governor Hunt House is also locally significant under Criterion B in Politics/Government for its association with Vermont's second lieutenant governor Jonathan Hunt. After settling in Vernon, Jonathan Hunt became an important local figure, serving as county sheriff and a local judge. In 1794 Hunt became the second lieutenant governor of Vermont, serving alongside Governor Thomas Chittenden until 1796.

The Period of Significance for the Governor Hunt House stretches from 1779 until 1823. This period of significance encompasses the construction of the house for Jonathan Hunt and covers his entire tenure in the house, ending with his death in 1823.

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

*History of Vernon*

The Town of Vernon is located on the southeast corner of Vermont. It is bordered to the north by Brattleboro and to the west by Guilford. The town's southern border is with Massachusetts while

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<sup>2</sup> Although Jonathan Hunt never served as governor, his house has long been known and referred to as the "Governor Hunt House".

Governor Hunt House

Name of Property

Windham County Vermont

County and State

the Connecticut River forms the boundary between Vernon and Hinsdale, New Hampshire. The Town of Vernon experienced a tumultuous history of European settlement starting in 1753 when Benning Wentworth, the governor of New Hampshire, included all land encompassing Vernon in the town of Hinsdale, New Hampshire.<sup>3</sup> By 1779 the states of New York, New Hampshire, and the independent Vermont Republic all claimed the future town of Vernon as their territory.<sup>4</sup> Hinsdale residents on the western bank of the Connecticut River wished to join Vermont and ultimately the town was divided along the river with the creation of a Hinsdale, Vermont and a Hinsdale, New Hampshire. In 1802 residents of Hinsdale, Vermont proposed changing the town's name. Initially, many were in favor of renaming the community Huntstown after Jonathan Hunt whose Georgian mansion was in Vernon. Hunt's wife, Lavinia Hunt, suggested an alternate name, Vernon, an homage to George Washington's home Mount Vernon.<sup>5</sup>

More settlers arrived in Vernon during the early nineteenth century and began to clear land for farms. Vernon possessed a mix of alluvial meadows fit for cultivation, stands of pine, and rocky mountainsides some of which could be cleared for hill farms.<sup>6</sup> The town also had plentiful fishing opportunities and by the mid-nineteenth century grist and sawmills had harnessed local waterpower to produce flour and finished lumber.<sup>7</sup> Vernon's local industry and agriculture were modestly successful however the town's population declined from 1850 to 1890 and ultimately hovered around 712 residents until the 1950 census.

In 1966 the Vermont Yankee Nuclear Power Company decided to erect a 540-megawatt nuclear power plant in Vernon.<sup>8</sup> Built on the banks of the Connecticut River and brought online in 1972 the Vermont Yankee Nuclear Power Plant brought jobs and controversy to Vernon. As a result of the plant's opening the population of Vernon surpassed 1,000 for the first time, however frequent protests were organized against the continued presence of a nuclear reactor in Vermont. The nuclear power plant was decommissioned in 2014; presently it is in the process of being dismantled. Despite the loss of the power plant, Vernon's population continues to grow, and the town serves as a bedroom community for other major regional population centers.

### *The Governor Hunt House During the Hunt Family's Residency (1779-1833)*

Born in Northfield, Massachusetts in 1738, Jonathan Hunt first settled in nearby Guilford, Vermont circa 1758. Circa 1770 he moved to nearby Vernon, then part of Hinsdale, New Hampshire.<sup>9</sup> In this year he and his brother, Arad Hunt, purchased a significant portion of land in what would become Vernon from Orlando Bridgman; specifics were not given in the deed but by 1814 the Hunt family owned over 1,500 acres of farmland in Vernon.<sup>10</sup> In 1779 Hunt married

<sup>3</sup> A. H. Washburn Esq., "Vernon" *Vermont Historical Gazetteer*, vol 5, (1891): 271.

<sup>4</sup> Washburn, "Vernon," 271.

<sup>5</sup> "Politics and Society at the Governor Hunt House, *Friends of Vernon Center*, <https://www.governorhunt.org/politics-and-society>.

<sup>6</sup> Washburn, "Vernon," 276.

<sup>7</sup> Washburn, "Vernon," 284.

<sup>8</sup> "Vermont to have Nuclear Power Generation by 1971," *The Times Argus*, August 6, 1966, 1.

<sup>9</sup> John E. Gale, "Carved Boulder in Guilford," *The Brattleboro Daily Reformer*, December 10, 1917, 7.

<sup>10</sup> Washburn, "Vernon," 275.

Governor Hunt House

Name of Property

Windham County Vermont

County and State

Lavinia Swan of Boston, Massachusetts and built the Governor Hunt House to serve as the couple's permanent residence.<sup>11</sup> In Vernon, Jonathan Hunt quickly rose through the local political ranks. Initially supporting the New York claimants to Vermont's territory, by 1780 Hunt came to support the movement for an independent Vermont. He served as high sheriff of Windham County in 1781.<sup>12</sup> Two years later he became a member of the Vermont General Assembly and was elected to the legislature in 1784 and 1791.<sup>13</sup> Hunt's election in 1791 was especially important as it was the Vermont Convention of 1791 that adopted the Constitution of the United States, officially bringing Vermont into the fledgling union.<sup>14</sup> Hunt also served as a member of the Governor's Council from 1786 until 1794 when he was elected Vermont's second lieutenant governor. Hunt won reelection in 1795 and in 1799 served on Vermont's Council of Censors.<sup>15</sup> In 1800 Hunt served as a presidential elector and cast his vote in favor of John Adams, however after this his political career appears to have ended. Lieutenant Governor Jonathan Hunt passed away in 1823 at the age of 85, and his wife Lavinia Swan Hunt died in 1834.

Following the presidential election of 1800 Jonathan Hunt largely faded from the public eye and two of Hunt's sons, Arad and Jonathan, took on more active roles in the community and state. Born in 1780, Jonathan Hunt, Jr. attended Dartmouth College where he studied law; after graduating he opened a law practice in Brattleboro. Jonathan Hunt, Jr. served in the United States House of Representatives from 1827 until his death in 1832. After the death of his father Arad Hunt inherited much of the family land which he managed largely from his bedroom where he was confined due to illness.<sup>16</sup> Arad Hunt died in 1833 and following his death the Hunt family's association with the Governor Hunt House ended. Though Jonathan Hunt and Lavinia Swan Hunt had other children they had moved elsewhere by 1833 and the house and a portion of the surrounding farmland was sold.

### *The Vermont Republic and Lieutenant Governor Jonathan Hunt*

The history of colonial Vermont and later the Vermont Republic is marked by a struggle of competing claims and sometimes violent disagreements. The first permanent settlements in Vermont occurred in the southern part of the state along the Connecticut River in the present-day towns of Guilford, Vernon, and Brattleboro. In 1724 the Province of Massachusetts Bay erected Fort Dummer near Brattleboro to shelter a militia garrison and protect settlers from raids by the French and their Native American allies.<sup>17</sup> Settlement in Vermont remained sluggish until the conclusion of the Seven Years War in 1763; Great Britain's victory in that conflict led to the destruction of French political influence in Canada and propelled settlers into Vermont.

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<sup>11</sup> Washburn, "Vernon," 294.

<sup>12</sup> "Lieut-Governors of Vermont-Jonathan Hunt," *Rutland Daily Herald*, October 23, 1868, 3.

<sup>13</sup> "Lieut-Governors of Vermont-Jonathan Hunt," *Rutland Daily Herald*, 3.

<sup>14</sup> "Lieut-Governors of Vermont-Jonathan Hunt," *Rutland Daily Herald*, 3.

<sup>15</sup> "Lieut-Governors of Vermont-Jonathan Hunt," *Rutland Daily Herald*, 3.

<sup>16</sup> Washburn, "Vernon," 290.

<sup>17</sup> Fredric F. Van de Water, *The Reluctant Republic: Vermont 1724-1791* (New York: The John Day Company, 1941), 12.

Governor Hunt House

Name of Property

Windham County Vermont

County and State

The growing settler population quickly ran into significant and unexpected legal troubles. Starting in 1749 New Hampshire's colonial governor Benning Wentworth had been granting town charters in Vermont to prospective settlers as part of a scheme to enrich himself.<sup>18</sup> The colonial governor of New York claimed these same lands for himself, and engaged in similar acts of land granting, asserting all the while that New York's territory stretched to the Connecticut River.<sup>19</sup> The conflict between settlers from New York and those from New England ran throughout the middle of the eighteenth century and militia groups like Ethan Allen's Green Mountain Boys formed to protect their claims against the incursion of New Yorkers.

In May 1775, just a month after the Revolutionary War began, the Continental Congress voted to allow unorganized territories to form their own independent governments.<sup>20</sup> The vote established Vermont's independence from New York and New Hampshire and in 1777 state delegates gathered at Windsor Vermont to sign Vermont's Constitution, thereby creating the Vermont Republic. The formation of an independent Vermont displeased some of the state's residents, particularly in the southeast corner of the state where many residents wanted to unite as part of New York State.<sup>21</sup>

Jonathan Hunt played a leading role in the resistance to Vermont's early attempts at governance, believing that the Vermont government would adhere to the claims of the New Hampshire grantees at the expense of those who recognized the legitimacy of New York State's land grants. In 1780 Hunt carried a letter to New York Governor George Clinton outlining the concerns of his fellow New York loyalists. Clinton sent Hunt onto Congress, but the governing body failed to act on the concerns outlined by Hunt.<sup>22</sup> Rebuffed, Jonathan Hunt returned to Vermont and with a small body of men attempted to form an independent state that would have encompassed the towns east of the Green Mountains as well as a number of towns east of the Connecticut River in New Hampshire.<sup>23</sup> The measure ultimately failed and soon after Jonathan Hunt renounced his loyalty to New York and embraced Vermont as a valid political entity. Embracing Vermont allowed Hunt to engage in the state's politics and he quickly rose through the ranks of state governance and the legislature.

As Vermont's second lieutenant governor and an influential political figure in 1780s and 1790s Jonathan Hunt played an important role in helping to shape Vermont's early history. Hunt was particularly influential in southeastern Vermont and acted as a prominent voice for the towns and residents who felt resistant to accepting the legitimacy of the early Vermont Republic. After it became apparent that these communities would not be able to secede and form their own independent state Jonathan Hunt became the voice for these formerly disaffected Vermonters in the state's government. The Governor Hunt House is the best representation of Jonathan Hunt's

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<sup>18</sup> Van de Water, *The Reluctant Republic*, 40.

<sup>19</sup> Van de Water, *The Reluctant Republic*, 38.

<sup>20</sup> Van de Water, *The Reluctant Republic*, 179.

<sup>21</sup> Van de Water, *The Reluctant Republic*, 179. Vernon, Guilford, Brattleboro, and Halifax were the center of this resistance.

<sup>22</sup> "Lieut-Governors of Vermont-Jonathan Hunt," *Rutland Daily Herald*, 3.

<sup>23</sup> "Lieut-Governors of Vermont-Jonathan Hunt," *Rutland Daily Herald*, 3.

Governor Hunt House

Name of Property

Windham County Vermont

County and State

work and life. Acting as Jonathan Hunt's primary residence from 1779 until his death in 1823 the house is the only known residence associated with the lieutenant governor. Even two-hundred years after his death the house continued to be locally referred to as the Governor Hunt House or the Governor Hunt Mansion, highlighting the local association of this property with Lieutenant Governor Jonathan Hunt's life and career.

### *The Governor Hunt House (1833-2021)*

After Arad Hunt's death in 1833 the Governor Hunt House, along with roughly one hundred twenty five acres of associated farmland, was sold to local farmer William Heard [See Figure 2].<sup>24</sup> William Heard lived in the Governor Hunt House and farmed the property until his death in 1875 at which point the property passed to his son Edmund M. Heard.<sup>25</sup> Edmund, who suffered from severe asthma, could not farm the property and instead built a career in the railroad industry. When Edmund Heard died in 1893 the Hunt property passed to his wife Lillian E. Davis. Ultimately, she and Edmund's three sons sold the property in 1906 to farmer George K. Stebbins.<sup>26</sup> Stebbins farmed the Governor Hunt House's associated farmlands from 1906 until his death in 1923.<sup>27</sup> After his death, Stebbins' widow Viola Stebbins sold the Governor Hunt House and farmlands to Clement R. and Bernice B. Jennison. The Jennisons' farmed the Governor Hunt House lands until 1938 when they sold the property to Richard W. Steenbruggen who held on to the property until 1943 when he sold it to Charles Westin.<sup>28</sup> Westin planned to renovate the property and install a farmer in the house however in 1947 he sold the Governor Hunt House to Robert J. Kuhn. This sale was marked by the separation of Governor Hunt House and its associated farmlands. Following the 1947 sale the house would exist as an independently of the lands which had been farmed by the Hunt family and succeeding local farmers.

Robert J. Kuhn was the author of a history of Northfield, he also researched the Hunt family. Immediately after purchasing the home, he put it and its belongings up for auction.<sup>29</sup> Subsequently, the house was purchased in 1947 by New York City socialite Florence Louchheim Stol who would be the last private individual to reside inside the house.<sup>30</sup> Circa 1950 Florence Louchheim Stol undertook a significant renovation campaign in the house, installing a bathroom on the second floor and hiring a Finnish restoration expert to do carpentry in the home. During the restoration Stol apparently conducted research at Historic Deerfield in Massachusetts. Florence Louchheim Stol lived in the Governor Hunt House seasonally from 1947 until her passing in 1967 of lung cancer. During her sojourn in the home Florence Louchheim Stol turned the Governor Hunt House into a gathering space for intellectuals from across America and Europe. Some of her guests during this time included Hannah Kister owner of Roy Publishers, Irena Lorentowicz a Polish stage actress and set designer, and Bruno Rossi an atomic scientist at

<sup>24</sup> "Vernon, Sale of the Heard Farm," *Vermont Phoenix*, May 11, 1906, 7.

<sup>25</sup> "Vernon, Edmund M. Heard," *Vermont Phoenix*, July 14, 1893, 6.

<sup>26</sup> "Vernon, Sale of the Heard Farm to George K. Stebbins," *The Brattleboro Reformer*, May 11, 1906, 7.

<sup>27</sup> "Vernon, Funeral of G. K. Stebbins," *The Brattleboro Reformer*, January 31, 1923, 7.

<sup>28</sup> "Buys Hunt Farm," *The Brattleboro Reformer*, May 14, 1943, 1.

<sup>29</sup> "Auction Sale," *The Brattleboro Reformer*, June 7, 1947, 6.

<sup>30</sup> "Vernon," *The Brattleboro Reformer*, July 18, 1947, 7.

Governor Hunt House

Name of Property

Windham County Vermont

County and State

M. I. T.<sup>31</sup> Florence Louchheim Stol was also a noted collector of contemporary art and following her death Stol donated her collection to the University of Michigan.

After Florence Louchheim Stol passed away, the Governor Hunt House was purchased by the Vermont Yankee Nuclear Power Corporation which formed in 1966 to build Vermont's first nuclear power plant.<sup>32</sup> After purchasing the house the leadership of Vermont Yankee installed their engineers in the Governor Hunt House while the powerplant was under construction.<sup>33</sup> During this time secretaries had to come in prior to the workday to light fires in the house to keep the engineers warm. The company also partnered with the Vernon Historical Society to open the Governor Hunt House as a museum.<sup>34</sup> In 1970 the nuclear power company built a large addition off the rear of the Governor Hunt House to accommodate administrative space and a large conference and training room.<sup>35</sup> Between 1987-1989 Vermont Yankee undertook an extensive restoration project in the Governor Hunt House. Led by Leigh Johnson and builder Jonathan Jesup of Westminster West, the restoration project used documentation and existing physical evidence to bring the Governor Hunt House back to its eighteenth-century appearance to the extent this was possible.<sup>36</sup> The company removed a non-original basement stair, replaced floorboards, and milled planks for the walls using era appropriate tools.<sup>37</sup> During the restoration Vermont Yankee also electrified the building and modernized its heating using electricity drawn from the nuclear power plant. Following the restoration, public tours of the Governor Hunt House were given until 2001 when Federal restrictions associated with the September 11th Terror Attacks curtailed public access to the power plant and its associated properties.<sup>38</sup> In 2002 the power plant was sold to the Entergy Corporation which operated the nuclear plant until 2014 when the facility was taken offline. Since 2016, the Vermont Yankee Nuclear Power Plant has been slowly dismantled by NorthStar Holdings. The Entergy Corporation retained ownership of the Governor Hunt House and ultimately offered it to the Town of Vernon. The town passed responsibility for the home to the Friends of Vernon Center a nonprofit organization dedicated to remembering the history of all the Governor Hunt House's many occupants while also redeveloping the space as a vibrant community center for Vernon residents.

### *Architectural Analysis of the Governor Hunt House*

The Governor Hunt House is an excellent example of a vernacular Georgian style home. Built near the end of the Georgian style's popularity, the Governor Hunt House has limited exterior adornment as befitting a rural home isolated from skilled builders. The home's eaves front

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<sup>31</sup> From the archives of the Vernon Historians, Inc. and the Friends of Vernon Center, Inc.

<sup>32</sup> "Vermont to Have Nuclear Power Generation by 1971," *The Times Argus*, August 6, 1966, 1.

<sup>33</sup> "Energy Center, Gov. Hunt House Open," *Town Crier*, June 26, 1991, 13.

<sup>34</sup> Betty Sak, "Historic Hunt House in Vernon Made Available for Museum by Vt. Yankee," *The Brattleboro Reformer*, October 18, 1968, 8.

<sup>35</sup> "Coming Full Circle: The Governor Hunt House is Returned to the Community," *Friends of the Vernon Center*, <https://www.governorhunt.org/coming-full-circle>.

<sup>36</sup> Charles Satterfield, "Yankee Restoring Historic Vernon Residence," *The Brattleboro Reformer*, September 16, 1989, 13.

<sup>37</sup> Satterfield, "Yankee Restoring Historic Vernon Residence," 13.

<sup>38</sup> "Coming Full Circle: The Governor Hunt House is Returned to the Community."

Governor Hunt House

Name of Property

Windham County Vermont

County and State

façade is symmetrically arranged with a central entry with paneled double doors topped with a multipane transom. This entry has the characteristics of a Connecticut River Valley Doorway, a type of entryway that was popular in the mid-18th century on homes of prominent citizens. Characterized by double doors and ornate surrounds, the doorway on the Governor Hunt House features “rarely seen hand-turned engaged flanking columns that once probably supported an elaborate pediment and now support a simple triangular pediment.”<sup>39</sup> Some of these details, such as the triangular pediment and the building’s 12/12 windows date to the 1987-1989 restoration efforts, however other details such as the engaged pilasters are much older dating to at least the early twentieth century [See Figures 3-5]. However, the arrangement of these windows with one per bay and the second story windows tight to the eaves is commonly seen in Georgian style homes. The house’s side elevations continue the trend of plain fenestration.

Inside the Governor Hunt House, the rooms are all arranged around the building’s central chimney stack. Each major room has a fireplace, a necessity for warming the uninsulated home. Even those rooms which lack a fireplace have operable panels which provide access to the chimney, providing warmth in the winter. The fireplaces are the focal point of each room, and each fireplace is surrounded by wood paneling. In multiple rooms this paneling disguises small cupboards or doors. The detailing of the panels is a key feature allowing one to determine the primacy of spaces within the house. For example, the kitchen features simple paneling while the walls are clad in wide vertical plank boards. Meanwhile in the formal dining hall the walls are plastered and the fireplace panels are varnished. Fluted Doric pilasters flank the fireplace which is topped by a large mantelpiece made from a single piece of pine. The arrangement of the rooms around the chimney stack also helps to articulate the formal spaces occupied by the Hunt family from the spaces occupied by their servants. The front entrance of the house opens onto a vestibule with the parlor to the right, the formal dining room to the left and a stairway to the second-floor bedrooms directly ahead. These formal spaces occupy the full width of the façade and the bulk of the northern and southern side elevations. Across the rear of the house is the kitchen which has its own rear staircase which would have accessed sleeping quarters at the rear of the house.

Structurally, the house is in keeping with 18th century building traditions of the Connecticut River Valley. The heavy timber frame has gunstock posts supporting the wall plates, which in turn support a series of widely-spaced common rafters. The horizontal roof sheathing boards are nailed directly to the common rafters. This type of roof framing is typical of builders who came to Vermont from Connecticut or western Massachusetts.

### *Conclusion*

The Governor Hunt House was built in 1779 for Jonathan Hunt, future lieutenant governor of Vermont and remained the Hunt family’s home until 1833. Since then, the Governor Hunt House has been a farmhouse, a summer home, and finally office space and a training center for a nuclear power plant. Through all this the home has retained its historic form and massing as well

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<sup>39</sup> Glenn m. Andres and Curtis B. Johnson, *Buildings of Vermont* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2014), 429.

Governor Hunt House  
Name of Property

Windham County Vermont  
County and State

as much of its original interior architectural detailing. Alterations to the home, particularly those undertaken by the Vermont Yankee Nuclear Power Company, were sensitive to the historic building which has been a place of local interest since the nuclear power company made it a publicly accessible historic site. The house has also retained a clear association with one of Vermont's important early political leaders. Though Jonathan Hunt initially resisted the government of Vermont after 1780 he embraced the state's legitimacy and worked to shape its future. Presently, the Governor Hunt House is managed by the Friends of Vernon Center, a community nonprofit who intend to make the home a community center.

Governor Hunt House  
Name of Property

Windham County Vermont  
County and State

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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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“Vernon, Funeral of G. K. Stebbins.” *The Brattleboro Reformer*. January 31, 1923, 7.

“Vernon, Sale of the Heard Farm to George K. Stebbins.” *The Brattleboro Reformer*. May 11, 1906, 7.

“Vernon, Sale of the Heard Farm.” *Vermont Phoenix*. May 11, 1906, 7.

Governor Hunt House  
Name of Property

Windham County Vermont  
County and State

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Washburn Esq., A. H. “Vernon.” *Vermont Historical Gazetteer*, vol 5, (1891): 271-327.

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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):** 1318-7 Vermont State Register (Vernon)

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**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreege of Property** 2.00 Acres

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: 42.77583 N

Longitude: 72.51549 W

Governor Hunt House  
Name of Property

Windham County Vermont  
County and State

2. Latitude: Longitude:  
3. Latitude: Longitude:  
4. Latitude: Longitude:

**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 Governor Hunt House is bound to the west by Governor Hunt Road, to the north by a solid line of trees, to the east by a fence which separates the property from the Vermont Yankee Nuclear Power Plant, and to the south by a parking lot and paved drive which lead into the power plant grounds.

**Boundary Justification** (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundaries selected correspond to the historic limits of the property as purchased by Florence Louchheim Stol in 1947.

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**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title: Matthew Shoen/Research Intern  
organization: Preservation Trust of Vermont  
street & number: 60 Grove Street Apt 2  
city or town: Burlington state: Vermont zip code: 05401  
e-mail: [mattshoen26@gmail.com](mailto:mattshoen26@gmail.com)  
telephone: 315-528-8227  
date: 12/21/2021

Governor Hunt House  
Name of Property

Windham County Vermont  
County and State

### 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.)



Figure 1: Map from 1789 showing the Town of Hinesdale (Vernon). In this map the Governor Hunt House (denoted as Maj Hunt) is marked out, indicated that the house had been well established by the time of the map's creation.<sup>40</sup>

<sup>40</sup> William Blodget, "A Topographic Map of the State of Vermont," 1789, <https://collections.leventhalmap.org/search/commonwealth:z603vh09p>.

Governor Hunt House  
Name of Property

Windham County Vermont  
County and State

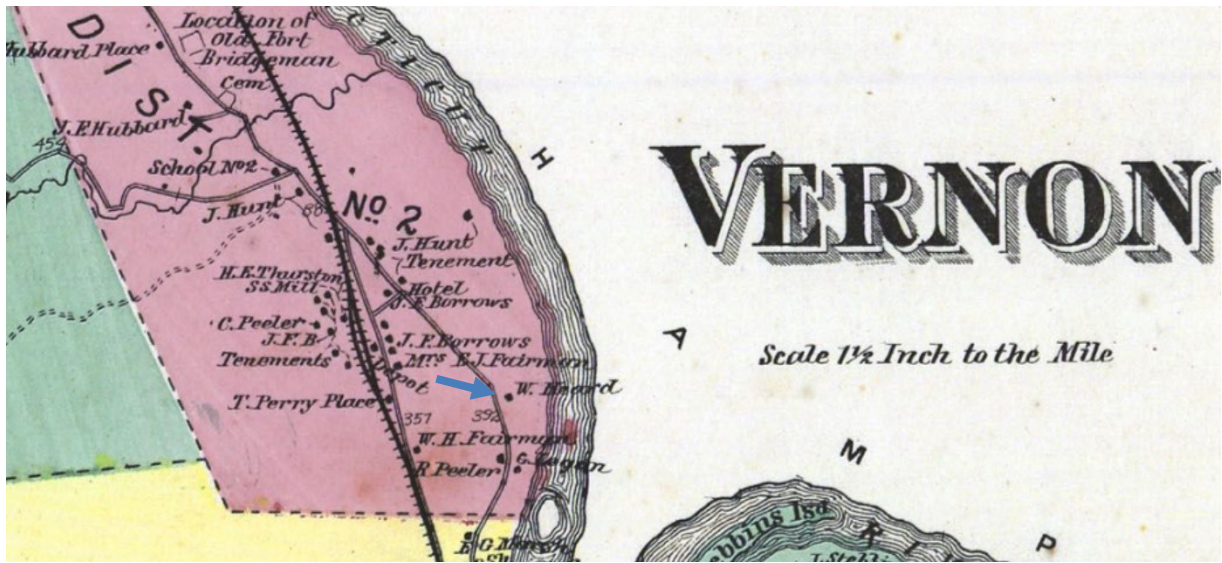


Figure 2: Map of the Vernon showing the Governor Hunt House during its ownership by farmer William Heard. The house's location is highlighted by a blue arrow.<sup>41</sup>

<sup>41</sup> F.W. Beers and Co., "Vernon, Vernon Village, Vernon South, Guilford," (1869), 32.

Governor Hunt House  
Name of Property

Windham County Vermont  
County and State



Figure 3: Photo from c. 1905 showing the Governor Hunt House. A full width porch occupies the southern elevation while there are multiple additions telescoping off the main house's rear elevation.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> From the archives of the Vernon Historians, Inc. and the Friends of Vernon Center, Inc.

Governor Hunt House  
Name of Property

Windham County Vermont  
County and State



Figure 4: Photo from 1947 showing the Governor Hunt House prior to Florence Louchheim Stol's purchase of the property. Note the presence of 6/6 windows, and a large projecting portico believed to be non-original. Nearby barns have all been subsequently demolished.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> From the archives of the Vernon Historians, Inc. and the Friends of Vernon Center, Inc.

Governor Hunt House  
Name of Property

Windham County Vermont  
County and State



Figure 5: Photo from 1967 just prior to the Governor Hunt House's purchase by Vermont Yankee. The photo shows the entry installed by Florence Louchheim Stol with square pilasters, a secondary entry on the southern elevation, and a side porch/addition off the rear elevation.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> From the archives of the Vernon Historians, Inc. and the Friends of Vernon Center, Inc.

Governor Hunt House  
Name of Property

Windham County Vermont  
County and State

### **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: Governor Hunt House

City or Vicinity: Vernon

County: Windham

State: Vermont

Photographer: Matthew Shoen

Date Photographed: September 2, 2021

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

Photo 1: Vermont\_Windham\_GovernorHuntHouse\_0001: ¾ shot of the façade and northern elevation of the 1779 portion of the house. Camera facing east.

Photo 2: Vermont\_Windham\_GovernorHuntHouse\_0002: ¾ shot of the façade and southern elevation of the 1779 portion of the house as well as the rear additions built by Vermont Yankee. Camera facing north.

Photo 3: Vermont\_Windham\_GovernorHuntHouse\_0003: Side elevation of the house and rear corridor addition. Camera facing northwest.

Photo 4: Vermont\_Windham\_GovernorHuntHouse\_0004: Rear of the Vermont Yankee addition. Camera facing west.

Photo 5: Vermont\_Windham\_GovernorHuntHouse\_0005: Rear and northern elevation of the 1779 building as well as the rear additions. Camera facing southwest.

Photo 6: Vermont\_Windham\_GovernorHuntHouse\_0006: Northern side elevation. Camera facing south.

Governor Hunt House  
Name of Property

Windham County Vermont  
County and State

Photo 7: Vermont\_Windham\_GovernorHuntHouse\_0007: Interior of the Vermont Yankee addition. Conference Room. Camera facing east.

Photo 8: Vermont\_Windham\_GovernorHuntHouse\_0008: Corridor leading into the 1779 portion of the house. Camera facing west.

Photo 9: Vermont\_Windham\_GovernorHuntHouse\_0009: Kitchen of the 1779 house wide plank flooring and a corner of the kitchen hearth are visible. Camera facing north.

Photo 10: Vermont\_Windham\_GovernorHuntHouse\_0010: Parlor of the 1779 house showing the large fireplace hearth and paneled surrounds. Camera facing north.

Photo 11: Vermont\_Windham\_GovernorHuntHouse\_0011: Dining room of the 1779 house showing the chinaware cabinet, windows, and wainscotting. Camera facing northwest.

Photo 12: Vermont\_Windham\_GovernorHuntHouse\_0012: Dining room of the 1779 house showing the fireplace and paneled surround. Camera facing south.

Photo 13: Vermont\_Windham\_GovernorHuntHouse\_0013: Second story children's bedroom showing fireplace and paneling. Camera facing north.

Photo 14: Vermont\_Windham\_GovernorHuntHouse\_0014: Second story master bedroom showing fireplace and paneling. Camera facing south.

Photo 15: Vermont\_Windham\_GovernorHuntHouse\_0015: Attic level showing massive chimney stack and roof framing in the unfinished space. Camera facing south.

Governor Hunt House  
Name of Property

Windham County Vermont  
County and State



Photo 1: Vermont\_Windham\_GovernorHuntHouse\_0001: ¾ shot of the façade and northern elevation of the 1779 portion of the house. Camera facing east.

Governor Hunt House  
Name of Property

Windham County Vermont  
County and State



Photo 2: Vermont\_Windham\_GovernorHuntHouse\_0002: ¾ shot of the façade and southern elevation of the 1779 portion of the house as well as the rear additions built by Vermont Yankee. Camera facing north.

Governor Hunt House  
Name of Property

Windham County Vermont  
County and State



Photo 3: Vermont\_Windham\_GovernorHuntHouse\_0003: Side elevation of the house and rear corridor addition. Camera facing northwest.

Governor Hunt House  
Name of Property

Windham County Vermont  
County and State



Photo 4: Vermont\_Windham\_GovernorHuntHouse\_0004: Rear of the Vermont Yankee addition. Camera facing west.

Governor Hunt House  
Name of Property

Windham County Vermont  
County and State



Photo 5: Vermont\_Windham\_GovernorHuntHouse\_0005: Rear and northern elevation of the 1779 building as well as the rear additions. Camera facing southwest.

Governor Hunt House  
Name of Property

Windham County Vermont  
County and State



Photo 6: Vermont\_Windham\_GovernorHuntHouse\_0006: Northern side elevation. Camera facing south.

Governor Hunt House  
Name of Property

Windham County Vermont  
County and State



Photo 7: Vermont\_Windham\_GovernorHuntHouse\_0007: Interior of the Vermont Yankee addition. Conference Room. Camera facing east.

Governor Hunt House  
Name of Property

Windham County Vermont  
County and State



Photo 8: Vermont\_Windham\_GovernorHuntHouse\_0008: Corridor leading into the 1779 portion of the house. Camera facing west.

Governor Hunt House  
Name of Property

Windham County Vermont  
County and State



Photo 9: Vermont\_Windham\_GovernorHuntHouse\_0009: Kitchen of the 1779 house wide plank flooring and a corner of the kitchen hearth are visible. Camera facing north.

Governor Hunt House  
Name of Property

Windham County Vermont  
County and State



Photo 10: Vermont\_Windham\_GovernorHuntHouse\_0010: Parlor of the 1779 house showing the large fireplace hearth and paneled surrounds. Camera facing north.

Governor Hunt House  
Name of Property

Windham County Vermont  
County and State



Photo 11: Vermont\_Windham\_GovernorHuntHouse\_0011: Dining room of the 1779 house showing the chinaware cabinet, windows, and wainscoting. Camera facing northwest.

Governor Hunt House  
Name of Property

Windham County Vermont  
County and State



Photo 12: Vermont\_Windham\_GovernorHuntHouse\_0012: Dining room of the 1779 house showing the fireplace and paneled surround. Camera facing south.

Governor Hunt House  
Name of Property

Windham County Vermont  
County and State



Photo 13: Vermont\_Windham\_GovernorHuntHouse\_0013: Second story children's bedroom showing fireplace and paneling. Camera facing north.

Governor Hunt House  
Name of Property

Windham County Vermont  
County and State



Photo 14: Vermont\_Windham\_GovernorHuntHouse\_0014: Second story master bedroom showing fireplace and paneling. Camera facing south.

Governor Hunt House  
Name of Property

Windham County Vermont  
County and State



Photo 15: Vermont\_Windham\_GovernorHuntHouse\_0015: Attic level showing massive chimney stack and roof framing in the unfinished space. Camera facing south.

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for nominations 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.). We may not conduct or sponsor and you are not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number.

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for each response using this form is estimated to be between the Tier 1 and Tier 4 levels with the estimate of the time for each tier as follows:

- Tier 1 – 60-100 hours
- Tier 2 – 120 hours
- Tier 3 – 230 hours
- Tier 4 – 280 hours

The above estimates include time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and preparing and transmitting nominations. Send comments regarding these estimates or any other aspect of the requirement(s) to the Service Information Collection Clearance Officer, National Park Service, 1201 Oakridge Drive Fort Collins, CO 80525.