



Name of Property: Brown Bridge
City, State: Shrewsbury, Vermont
Period of Significance: 1880
NHL Criteria: 4
NHL Theme: V. Developing the American Economy
 3. Transportation and Communication
 VI. Expanding Science and Technology
 2. Technological Applications
Previous Recognition: 1974 National Register of Historic Places
 2002 Historic American Engineering Record, HAER VT-28
National Historic Context: *Covered Bridges NHL Context Study*
 XVII. Technology (Engineering and Innovation)
 B. Transportation

NHL Significance:

- Constructed in 1880, the Brown Bridge is an exceptionally fine example of nineteenth-century covered bridge construction. The bridge is one of the most outstanding surviving examples of a Town lattice truss, a nationally significant timber bridge type.
- Patented by Ithiel Town in 1820, this truss was widely popular throughout the nineteenth century because it could be erected inexpensively by local builders using machine-fabricated woodwork, and with no need for arch construction, it obviated the need for substantial abutments.
- Brown Bridge was erected by Nichols M. Powers, who built over twenty substantial covered bridges. Powers also built the Blenheim Bridge, a National Historic Landmark destroyed in 2011 by Hurricane Irene.

Integrity:

- Constructed for use on a minimally-traveled road, the bridge has survived with little need for repairs beyond the traditional replacement of the wood superstructure (siding and flooring). The bridge retains a high degree of historic integrity with all of its load-bearing components intact. It also retains its slate roof, a local tradition in this area of

Vermont.

- Brown Bridge clearly illustrates the character-defining features of the resource type. The original trusses exhibit the distinctive features of the Town lattice truss type: a series of overlapping diagonal planks fastened together with trenails (wood pins) to form a lattice web.
- The bridge's picturesque rural setting possesses a high level of aesthetic integrity, and Brown Bridge retains the feeling of a nineteenth-century covered bridge.

Owner of Property: Town of Shrewsbury, Vermont

Acreage of Property: Less than one acre

Origins of Nomination: The Covered Bridge Context Study, as well as this nomination, originated with funding from the National Historic Covered Bridge Preservation Program. The Historic American Engineering Record (HAER) documented 75 historic covered bridges from 2002 to 2004 from a list suggested by a national committee of covered bridge experts. This bridge and the Duck Creek Aqueduct, are being nominated subsequent to the designation of the Humpback Bridge and Knight's Ferry Bridge in 2011.

Potential for Positive Public Response or Reflection on NHL Program:

- Designation would recognize the importance of covered bridges to the development of transportation and engineering in the United States.

Potential for Negative Public Response or Reflection on NHL Program: None known.

Landmarks Committee Comments:

Landmarks Committee Recommendation: Designation. Mr. Hoyos moved, Dr. Mills seconded; unanimous approval.

Public Comments Favoring Designation (received as of 12/13/13):

Joseph Conwill, Editor, Covered Bridge Topics

Bert Potter, Chair, Selectboard, Town of Shrewsbury, Vermont (owner/HEO waiver received)

Margaret Strobel, Ph.D., Professor Emerita of Gender and Women's Studies, University of Illinois at Chicago; Board Member and Former President, National Collaborative for Women's History Sites

Advisory Board Recommendation: