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National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 1

Church Street Historic District
Burlington, Chittenden County, Vermont

Statement of Significance

Architect/Builder:

Atkin, Lawrence
Austin, Frank Lyman
Bergholtz, William Rudolph Otto
Clure, John
Fisher, Alfred Benjamin
Fisher, Clellan Waldo
Freeman French Freeman
Hatch, Steven D.
Lee, George
Lindberg, Colin
Lynch, Charles
McLaughlin, John
Mies van der Rohe, Ludwig (Office of)
Mountain View Diner Company
Newton, Louis Sheldon
O'Connor, James W.
O'Mahoney, Jerry, Inc.
Ryer, E.C.
Stein, Benjamin
Townsend, William H.
Truex Cullin and Partners
Wiemann-Lamphere

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Significance

The Church Street Historic District in Burlington, Vermont, exemplifies the development of a small American city's commercial downtown during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. It possesses a concentration of commercial, domestic and mixed use buildings around an urban streetscape that links the district historically and aesthetically to its role as the commercial heart of Burlington. The district's period of significance runs from c. 1820 to 1964. It begins with Church Street's early development as a primarily residential neighborhood with a few shops, continues through the later decades of the nineteenth century when the district evolved into the hub of a thriving lumber town, and extends into the twentieth century as it transitioned into a regionally important center for business, cultural and retail activities. Local businessmen and women operated stores, banks, insurance offices, restaurants and entertainment venues in buildings designed and erected by regionally and nationally significant architects, contractors and craftsmen. The District includes some of the state's best examples of late nineteenth and early twentieth century commercial architecture. Significant events and trends in areas such as finance, communications, transportation, cultural and women's history have transpired within the district. Church Street is Burlington's main street. The Church Street Historic District is eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places under Criteria A because of its association with historic events and activities in the city, in the state, and in northern New England; and under Criteria C for its architecture and for the contributions of its regionally, nationally and internationally recognized designers and builders.

Chartered in 1763, Burlington was not permanently settled until the 1780s. By 1820, topography, lake transport at the waterfront, and mill industry at Winooski Falls combined to determine the emergence of Church Street as one of three mercantile districts in the city (the other two were located at the lakefront and along the crest of Pearl Street).

As the center of the town and, by 1865, the city, Church Street became Burlington's venue for innovative commercial architecture as new buildings rose and facades were renovated during the course of each successive decade. Just as important, too, the Church Street district served as the stage for historically significant activities and events relating to trade, industry, finance, transportation, communications, education, society, entertainment and the performing arts. All of these activities and events took place on the district's streets and in its historic buildings. During

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the early nineteenth century Church Street gradually evolved into the downtown center. It was a thriving retail and business hub during the boom economy of the latter half of the 1800s and remained the commercial and entertainment heart of the city throughout the twentieth century. The period of significance for the Church Street Historic District is 1820 to 1964. It begins with the early years of Church Street's development as a commercial center and ends forty-five years ago, by which time all of the contributing structures had been built.

Historical background

Established as the shire town of Chittenden County, Burlington was chartered in June of 1763. Although the first proprietors met in 1774, an unstable political climate postponed permanent settlement until the 1780s. After the American Revolution and after the jitters of conflict with Great Britain subsided, Burlington began to grow steadily in population. Farming, milling and trade expanded as eager and ambitious grant holders settled and developed their land. At the widest expanse of Lake Champlain, sheltered in a crescent-shaped bay, Burlington's setting claimed an advantage not only for beauty but for offering an ideal location for a mercantile port. With Montreal and Quebec City to the north and Albany, Troy, Manhattan and Boston to the south, Burlington was in a position ripe for progress and growth. In fact, the shipping industry thrived in the port from the village's earliest development. Products such as grain, butter, cheese, iron, pearl ash, wool and lumber, in abundant supply in the newly settled town and its hinterland, were shipped out from the harbor, while arriving vessels dropped off sugar, salt, molasses, liquor, dry goods and other merchandise.

Early business activities were concentrated near the wharves, with ship captains Gideon King Jr., Job Boynton, Dan Davis, Dan Lyon, Jahaziel Sherman, Gideon Lathrop, and others trading goods between Burlington and Canada and New York state. Initial lake transport was by sailing vessels, but it was the advent of steam power, beginning with the construction of the *Vermont*, the second steamboat in the world, by John and James Winans in Burlington Bay in 1809 that enhanced the harbor's commercial development. Storehouses and shops extended from the waterfront to Court House Square, forming an early center for trade. Stephen Keyes opened the first mercantile establishment in 1789. The magnet of economic vitality attracted new businesses and settlers as banks, insurance offices, shops and hotels grew in size and number in the village. Merchants rode water vessels and horseback from Burlington to Albany and Troy to obtain goods, while stage coaches arrived at Court House Square, horns blowing.¹

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In the first decades of the nineteenth century, Courthouse Square functioned as the heart of Burlington village. Samuel Hickok, Philo Doolittle, and E. T. Englesby were storekeepers nearby the courthouse and customhouse, which were also convenient to Howard's Hotel, King's sail works, banks, and the jail. By 1800, there were 3,000 residents, 400 dwelling houses, and six stores in the emerging town.² Some businessmen and merchants chose to locate their homes and shops at an intermediate distance between Burlington Bay and the busy mills constructed by James Sawyer for Ira Allen at Winooski Falls, and a second settlement developed along the hill, running up Pearl Street. Here, merchants such as George Moore, E. H. Deming, Stephen Pearl, Harry Bradley, James Sawyer, the Loomis brothers (Luther, Edward and Horace), and the firm of Vilas & Noyes operated their retail trade. Dr. Lazarus Tausley, who built his house at the southeastern corner of Church and Pearl streets, kept an apothecary shop east of the Unitarian Church, mid-way between the business district at Courthouse Square and the Pearl Street merchants.³ These Pearl Street businesses thrived during Burlington's early history. However, the town's topography eventually led to the growth of Church Street as Burlington's primary mercantile and retail district.

A wide natural ravine stretched diagonally across the hillside from lower King Street northeast to Greene Street (now Prospect Street). The ravine acted as a physical barrier preventing residents and visitors from moving easily from west to east across the hill. Only filled in after street and sewer improvements were made in the late 1870s, the ravine played a major role in the developing patterns of settlement, transport, industry and commerce in Burlington.

Early Development of Church Street

In order to travel from the wharves along the lakefront at the foot of Main Street to Pearl Street and the Winooski Falls area and beyond, pedestrians and riders, carriages and carts had to navigate around the ravine. Church Street offered the most convenient passable route. It quickly became the favored path for travel between the two commercial areas along Battery Street and Pearl Street. Perhaps inevitably, Church Street slowly and steadily assumed its own commercial character and eventually supplanted both Battery Street and Pearl Street as the town's predominant commercial district.

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An 1830 land record refers to Church Street as “the street which leads from the Court House Square to the Brick Church on Pearl Street.”⁴ Later, a Burlington resident reminisced about the general aggravation caused by the construction of Peck’s Block on College Street, physically preventing her from following her usual shortcut to church and forcing her path up Church Street instead.⁵ Burlington historian W. S. Rann noted that “Church Street was far from being the main business street of the village. There were no [commercial] blocks and few dwelling houses, only five or six stores and tin shops.”⁶

By 1830, Church Street had at least three established dry goods stores. The Lyman Block was built by John and Cornelius Wickware in 1829 at the southeast corner of College and Church streets (the site of the Burlington Trust Company building, #68). Sion E. Howard opened a store on the southwest corner of Church and Bank (current site of Howard Opera House, #77) and “Sherman’s Brick Block, at the sign of the Padlock,” advertised its wares in the 1830 Burlington Sentinel (#69 and #70, the Sherman/Abraham buildings). Although business activity was already well-established in stores surrounding Court House Square, with J. & J. H. Peck & Co. leading the wholesale business, mercantile establishments gradually migrated up Church Street. The *Burlington Sentinel* of August 19, 1830, ran this advertisement for the New York Leather Store:

Removal. The subscribers respectfully inform their friends and the publick [sic] that they have removed to Church Street, a few rods north of the old bank...[by] Johonnott & Smith⁷

Although Church Street contained many residential buildings, as early as 1834 businessmen were choosing to build their stores on this thoroughfare, as well as to live nearby. Some Church Street merchants lived above their businesses, while many others built separate residences on adjacent city blocks. John Johnson’s 1835 insurance plans confirm this practice. Saddler Samuel H. Peaslee located his store at the southeast corner of Church and Bank, and lived immediately behind in a detached structure.⁸ Similarly, Jesse J. Starr’s tinshop on Church Street (near the Burlington Square mall entrance, #95A) sat 110 feet from his barn and 147 feet from his residence, on the southwest corner of Cherry and Church streets.⁹ Lewis Curtis opened a jewelry store and lived with his father on the corner of Bank and Church streets.¹⁰ Grocer Ira Russell purchased the store of A. S. Dewey in 1865, on the east side of Church Street, “eighteen inches south of the F. Staniford Store...to the northern corner of S. L. Herrick’s store” (between College and Bank) but lived on the corner of Cherry St. and South Winooski Avenue (#13).¹¹

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William Strong and Thaddeus Sawyer had similar arrangements. More and more businessmen began to recognize the advantages of its location and invested their interests on Church Street.

Merchants on Church Street not only followed the model of new construction: some business owners simply converted residential buildings to commercial use. Hiram Blood opened his grocery in the former home of Hiram Ballard on Church Street (#99) and lived on Cherry Street between Church and South Winooski Avenue.¹² Artemus Prouty lived at 131-133 Bank Street, but ran a business in a domestic building converted to a shop at 106 Church Street (#39). Other surviving residential scale buildings suggest this may have been a fairly common practice.

As the nineteenth century wore on, however, more domestic residential structures were replaced by new commercial style buildings. This happened early along the upper block of Church Street between Pearl and Cherry streets. The home of Charles and Lydia Grant was razed to build Corley's Grocery (#98) and the Peirce/Pierce residence, built by Lazarus Tausley, was replaced by a commercial building (now the location of the Richardson building, **Head of Church Street Historic District**). A private library on the grounds of the George Perkins Marsh property was demolished for the construction of a new business block (#1) and the remaining land sold for another commercial development (Chauvin's Block, #2).

By the 1840s Church Street had established a reputation as the town's new commercial and retail center. Historian T. D. Seymour Bassett compared census data for the villages of Vermont, and found that in Burlington "an overwhelming proportion [of businesses] was located in the twenty seven block gridiron from the Lake to Church and White [South Winooski] Streets, in diminishing concentration from the Water-Main-Church-Pearl route."¹³ In 1840, with a population of 4,271, Burlington boasted 49 stores, 2 banks, and 12 hotels.¹⁴

The 1857 *Wallings Map of Burlington and Winooski Village* identified medical and legal offices as well as a large number of retail shops on Church Street. For example, Dr. Bigelow, Dr. J. May, and Dr. E. Weston, Jr. each had a Church Street office. Store owners included Nichols & Boynton, Hotchkiss & Jellison and C. F. Staniford, all dry goods merchants; G. B. Dow who sold stoves and tinware; H. Burritt and G. L. Warner (#6), both grocers; J.S. Pierce, who dealt in agricultural tools; A.G. Strong carried shelf hardware; Daniel Snow, a baker and confectioner; and S. Huntington and E. A. Fuller, stationers and booksellers.¹⁵ Fuller was located at 99-101 Church Street (#73) in 1870.

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Both the *Wallings Map* and 1869 *Beers Plan of the City of Burlington* indicate that the block between College and Bank Streets was the most densely developed area of Church Street. This block eventually became known as the “dry goods district” because of the prevalence of grocers, grain sellers and tools and hardware merchants.¹⁶ Today this block continues to have a concentration of use: on any sunny day it is crowded by pedestrians and outdoor diners. Perhaps this is due to the present concentration of restaurants and outdoor cafes here; but it is also the location of a convergence of foot traffic streaming from both the east (university campuses) and the west (City Hall Park). In this way, pedestrian use and commercial activity have continued in the same pattern on Church Street as they did in the early nineteenth century.

Shopping on Church Street during its early years, however, was far from the handy experience it is today. While pedestrians were welcome to browse the stores, sidewalks were considered “unsuitable” until the 1850s. A writer in 1884 reminisced:

The writer estimates that he has passed along and through Church Street not less than sixty thousand times during the last third of a century. In the earlier portion of these tramps the sidewalks were so poor and the steps projected into the street so variously that one was obliged to give heed to his footsteps lest he fall and hence could not as carefully read the lessons of the street as in these later years...When the side walks were widened a few years ago and flagged [1877] the portion assigned to man was about equal to that given to the horse. The setting apart of a respectable portion of the street for the benefit of man so that even horses were bound to respect his rights therein was not accomplished without a struggle.¹⁷

Church Street was paved with stone cobbles in 1851. A letter to the local paper two years later remarked on changes in Burlington, noting that Church Street was “paved and thickly built up, [it] is a different looking street.”¹⁸ By this time Church Street had definitively supplanted Pearl Street as the town’s central business district, for the same letter writer also mentioned a transformed Pearl Street: “...through which the Stages used to come whirling in from the North and East, and the eight and ten horse land ships loaded with flour and merchandise take their way, has ceased to be the great thoroughfare. It is now a quiet street of handsome residences.”¹⁹

The ebb and flow of physical changes on Church Street reflected the fluctuations in Burlington’s economic climate. The opening of the Champlain Canal (the first leg opened in 1819, completed

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to the Hudson River in 1823) would make available retail markets unheard of in Gideon King's day. Burlington continued to ship lumber and other articles from its port, anxiously profiting from its preferred location and good fortune. The addition of two railroad lines in 1848 seemed to confirm Burlington's dominance as a commercial and manufacturing location, as this was the only location that both ship and iron horse converged. Unfortunately, Burlington was now at the terminus of the line instead of acting as wholesaler for the region, and Burlington's economy faltered.

The closing of the Champlain Glassworks on Park Street in 1850, however, triggered a financial panic that temporarily stalled commercial growth in Burlington. By 1852, however, farsighted Burlington leaders had redirected their resources as, for example, in the construction of the Pioneer Mechanics shops along the sandbanks of the waterfront. Long-term effects of the panic were averted when Burlington industry refocused on new manufacturing industries. The lumber trade found a new footing, as raw lumber now was imported from Canada and reworked in saw mills and wood products' manufacturing shops along the lakefront, producing all manner of building goods and products. Historic photographs confirm the exuberance of the new lumber trade, with over 40 acres of stacked raw materials filling the wharves along the lakefront. This new, broad based endeavor jump-started Burlington's economy and produced a surge in both population and commercial activity. The lumber and wood trade fed off the easy market accessibility afforded by both rail and water. An immigrant labor force, mostly from Canada and Ireland, began to settle in Burlington, finding work in the new lumber sheds, planing mills and waterfront factories. Besides the increase in residents and commerce, Burlington benefited from the availability of skilled lumber manufacture; many of the buildings constructed at that time displayed fine detailing and elaborate wooden features.

By 1854, a gas works had been built and gas lighting was installed along the streets of the downtown area. The early 1860s saw the construction of the first large, three-story, Italianate style commercial blocks on Church and College streets. The Union, Central, and Allen Blocks (#s 94, 93 and 92) were built from 1857 to 1863, the Payne and Nelson Blocks (#17 and #18) and the Fisher Block (#33) in c.1865, all on Church Street, and the Blodgett Building (#66) was constructed in 1860 on College Street. These buildings signaled a change to a more commercial character for the district, as merchants sought ways to improve their prospects. They recognized that new buildings, as well as structural alterations and improvements to existing properties, were essential to the success of their businesses. Shop owners wanted their premises to reflect

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their prosperity, so new and improved buildings were considered barometers of commercial success. Those who lagged behind were chastised. One newspaper contributor later wrote:

At that time the store windows, then principally called shop windows were comparatively small and made of small glass, but these things gradually changed until now [1884] the best of plate glass is used and the size is as large as the proper arranging of the entrances will permit...The improvements in store fronts and glass which had made considerable progress before that time has made rapid progress since and is still progressing and with it has been developed much good taste...There are still a few stores, as there then were many, whose proprietors do not seem to take in the full idea of the real purpose for which such windows are constructed... The new windows in Union Block deserve a note in reward for their recent improvement in rich plate glass.²⁰

Growth of Church Street after 1860

By 1860 Burlington had become the most populous town in the state, with 7,713 residents. It was a thriving lumber boomtown. Matthew Buckham sang Burlington's praises in an essay entitled "Burlington as a Place to Live in," published in Abby Hemenway's 1867 *Vermont Historical Gazetteer*:

Burlington is the only point on the lake from the extreme northern limits of the state, at which the railroad and lake navigation come together. The importance of this fact, connected with the territorial advantages... will at once be seen upon reflection; although its value was not practically appreciated for many years after the railroads were opened, and is even now but partially turned to account. This is the simple and natural explanation of the almost wonderful revival of enterprise here within five years past; this accounts for such a vast accumulation of lumber that not only our wharves will not hold it, but the bay will hardly furnish room enough to build all the wharves that are needed; this justifies the transfer of a large iron works from an inland region traversed only by common roads, to a point where bulky raw materials can be brought by water and from which the manufactured article can be hurried to market by rail. And this, unless we are greatly mistaken, will yet, ere many years, actually make Burlington what she bade fair to be thirty-five years ago, and what she despaired of ever being fifteen years ago, one of the most important business centers in northern New England.²¹

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Prosperity, then, followed the years immediately after the Civil War. Many of the district's buildings date to these years. The Gibbs House (#26), the Gibson Building (#31) and Reynold's Saloon (#57), as well as Mary Collinson's millinery shop (#32) were among the smaller buildings, while the Mooney Block (#34) on Church Street, and Baxter's Block (#43) and Beach's Bakery (#44), both on College Street, were large commercial blocks built just after the war.

By the time of the Civil War, moreover, Burlington was the third largest lumber port in the country, after Chicago and Albany. In 1856, 20 million board feet of lumber were cut in its saw mills. By 1889, the peak year of production, this number reached 375 million.²² Beginning in the 1860s, when most of the state's old growth forests had been clear cut for lumber, the city depended on lumber imported from cutting operations located in the eastern Canadian provinces and floated by river, canal and lake to Burlington's mills. Raw lumber was imported duty-free from Canada, then cut and finished in Burlington and shipped via the railroads to markets and ports in the United States.

The town became a city in 1865, when Burlington voters and the state legislature approved articles of incorporation. Burlington's transition from a township composed of a village core surrounded by farms and pastureland into a city was a response to the changing needs of the commercial and industrial trade interests developing along Church Street and the lake shore. An increase in trade and commerce not only enriched merchants and other members of the professional class, but also brought large numbers of workmen and their families to the city, creating a need for housing stock and services. Incorporation, however, only included about one-half of the land area of Burlington. Three wards were created, North, South and Center, while the areas to the west and south of the city formed the separate township of South Burlington.²³

There had been vocal opposition to altering the form of town government for more than a decade leading up to 1865, as various interest groups did not share a common vision for Burlington's future. At town meeting in 1852, a motion to incorporate the town center and the area to the north under a city charter had been narrowly defeated. Most notably, a conflict existed between the "downhill" urban dwellers and the "uphill" rural inhabitants of the town. Land owners, predominantly sheep and cattle farmers in the southern part and around the edges of the town, opposed a city charter since it held few, if any, benefits to them and would certainly increase their tax burden. With the growth of the town center along Church Street, a burgeoning trade in

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lumber and wood products and the arrival of new town dwellers, both from the hinterland and abroad, however, the newly rich merchants, traders and businessmen desired and pushed for a change in the organization of the local government.²⁴

Between 1860 and 1870 Burlington experienced the most marked growth spurt in its history. The population increased from 7,713 to 13,596. One of the motivations for Burlington's incorporation as a city was to provide a public water supply system. With the lumber boom came an increased awareness among city officials and business owners of the destructive potential of fires. Conflagrations were an especially serious concern in Burlington, considering the rapid growth of wood-related businesses. The major industries were concentrated in wood products: the storing and shipping of lumber, saw mills, and manufacturing. An enormous amount of flammable material, including timber, sawdust and shavings, was located in close proximity to residences and civic buildings, which also were built, for the most part, with wood. Stacked lumber occupied most of the land along the Burlington lakefront. The area adjacent to the wharves and piers, in fact, was known as the Lumber District. The average height of piled wood was 18 feet, and the rows of open space between the stacks were given numbers and referred to as 'streets.' Private fortunes were made, as well as lost, in the lumber trading business.²⁵

An adequate, if not an abundant, supply of clean water was one of the newly incorporated city's most urgent needs. Besides the requirement for a large quantity of stored water to be on standby in order to combat fires, the city would profit in other ways from a municipal water system. Families required water for drinking, cooking, and cleaning, as well as to flush away household waste. Water was required for the business community as well: railroads, livery services, sawmills and manufacturing shops needed water for the production of their goods and services, and tourism would increase if the city could project an image of civic progressiveness, with water fountains in public spaces and ample running water for hotels. Finally, a municipal water supply was needed to improve public health and decrease the risk of contagious disease.²⁶

In 1866, two engineers presented separate proposals for the waterworks. W. J. McAlpine of New York advocated using the Winooski River as the source for the city's water, while Burlington resident D. C. Linsley insisted that Lake Champlain was the better choice. The conflict between these two protagonists brought into focus the complex interaction of public-spirit and raw self-interest that defined Burlington's early civic leadership. After Linsley's proposal won the debate, construction began in 1867 under his supervision. A pier and intake

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well were built in the lake, near the Battery at the foot of North Street. A pump house on the lakeshore housed two pumps, a duplex condensing steam engine and a boiler fueled by coal and wood shavings. The pumps had the capacity to lift water 285 vertical feet for a distance of 8,362 feet to an earthen reservoir with a capacity of 2,236,000 gallons that was built near the University of Vermont campus. The reservoir allowed gravity to distribute water throughout the system when the pumps were turned off. Municipal service began on December 25, 1867. Between 1868 and 1875, the distribution system was expanded to cover most of the city's three wards. In 1868, the first year of operation, nearly 50 million gallons of water were pumped from the lake into the supply and distribution mains. The following year the amount of water pumped increased to approximately 88 million gallons. In 1870, the amount reported was 109,500,000 gallons, an average of exactly 300,000 gallons per day.²⁷ Fire hydrants were placed at most street corners within the area covered by the water system, and within the National Register District at the corners of Church and Main, Church and College, and Church and Pearl streets. A new drinking well was installed at the corner of Church and Cherry Streets.²⁸

Writing in 1886 of the changes that took place in the first decade following Burlington's incorporation as a city, W.S. Rann included:

The grading and curbing of streets, the beautifying of lawns, the extension of thoroughfares, and especially in the removal of old buildings and *rookeries* [sic], and the erection in all parts of the city of new, substantial and tasteful structures. Along the lake front the wharfing was greatly extended, and acres of land made by filling the shore. In the place of tangled ravines and disused brickyards appeared extensive lumberyards.²⁹

The national economic prosperity of the post-Civil War era came to an abrupt end in September, 1873 when a severe financial panic, caused in large part by the wildly speculative financing of Jay Cooke for the Northern Pacific Railroad, gripped the entire country. The economic depression that ensued lasted for the next five years.³⁰ Work on the Northern Pacific Railroad came to a standstill, while banks and businesses failed across the country. However, despite the economic rollercoaster ride, a great number of large new buildings, nearly all of them with Italianate characteristics, were constructed within the Church Street commercial district in these years. Chauvin's Block (#2) had been built in 1872, before the panic, but the larger, adjacent Bacon's Block (#3) was constructed in 1874 and the commercial block (#4) next to it c. 1875. The Champlain Hotels (#58) and the Woods Building (#63) were also erected in 1875.

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The Vermont Life Insurance Building (#54) and the Exchange Block, (#55) were built in high Italianate style, with cast iron cornices and window surrounds, at prominent sites in 1876 and 1877. Shortly after, in 1878 and 1879, John Purple Howard built his Opera House (#78) and commercial building (#79) and the adjacent Burritt Block (#77) went up. Very likely, Burlington's businessmen were loath to turn their earnings over to banks or to convert them into stocks or bonds, given the recent financial crash. Instead they invested in real estate. Since much of the local economy during the economic catastrophe was based on credit rather than cash, moreover, merchants and the professional class probably found construction labor easy to come by. Down and out tradesmen and day laborers could be inexpensively employed on construction projects, and credit rather than cash was likely the preferred form of exchange.

Despite the economic depression, Burlington city officials justifiably viewed the city's prospects with optimism. An anonymous author writing in the 1875 *Annual Report* extolled Burlington's recent successes and predicted future growth:

While these public institutions and buildings have been taking shape and direction, the business facilities and home improvement of our citizens have grown even more rapidly. Whole streets have been built up, and others so re-modeled and improved, that the visitor of ten years ago can scarcely recognize old landmarks. Evidence of business thrift, and individual wealth abound all around us, and though the depression of enterprise, so universal throughout the country, has not spared Burlington, still, there are not wanting proofs that our city is destined to recover from it and attract capital, for profitable investment in business and manufacturing enterprises, to a greater extent than she has yet done.³¹

Such was the fear of fire in these years that the city passed an ordinance in 1876 regulating the use of wood as a building material in the most densely settled central district. The area comprised the city blocks enclosed by Battery Street to the west, Pearl Street to the north, Williard Street to the east and Maple Street to the south. The entirety of the Church Street Historic District lies within these boundaries. Wood buildings could be erected only by special permit, and all roofs were to be covered with either slate or metal. Awnings with wood supports were also prohibited.³²

In these years, too, the city began to make street and sewer improvements in a systematic manner. Daniel Chipman Linsley, who had built the municipal waterworks and served briefly (1870) as city mayor, became Superintendent of Streets in 1873. He described the work of

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paving the main thoroughfares in the city with crushed stone, after new sewers had been installed underground. He wrote that that “after careful consideration of several plans for permanently improving our streets and constructing substantial roadways, that of using finely broken ledge-stone was adopted.” The city obtained the stone, which Linsley called red sandrock, from Williard’s Quarry, owned and operated by Guy N. Williard.

Under Linsley’s supervision in 1873, several streets, including Main, College, St Paul and a section of Church Street, were widened, curbed, guttered and paved. The width of the streets varied from 30 to 35 feet, with sidewalks set at 15½ feet. Linsley wrote that objections were raised that the sidewalks were too wide and the roadway not wide enough, but he asserted that “a belt of grass, and if possible a double row of trees between the footpath and the curbstone, presents a far more attractive appearance than a wide roadway.” To justify the width, moreover, Linsley compared Burlington’s streets to those of New York City:

Broadway, New York, above Chambers Street, is eighty feet wide between the houses, and the sidewalks are nineteen feet wide each, thus leaving the roadway forty-two feet wide. There can be no reasonable question that a roadway thirty feet wide will prove ample for the traffic of our busiest streets for many years to come.³³

By 1874, curbing had been finished on the east side of Church Street, from Cherry to Bank streets.³⁴

The year 1877 saw a significant transformation on Church Street, precipitated by the construction of several major public and commercial buildings. Large swaths of the streetscape were demolished to make room for the Howard Opera House (#77), the Burritt Block (#76), Abernathy’s Men’s Shop (#1),³⁵ and the Exchange Block (#55) as Burlington sought to remove the “rookeries” and look to the future on “this, our principle street.”³⁶ Improvements were not limited to new buildings and refurbished storefronts, but extended to street and municipal services. Slate sidewalks were installed on Church Street at the expense of adjacent building owners. The local newspaper commended one Church Street merchant:

James A. Shedd has carried the curbing around the Cherry Street side of his premises [#96] and is flagging his walks with fine flagging at an expense of some \$400...The owners and occupants of the stores in Union Block are doing a nice thing in the way of a sidewalk. They have had the face of the curbing dressed at their own expense and are

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laying a walk of the nicest blue flagging. This will greatly improve the front of this nice block.³⁷

Historic photographs confirm this practice. An image in the collection of the University of Vermont shows Chauvin's and Bacon's Blocks, with new curbing along the street but sidewalks only in front of their own buildings.³⁸ Sidewalks on the lower portion of Church Street were widened two feet, "a consummation devoutly to be wished."³⁹ Also in 1877, the cobblestoned sections of Church and College Street were cleaned, while the upper portion of Church Street was macadamized.⁴⁰ Residents complained in letters to the newspaper about fast driving on Pearl Street and the nuisance caused by "the crowd of loafers" on the corner of Church and Pearl Streets who congregated to watch the construction activity.⁴¹

After the City Ordinance passed in 1876 prohibiting wood awnings in the central business district, the overhead shop canopies became a topic of newspaper editorials and letters:

At about the same time the wooden awnings which had been put up in front of nearly all the buildings on the street resembling cheap lean-to sheds about the country barns were ordered removed. This gave the street a neater and more business-like appearance and turned a flood of light into the stores.⁴²

Newly installed canvas awnings provoked the ire of some letter writers because they were installed lower than the wood canopies. The grade on the east side of Church Street was lowered a short time later, and shopkeepers and residents were appeased, though a cynical letter writer remarked that "probably storekeepers will at once lower them so as to take in the head-gear of passers-by, as of yore."⁴³ Just about a century later, glass and steel awnings were installed along many of the storefronts that line Church Street when it was converted to an outdoor pedestrian mall in 1981. Transparent to allow the free transfer of light yet strong enough to withstand the snow load of Vermont winters, these modern glass canopies allude to the earliest commercial days of Church Street.

The decades of the 1880s and 1890s saw a continuation of growth within the Church Street commercial district. Burlington's population decreased slightly between 1870 and 1880, but rose to 14,590 in 1890. These were certainly not the boom years of the 1860s and 1870s, although several large new commercial blocks were erected. The Warner (#36) and Hall (#46) buildings, as well as commercial blocks at 180-184 Main Street (#53) and 197-201 College Street (#64),

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and the Standard Steam Laundry building (#16) were all constructed between 1886 and 1894 in the Queen Anne style. Two Romanesque Revival style buildings were erected on Church Street: the Weller Block (#35) in 1889 and Isham's (#37) in 1894. Many of the remaining residential buildings within the district also were built or remodeled during these two decades. The Conklin House (#14), the Nellie Pope House (#85) and the Baptist Parsonage (#88) date to the years from 1882 to 1897, while Dr. Leonard Marsh's House (#81), the Bennett Turk House (#87) and the First Calvinist Congregational Parsonage (#83) were all remodeled with Queen Anne detailing. Electric lighting replaced gas lights along the streets in the late 1880s.

By the turn of the twentieth century, when the city's population reached 18,640, most of the available land within the district had been developed with substantial commercial blocks and retail buildings. The Revival styles popular during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries are represented within the district by several buildings, including the Renaissance Revival-style Howard National Bank (#42), built in 1902, the Art Nouveau-styled Elias Lyman Oil Building (#45), also 1902, and the Colonial Revival Brownell and Hathaway Building (#52) in 1909. The Renaissance Revival Burlington Trust (#68) was constructed in 1925 and the O'Sullivan Building (#5), 1915, and the Montgomery Ward Department Store (#19), 1929, were both built in the Classical Revival style. For the most part, construction within the district during the remainder of the twentieth century was limited to replacing older buildings, and infill after fire losses.

Commerce along Church Street

The banking and insurance industries played a key role in the development of the Church Street district as Burlington's downtown hub. In fact, the city has had a long history as the banking and insurance capital of Vermont. Confidence in financial institutions was not gained easily, however, as Burlington's settlers in 1800 were reluctant to endorse any other currency but "industry and economy, the only two honest, general and sure sources of wealth."⁴⁴ Yet in 1806 the Vermont State Bank was chartered in the village, located on the west side of Court House Square until 1812 when it moved to Woodstock, Vermont. The Bank of Burlington was chartered in 1818 and first occupied a building on the north side of Court House Square. Later it was located in a two-story building at the corner of Bank and Church Streets.⁴⁵ The demolition of this second headquarters of the Bank of Burlington in 1877 to make room for the Howard

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Opera House (#77) was lamented: “the Old Howard Bank building is one of the most venerable of our landmarks, and its Doric Architecture and unpretending yellow will be greatly missed.”⁴⁶

Other banks were chartered to serve Burlingtonians: the United States Bank (1830-1834) was replaced by the Farmers and Mechanics Bank (1834-1846), located at the northeast corner of St. Paul and College streets; the Commercial Bank of Burlington (1847); and the Merchants' National Bank (1849); the First National Bank (1867); and the Howard National Bank (1870). Most of these banking interests were headquartered on the north side of Court House Square. Referred to as the “Bank Block,” this area reached its capacity by 1870. Church Street then became the preferred location for financial affairs. The Bank of Burlington, by 1870 the largest bank in Vermont, was the first to locate here, on the southwest corner of Bank and Church streets. The construction of the First National Bank, (site of #42) c. 1870, at the northeast corner of Church and College streets reinforced the image of Church Street as the prime location for banking activity and definitively supplanting the “Bank Block” near Court House Square. This three story brick building, constructed for the First National Bank but soon after acquired by the Howard National Bank, is no longer standing. In the 1880s, though, it was considered ideal for a financial institution: “[the Howard National Bank] is admirably adapted for the purposes of a bank, as it is fire-proof, neat and commodious, and furnished with spacious vaults lined with walls of railroad iron, and is heated by steam.”⁴⁷

A magnificent Renaissance Revival structure (#42) was constructed at the same site in 1902 to serve as the Howard National Bank's new headquarters. Its imposing size, granite façade and elegant styling were intended to assured bank patrons of the bank's reliability, longevity, and permanence. Even after the financial panic of the 1890s, here, certainly, Burlingtonians could place their trust (and earnings). The Classical Revival style building constructed by the Burlington Trust Company (#68) in 1925 also sought to assure customers with an impressive and ornate design. The preference for revival styles with classical embellishments ended in Burlington, as it did nationally, around mid-century, after the travails of the Great Depression and the uncertainty of the war years. The construction of the Burlington Federal Savings and Loan building in 1958 (#90) heralded the new prosperity of the post-World War II economy. By this time it became more important to convey modernity and convenience to bank patrons. This International Style building embodied *avant-garde* design, in a bold statement meant to attract business through its contemporary appearance and progressive banking methods. Furthermore, the construction of this new bank along Bank Street, within one block of Church Street, helped to ensure the continuation of banking offices within the Church Street Historic District. After

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urban renewal efforts in Burlington during the 1960s and 1970s cleared the way for a very large multi-use redevelopment project, two additional bank office buildings were constructed: the New Vermont Federal Savings and Loan Building (#95B) on Cherry Street, and the headquarters of the Chittenden Bank at the corner of Bank and Pine streets (just outside the National Register district). The New Vermont Federal Savings and Loan Building, designed as a Miesian glass box attached to the new enclosed shopping center (#95A), contained administrative offices rather than a branch office for the bank.

The insurance industry also thrived in Burlington, and is amply represented in the Church Street Historic District. The erection of the high Italianate Vermont Life Insurance building (#54) in 1877 signaled an end to the economic troubles that had begun in 1873. The insurance business was conducted in several other locations within the district, both during the second half of the nineteenth century, when lumber magnates and other businessmen required policies to protect their properties and goods, and later, after the industry began to court the middle class during the twentieth century. The first original Howard National Bank Building (site of # 42) rented office space to Charles P. Frissell, successor to one of the oldest insurance agencies in the city, in the years from 1870 to 1902. The Metropolitan Life Insurance Company had offices in the Hall Block (#46), while the Mooney Block (#34) also rented space to an insurance firm. The former Hayward Block and its replacement, the Parkhill Building (#51), both had retail stores on the first floor and insurance offices on the second. The Chioffi Agency continued their insurance business on upper Church Street (#7) well into the 1970s. Several insurance agents made their homes close to their offices within the district. Warren Gibbs, secretary of the Vermont Life Insurance Company, lived at 13-15 Center Street (# 26) between 1869 and 1882. John Traill, treasurer of the T.S. Peck Insurance Company lived at 125 Bank Street (#85), purchasing the property in 1917. Homer LaDuke, manager of the U.S. Life Insurance Company lived at 109-111 Bank Street (#87) in 1910.

Technology and Communications

The Church Street Historic District has served as the arena for several important technological advances in both Burlington and Vermont. From the introduction of a telegraph office in the mid-nineteenth century to later innovations such as telephones and air conditioning, the district has been a center of progress. Church Street was home to Burlington's first telegraph exchange, alter telegraphic wires were installed along the route of the rail lines in the early 1850s by

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Charles Linsley, the father of Daniel Chipman Linsley, builder of the city waterworks.⁴⁸ In 1889 the telegraph office was located on the third floor of the Central Block (#93). By 1894, the Postal Telegraph Company operated at 106-108 Church Street (#39), remaining here at least until 1942. A second telegraph office also operated from 179 Bank Street (#32).

In July of 1877, Dr. Walter Vincent obtained a patent license from Alexander Graham Bell and opened the Vermont's first telephone exchange from the Union Block (#94). It was only the third telephone exchange in the world, after Boston and New Haven, Connecticut.⁴⁹ A total of 168 customers signed up for this new endeavor. The first phone line ran from Vincent Taft & Co.'s pharmacy in the Union Block (#94) to W. Carpenter & Co.'s drugstore on lower Church Street via Lyman & Allen's Building (site of #68). The technology consisted of a board with upright flat bars and sliding connecting plugs, with brass conducting strips at the back. Waxed linen string, supported by a heavy structure on the roof of 61 Church Street in the Union Block completed the connection. Dr. Vincent's interest in telephones was compounded after meeting Theodore N. Vail of the Boston telephone exchange. The Burlington Free Press reported:

The operation is similar to that of an ordinary speaking-tube, anything said at one end being heard at the other with equal readiness, and as means of instant and ready communication...At a semi-public trial the other evening, a cornet solo from the skilful hands of Mr. Ed T. Paige played at one end of the telephone, was distinctly heard at the other, and messages in ordinary conversational tones were interchanged. For points within reasonable distances nothing can be more convenient and economical...Its adoption here is due to the mechanical genius of Dr. Vincent, and probably his example will be widely imitated.⁵⁰

Burlington merchants quickly adopted the new technology. Within months, the convenience of rapid communication was recognized as a potential business tool, and telephone connections proliferated up and down Church Street. The Daily Free Press remarked that "another telephone has been erected, from H. E. Sall's store [#1] to his residence – the longest in the city. The city will soon be completely covered with waxed string."⁵¹ A letter writer to the newspaper ironically proposed that the best use of this new technology might be a direct line between the jail and the church.⁵² Burlington's innovation in telephone communications was emulated immediately by the town of Charlotte; its first telephone line was installed in August of the same year. Williston and Montpelier were without telephone service until November of 1883.⁵³

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The Church Street Historic District has played a prominent role in Burlington's printing industry. Perhaps the oldest establishment was the book bindery and printing office located in the warehouse (#62) on Mechanics Lane. Now owned by the *Burlington Free Press* and joined with other structures (#s49, 50, 65, 66 and 67) in the newspaper's complex of buildings, the warehouse continues its historic function today as part of the production process for Vermont's largest daily newspaper. J. E. Peter's printing office was located at 179-181 Bank Street (#32) in 1891. In 1912, the *Daily News* occupied offices at 180 Main Street (#53), with their printing press located in an addition at the rear of the property. Another press was located at 203-205 College Street (#63), where the *Burlington News* was published in the 1920s. From 1906 until 1951, Fred M. Sheldon operated the Sheldon Press at 13-15 Center Street (#26). After his retirement, the shop continued to serve as a printing office until 1979.

Technological innovations ranged from communications to comfort. Merchants and businessmen working in the Church Street district discovered that just as rapid communication could improve profits, creating a comfortable environment for patrons could enhance business as well. Restaurant owners were the first to recognize this. The 1935 renovation of Henry's Diner (#79) included the installation of air conditioning, the first in the city.⁵⁴ Other eating establishments followed suit, frequently advertising their new air conditioning on their signboards. In 1953, the Oasis Diner (#30) opened its dining car with air conditioning and allotted almost as much space on its original sign as its name to advertise the amenity.

Women as Business and Property Owners

An important trend in Burlington's social history emerged during the late nineteenth century. The Church Street Historic District included women among some of its most progressive torchbearers. Before the twentieth century, it was rare for an American woman to own property in her own right, and even less likely for her to retain a property title after marriage.⁵⁵ Several Burlington women, however, defied the norm by both acquiring property and contracting for the construction of several buildings within the District. Mrs. Mary Collinson, who operated a millinery at 179 Bank Street (#32) from 1895 to 1905, had the business acuity to profit from the financial woes of other building owners and eventually purchase two buildings as investments: 80 Church Street (site of #30), and 82-84 Church Street (#34). Mary Collinson also commissioned the construction of two houses on Monroe and George Streets in 1885 at an expense of \$5,600.⁵⁶ Nellie S. Pope, daughter of prominent Burlington businessman Samuel M.

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Pope, commissioned the construction of her residence on Bank Street (#85) in 1897. Nellie Pope's father happened to be the executor of an estate whose subdivision created the lot where she built her house. It is plausible that Mr. Pope shared his investment experience with his daughter because she commissioned the building's construction before she married. She acquired the property on March 30, 1897; land records indicated that "a new dwelling house was thereon situated."⁵⁷

Eva Shedd, whose husband Cheney had been an employee of Sparhawk's Sanitarium (site of #90) before he "vacated the city" in 1895, at first supported herself by running a boarding house at 58 St. Paul Street and later at 115 Cherry Street (site of #96). Mrs. Shedd, who also earned income as a dressmaker, was evidently a quite successful boarding house proprietress. She purchased two empty lots within the district and commissioned the construction of two similar Queen Anne-style boarding houses at 127-129 Bank Street (#84) in 1907 and 135 Bank Street (#82) in 1909. Perhaps her experience with lodgers led her to understand the need for high quality boarding quarters. Mrs. Shedd moved into one of the apartments at 135 Bank Street in 1910.

Two other women made significant contributions to the commercial building stock within the Church Street Historic District. Mrs. Mary H. Weller purchased a wood commercial block at 86-88 Church Street in 1871, but later had it razed for the construction of the four-story Weller Block (#35) in 1889. Mary Weller hired Clellan Waldo Fisher (1862-1932), the son of noted architect Alfred Benjamin Fisher (1831-1911) to design this handsome Romanesque Revival-style structure. Mrs. Mary Hockley Wheeler commissioned the construction of the Warner Block (#36) in 1886 in honor of her uncle, Charles Warner. Mary Wheeler was the adoptive daughter of Burlington philanthropist John Norton Pomeroy and the widow of Lewis H. Wheeler. She financed the \$30,000 construction of the Warner Block, designed by W. H. Townsend, with a portion of her inheritance. Both on commercial or residential scales, Burlington women made significant and lasting contributions to the architectural and social history of the Church Street Historic District.

Women also owned or operated many of the stores within the District. Two women who had acquired joint ownership of a property through inheritance maintained a long business relationship with each other and leased their premises to tenants. Frances Barlow and Ellen Platt gained title to 107 Church Street (#71) in 1864. Ellen's share was later assumed by Julia Platt, and the firm of Platt & Barlow operated here until a lease arrangement was made with Nelson

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Bero. Bero eventually purchased the building in 1912. Since Sidney Barlow and Cyrus Platt were early Burlington merchants with adjacent stores, it is likely that their daughters formed a business partnership. There were many millinery shops owned and operated by women within the district. Mrs. Collinson ran her millinery for ten years on Bank Street (#32) and was known for some of the city's most fashionable window displays every season.⁵⁸ Her shop was also recognized for offering the most up to date styles. Milliners with shops on Church Street included Mrs. H. E. Salls at no. 103 (#72), Mrs. Kennedy at three successive locations (#75, #95 and #97), and Mrs. Brown in the Union-Central-Allen Blocks (#92-94). When Bacon's Block (#3) opened on Church Street in 1874, one of the shops was occupied by "a fancy goods store by two ladies from Brooklyn, New York."⁵⁹ Mrs. Brownell and Miss Mills kept the shop and were also dealers of the Wood sewing machine.⁶⁰

When most of Vermont was largely rural, Burlington's connections by boat and rail to larger cities probably contributed in great part to its progressive climate. The downtown district was a place where it was possible for women to own property, build businesses, and enjoy a degree of business success.

Culture and Entertainment

As Burlington grew, so did the sophistication and cultural requirements of its residents. Local philanthropist John Purple Howard satisfied the city's thirst for entertainment with his commission of the Howard Opera House (#77) in 1878. For both the quality of its spectacles and shows and the superiority of its architectural design, Howard's Opera House was a venue without parallel in northern New England. The Church Street Historic District also was the setting of early motion pictures. Vermont's very first movie theatre, the "Theatorium," located at 69 Church Street (#93), operated from 1907 until 1910. The "Amuse-U-Theatre" opened in 1910 in the Brownell & Hathaway Building (#52) on Main Street under the management of Lyman and W. J. Le Barron. The Majestic Theatre at the corner of Bank Street and South Winooski Avenue (site of #25), which burned in 1946, showed movies beginning in 1912. Also in 1912, a movie house operated briefly in Chauvin's Block (#2). The 1919 Sanborn Map lists a "Moving Pictures Hall" on the second floor of the New Sherwood Hotel (site of #97), though the theater soon closed. The district's sixth movie house opened before 1919 in the Walker Block (site of #91) and the "Orpheum Theatre" opened before 1926 in the west half of the same block. Later, the Walker Block was also the location of the "State Theatre," lost to fire in May of 1977.

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While there are no longer any movie theaters within the district Church Street, movie-goers continue to travel downtown to enjoy the cinema at the Roxy Theater on South Winooski Avenue. Other amusements were available to Burlington residents as well. By 1900, the middle store of the Exchange Block (#55) was a billiard parlor. A bowling alley was added to the list of entertainment sites in the block; it operated from 1906 until at least 1919.

Of course, the Church Street Historic District was and continues to be renowned for its eating and drinking establishments. By 1869, a number of saloons and dining rooms operated on both sides of Church Street. Rowe's Hotel, at the northwest corner of Church and Cherry Street (site of #97) was a typical early example of a wood frame building offering both rooms and meals. Central House, the Sherwood House, and the New Sherwood Hotel (none of them now standing) opened more elaborate dining rooms for area patrons. Hiram Reynolds's Dining Saloon (#57), opened in a new building in 1866. This structure is remarkable for its continuity of use as a dining establishment for nearly a century and a half and has housed an Asian restaurant since 1947. By 1889 an Oyster House operated on the site of what would later become the Champlain Hotel (#58.) Casual eateries within the District have included Henry's Diner (#79), the Oasis Diner (#30) and the Concord Candy Kitchen (#33) as well as luncheonettes at 28 Church Street (site of #5) and inside Woolworth's (#96). Soda fountains were very popular and represented by Zottman's (site of #101), Liggett's Rexall Drugs (#8) and Upton's in the Exchange Block (#55). These have been supplanted by a number of coffee shops and tea houses located within the district. Bakeries and confectionary shops continue to prosper, much as they did traditionally. Kent's Candy Factory and Bakery (#74), for example, is now Breugger's Bagel shop. The district continues to be Burlington's primary destination for food and refreshment.

Several early educational facilities were located within the Church Street Historic District. The University of Vermont, with its historic campus set atop Burlington's hill, remains the largest educational institution in the state. But another prominent institution, Champlain College, had its origins within the Church Street Historic District. First named Burlington Business College, the school had classrooms and offices in several downtown buildings, moving as increased space became necessary. In 1906 the College was located at 184-188 Bank Street (site of #22), in a building lost to fire in July, 1977. The college moved to the Brownell & Hathaway Building (#52) in 1911 and expanded into the building next door at 180-184 Main Street (#53) in 1960, where it occupied the second and third floors. Soon after, the administration purchased land a few blocks to the south, and moved the school to its new quarters, when the Burlington Business College became Champlain College. The Warner Block (#36) was the location of another

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business school, Evan's Commercial College. The school moved into the third floor in 1887, shortly after construction was completed. Higher education continues within the Church Street Historic District; the Community College of Vermont conducts classes on the upper and basement floors of the former J. C. Penney Building (site of #97) at 29-35 Church Street.

Gideon Lathrop wrote in his Steamboat Diary that it was necessary to leave Burlington to find music or dance lessons in the 1820s.⁶¹ By c.1860, several music and dance schools were located on the upper floors of the Union-Central-Allen Blocks (#s 92, 93 and 94). Professor Bachimont's School of French was located upstairs in the Isham Block (#37) in 1904.⁶² Vocational education was also offered within the district, as many of the city's silversmiths and watchmakers began as apprentices in the shops of other craftsmen. James Brinsmaid apprenticed with Amos Pangborn, eventually sharing a shop with him at 103 Church Street (#72). Tanners and potters learned their craft at the elbows of experienced men as well. This tradition of vocational training continues today at 110 Church Street (#40) where bartending classes are conducted.

Transportation

As one of Burlington's primary north south corridors, Church Street experienced changing modes of transportation through its history. It began humbly as a mostly pedestrian thoroughfare, paved with dirt. By the middle of the nineteenth century, it was a cobblestoned street bustling by day with people, horses, carts and carriages, and sleighs in wintertime. The roadway was widened and macadamized between 1873 and 1875. The Winooski and Burlington Horse Railroad was introduced in 1885. Church Street was located at the center of its three-mile route. Besides connecting the mills at Winooski Falls with the Church Street commercial area, it also facilitated the movement of residents and visitors within the city. Tracks of the Horse Railroad's system are discernable in historic maps and photographs. By 1900, bicycles were added to the mix, with a wheelman's shop located on Church Street behind the telegraph office (#39).

Electric streetcars replaced the horse-powered railroad by the early twentieth century. Church Street's commercial influence was enhanced when both Burlington residents and neighboring townspeople could travel more easily. With this new mobility, moreover, employment opportunities expanded to include residents from neighboring communities. Tangles of overhead

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electric streetcar lines visible in historic photographs of Church Street add to the impression of vibrancy and bustle within the district around the turn of the twentieth century. Although the electric streetcar system was eliminated in the late 1920s, the rail tracks were not removed from Church Street until the Second World War, when the iron was salvaged for the war effort.

For a while during the early twentieth century, horses, carriages, bicycles and electric streetcars shared an uneasy peace with the automobile on Church Street, but the Automobile Age was in full swing by the 1930s. Church Street remained a principal thoroughfare, with motor traffic speeding both north and south. Although traffic was altered to one-way in a northerly direction during the 1960s, volume remained heavy. The Motor Age has also left a significant mark on the architectural character of the Church Street Historic District, though for the most part on the streets intersecting Church Street. The Yandow Tire Company (#11) was built on Cherry Street c. 1924 as a filling station and automotive garage. Two other gas and service stations date to the 1950s and 1960s: Handy's Texaco (#23) and the Mobil Station (#25), on facing lots at the corner of Bank Street and South Winooski Avenue.

Church Street has traditionally been the avenue for celebrations. Parades, New England Musical Festival's marching displays, and athletic victory motorcades have wound through the Church Street Historic District. It was the preferred place to show off a new car, take a date, and be seen. Now in lieu of the electric streetcar, shuttle buses carry passengers from the University of Vermont campus to Church Street and the waterfront. Although the commercial area of Church Street was returned to its pedestrian roots in 1981 when the Church Street Marketplace Association was formed, the Historic District remains the location for parades, celebrations and demonstrations.

Architectural Significance

The Church Street Historic District contains many buildings designed by architects of regional reputation and several by architects of national and international reputation. Many of the buildings display a high degree of architectural sophistication. Almost all the styles popular in American architecture during the period of significance, c.1820 to 1964, are represented by one or more buildings within the district. The Italianate Vermont Life Insurance Building (#54), the Queen Anne Warner Block (#36), the Renaissance Revival Burlington Trust Company (#68), and the Art Deco Parkhill Block (#51) are just four of many buildings within the district that

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could serve as textbook examples of their styles. The district contains imposing and ornate buildings, as well as ones more modestly embellished; both types contribute to defining the district's streetscape and are keys to its character.

Little is known about the designers and builders of the eleven buildings from the pre-Civil War period that remain within the district. Local carpenters and masons no doubt built these structures using conventional building methods. Early builders likely learned their craft as apprentices to other men and worked their trade seasonally or as needed. The Federal and Greek Revival style structures dating to the earliest period of the district's history are identified for the most part by names of their owners or early occupants. Historic photographs taken c. 1870 confirm the presence of at least six Federal style buildings along the block of Church Street between College and Cherry streets. Although most were small residential buildings, such as Rowe's Hotel, built before 1800 but lost to fire (site of #97), the Daniel Kern's House (#24), c. 1855, and Sidney Barlow's Brick Store (#71), c. 1822, some were emphatically commercial in scale and appearance, for example the Lyman Block (site of #68), built in 1829 but no longer standing, and Sherman's Block/ Abraham's Building (#69 and #70), dating to 1830 and 1847.

A few of the early structures illustrate the transition between the Federal and Greek Revival styles, when local builders began to consult Asher Benjamin's *American Builder's Companion* of (1827) and other pattern books. The A. B. Lowry House (#9), before 1850, and the large Leavenworth Block (#47), built in 1847, both suggest the Federal style in their proportions and crisp lines but also show the influence of Greek Revival in their cornices and other detailing. More fully developed Greek Revival style buildings include A. Prouty's Store (#39), c. 1840 and the Warner House (#6), c. 1854, both on Church Street, and the Miller and Gibbs Houses (#27 and #26), c. 1860 and 1868, on Center Street.

Training for the architectural, engineering and building professions in New England, moreover, was very loosely organized for most of the nineteenth century. Many of the Italianate and later style buildings within the district were also designed and built by men who learned their trade as carpenters and masons. Well into the twentieth century, in fact, it was a common practice in Vermont for one tradesman or professional to serve as both a building's architect and construction supervisor. William H. Townsend (1830-1899), born in Saco, Maine, and trained as a carpenter, was involved in the design and construction of several buildings within the district during the 1870s and 1880s. Townsend supervised the construction of the Vermont Life Insurance Building (#54), designed by Walter Dickson of Albany, in 1877, and the next year

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both designed and built the larger Exchange Block (#55) adjacent to it. A *Daily Free Press* article at the time praised Townsend's "very competent supervision"⁶³ of the Exchange Block's construction. Later, in 1886, Townsend designed and built the Warner Block for Mary H. Wheeler. George W. Lee, "architect and builder"⁶⁴ of the Kelsey and Brodie Block (now destroyed, site of #40) in 1880 and the Baptist Parsonage (#88) in 1882, was also equally comfortable with pencil and hammer.

Other nineteenth century builders and designers included William Rudolph Otto Bergholz (1833-1901), who immigrated to the United States from Germany in 1855 and moved to Burlington in 1858. Known primarily for his residential buildings in Burlington, he very likely designed the Baxter Block (#43) at 190 College Street in 1868. A local firm, H. Roby and Brothers, originally from Corinth, Vermont, had their construction offices and shops on Mechanic's Lane (present site of #49). Many of the buildings designed and constructed by the four Roby brothers are located in historic districts adjacent to the Church Street district, including the Wells-Richardson Building (1874), the Chittenden County Courthouse (1871), and the former Merchant's Bank on College Street (1895).

Alfred Benjamin Fisher (1831-1911) and Clellan Waldo Fisher (1862-1932), father and son, both designed and built large commercial blocks within the district. A. B. Fisher served as the contractor for John Purple Howard's Opera House (#77) completed in 1878 and the adjacent Burritt Block (#76) built the next year. Both buildings were designed by the New York City architect Steven D. Hatch (1839-1894). A. B. Fisher also built and may have designed the Commercial Block (#78) on Bank Street for John Purple Howard in 1878 and drew the new façade design for Beach's Bakery (#44) on College Street in 1885. Within the district, Clellan Waldo Fisher designed the Romanesque Revival style Weller Block (#35) on Church Street in 1889 for Mary H. Weller.

A number of designers and builders in Burlington relocated their offices to their most recently commissioned buildings. A. B. Fisher, C. S. Fisher, W. R. O. Berkholz, and E. C. Ryer all followed this pattern. In the span of three years, Ryer, designer of Bacon's Block (#3), moved his office three times. Likely, this was considered a fine way to advertise professional services, since potential clients could experience firsthand what a designer's skills might produce.

During his early career, Frank Lyman Austin (1875-1942) was the only registered architect in Vermont. He was a member of the American Institute of Architects and the Vermont Society of

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Engineers and brought a new level of professionalism to Burlington's construction industry. Austin designed many public, private, and civic buildings throughout the state, including in Burlington. Within the district, Austin was very likely responsible for the design of the Parkhill Building (#51).

Besides Steven D. Hatch, who was engaged by John Purple Howard and Edgar Burritt in the 1870s to design their buildings (#76 and #77), at least one other New York City architect was hired for an important commission within the district. In the 1920s, officers of the Burlington Trust Company commissioned New York architect James W. O'Connor to design the bank's new headquarters (#68) at the corner of Church and College streets.

Italianate and Queen Anne Styles

The predominance of Italianate style commercial buildings within the historic district was largely the result of the booming lumber trade in Burlington after the Civil War. Local lumber barons such as Lawrence Barnes and J. R. Booth made millions of dollars importing raw lumber from Canada, milling it in shops at the lakefront and then shipping wood products via the railroads to destinations around the fast-growing nation. A good number of local businessmen and professionals, including bankers, insurance agents and lawyers, also made tidy fortunes from the lumber business. Merchants, too, profited from the increased wealth flowing into the city. Many newly affluent men, as well as several women, in the city invested in real estate and constructed impressive new buildings in the commercial district. A few of the more notable examples of this trend are the Fisher and Mooney Blocks (#33 and #34), 1865 and 1868, Baxter's Block and Beach's Bakery (#43 and #44), 1868 and 1869, and Bacon's Block (#3), 1874.

The Italianate style seemed to suit the taste of Burlington's newly rich business class very well. The logic and clarity of its sophisticated elements, such as brackets, cornices and window surrounds, symbolized their progressive attitudes, while its horizontal emphasis made for buildings that were easily expandable. At the same time, the block massing of the Italianate style suited the narrow lots of the urban environment. Furthermore, the mass production of building materials, both in wood and cast iron, led to reduced costs and faster construction times.

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As commercial interests expanded along Church Street and the streets surrounding it during the 1860s and 1870s, moreover, there seems to have been a concerted effort to create and maintain a compatible streetscape. Property owners continued to build or renovate buildings to correspond stylistically with other recent buildings. Early Italianate examples, the Union-Central-Allen Blocks (#92, #93 and #94) were built by different owners over a period of six years between 1857 and 1863, yet display a seamless consistency in style and design. The Vermont Life Insurance Building (#54) was constructed in 1877 and one year later the larger Exchange Block (#55) emulated its high-Italianate styling on an adjacent lot. In the same years, architect Steven D. Hatch and builder A. B. Fischer performed a similar feat in their designs for the Italianate Burritt Block (#76) and Howard's Commercial Block (#78), standing like sentries on either side of John Purple Howard's Opera House (#77), designed by Hatch in high Victorian commercial style with Italian Renaissance elements.

The Italianate style was also used in these decades for residences, such as the Baptist Parsonage (#88), 1882 and the Leonard Marsh House (#81), remodeled c. 1880, as well as for the one ecclesiastical building within the district, the First Baptist Church (#89), in 1864. Burlington's preference for the Italianate style was mentioned by historian Abby Maria Hemenway in 1867 as "the style which prevails in the more ambitious residences."⁶⁵

The Queen Anne style, popular nationally after the Philadelphia Centennial Exposition of 1876, made a later appearance in Burlington than in many other American cities in large part because of an enduring local preference for Italianate buildings. Eventually, both commercial structures and private residences were built with Queen Anne styling: the Warner Block (#36), 1886 and the Hall Block (#46), 1894, and six houses along Bank Street (#82 through #87) built or remodeled between 1897 and 1910. The Hall Block (#46), erected on College Street in 1894 is an exceptional example of the Queen Anne style, evident in its irregular fenestration pattern and its exuberant ornamentation.

Twentieth Century Styles

During the early decades of the twentieth century, property owners within the Church Street Historic District began to show a preference for eclectic styles. Both newly constructed buildings and remodeled facades show a variety of stylistic idioms and detailing. The district also has several outstanding examples of twentieth century Modernist architecture.

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When revival styles were popular in the early years of the twentieth century, several new buildings were constructed in the district: the Renaissance Revival Howard National Bank (#42) in 1902, the Colonial Revival Brownell and Hathaway Building (#52) in 1909, and three Classical Revival buildings: the O'Sullivan (#5), in 1915, the Burlington Trust (#68) in 1925, and the Montgomery Ward Department Store (#19), in 1929. The Commercial Style also appeared in the district in these years: Smith's Grain Building (#48) and the Mechanic's Lane Warehouse (#62), both c. 1900 and Sikora's Shoe Repair Shop (#28), in 1924.

Art Deco became a fashionable trend after the Exposition des Arts Décoratifs et Industriels Modernes was held in Paris in 1925. The Parkhill Building (#31), 1930, is a fine example of an Art Deco building constructed within the district. The Parkhills, a prominent Burlington family, demonstrated a progressive outlook when they commissioned the design for their building, set at the corner of Main Street and South Winooski Avenue. Several significant renovations were also carried out in Art Deco style on what were considered outdated facades. New owners of the Payne and Nelson Blocks (#17 and #18) altered the original Italianate façades of their contiguous buildings in 1928. The front elevations facing Church Street were both sheathed in pressed metal paneling, complete with tripartite windows and foliate tracery detailing. Other notable Art Deco renovations were Hiram Blood's Grocery (#99), altered by the Singer Sewing Machine franchise in 1925, the storefronts of the Sherman/Abraham Blocks (#69 and #70), in 1933 and 1946, and Abernathy's Men's Shop (#1) in 1936.

Besides the two filling stations (#23 and #25) and Yandow's Tire Building (#11), Henry's Diner (#79), installed in 1925, and the Oasis Diner (#30), 1953, also reflect the influence of a nation seduced by the automobile and travel. The two diners were manufactured outside of Vermont and shipped to their current sites. Henry's Diner was renovated in 1935 with a Spanish Mediterranean style reflective of vernacular American roadside architecture. The Oasis Diner is an exceptionally intact example of Streamlined Moderne style.

Other early forays into Modernistic styles within the district include the construction of the Woolworth Building (#96) in 1964 and Tina's Fabrics (#100) in 1953. Woolworth's sleek enamel panels, single story, and large signage define it as another excellent example of Streamlined Moderne style. It also represents an early type of the American department store and is one of only two buildings on Church Street that date to the 1960s (the other is the H. Abraham store, #41). Tina's Fabrics replaced a three-story block built before 1885. The false upper floor

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of its façade, in corrugated metal panels, is reminiscent of the “boomtown” style popular during the early twentieth century, but the metal materials and its plain geometry point to Modernistic trends.

Storefront Alterations

Most of the commercial storefronts within the district were altered or rebuilt during the twentieth century. There was competition among shop owners—to be a successful merchant it was expected that both store and stock would reflect current trends. Newspaper editorials sometimes goaded merchants if they lagged behind. If physical reconstruction of the storefront was not within the means of the building or shop owner, then window displays were made as fashionable as possible. Business owners, however, sought to emphasize their desire to remain at the height of fashion, thus building or altering their stores to be the most up-to-date. In many cases, the building or storefront themselves were considered the most effective advertisements for businesses.

This trend to employ a fresh, new appearance on the ground floor is particularly evident on the Abernathy’s Men’s Shop (#1), when the storefronts were rebuilt to match façade renovations in 1936. The storefronts of the Hiram Blood Grocery Store (#99) were also “up-graded” during façade alterations by the Singer Sewing Machine franchise in 1925, and 146-148 Church Street (#56), the A.B. Lowry house (#9), and Brinsmaid & Hildreth’s shop (#73) were similarly modernized. Carrara glass remains on the storefronts of only two buildings within the district: the Sherman Block/Abraham Building (#69/ #70), and 128-130 Church Street (#60).

International Style

The International Style of modernism made its first appearance within the district in 1958, when the Burlington Federal Savings and Loan Building (#90) was completed on Bank Street. A Burlington architectural firm, Freeman French Freeman, designed this elegant curtain wall glass box, with green-tinted glass and aluminum panels. It is now considered a landmark International Style building in the city and the region. Freeman French Freeman also designed the Burlington Free Press Buildings (#49 and #50) along South Winooski Avenue, and the 1950’s façade of the Brownell and Hathaway Building (#52) in modernistic styles. Hiram Abraham’s Store (#41) is another fine International Style building in the district. Designed by architect Benjamin Stein,

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this small commercial building has an exposed steel frame and white plastic paneling on its façade. At the time of its construction in 1961, it was the first new structure built on Church Street in almost a decade.

Urban renewal efforts had begun in Burlington in 1958, when voters passed a referendum allowing demolition of central city blocks, in what was considered a “slum” neighborhood. In all, urban renewal work in Burlington affected a large area, comprising more than six city blocks. Within the district, two city blocks were razed and redeveloped; this area is defined by Church Street on the east, Bank Street on the south, Pine Street on the west, and Cherry Street on the north. Only three commercial blocks, the Central-Union-Allen Blocks (#92-93-94) along Church Street within this area, were spared from the wrecker’s ball. The remainder of the area, 128 parcels, was bought by a series of development firms who, in a joint venture with the city government, constructed a multi-use development that included an early department store (#96), a shopping mall (#95A), several office and bank buildings (#90 and # 95B) and a parking garage (#95C).

All of these buildings, with the exception of Woolworth’s (#96), were constructed in International Style, then at the height of its popularity. One bank building, the Burlington Federal Savings and Loan Building (#90) and Woolworth’s (#96) were quickly completed, but the office building, the New Vermont Federal Savings and Loan Building, (#95B) was not finished until 1974, while the Burlington Square shopping mall (#95A) and its parking garage (#95C) were opened in 1976. The development process was beset by financial and administrative issues almost from the beginning. The final consortium, made up of Fidelity Mutual Life Insurance Company of Philadelphia and Mondev International, of Montreal, finished the development. The Office of Mies van der Rohe, of Chicago, became the lead architects of the project c. 1970. Freeman French Freeman acted as associated architects throughout the construction process.⁶⁶ Thus, the Office of Mies van der Rohe was responsible for much of the plan and design of Burlington Square and its associated buildings (#95A, B and C).

Jean Davern, an architectural journalist, wrote an account of Mondev International’s involvement in mixed use development in four American cities, Burlington, Seattle, Colorado Springs and Salem, Massachusetts, that appeared in *Architectural Record* in December, 1977. Mondev had previously built Westmount Square in Montreal, an office-retail-apartment complex, designed by Mies van der Rohe and completed in 1969. Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, who died in 1967, was one of the founding members of the International Style. Westmount

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Square, moreover, was the first multiuse development project connected to a metro system in North America.⁶⁷ Davern wrote that:

Three of the four projects... are designed for urban renewal sites, but what Mondev is up to on those sites is not the standard urban renewal project, a few or several new buildings standing on their cleared site in visible (and actual) isolation from the rest of the community. All four projects are in some way linked to their surroundings, knitted into the living fabric of the community. They are also designed for spin-off, to encourage new activities beyond their sites which can both contribute added vitality to the community and reinforce the vitality of the projects themselves.⁶⁸

Urban renewal work in Burlington, then, had a utopian vision of “what the city ought to be.”⁶⁹ One of the planned “spin-offs” of the development was the “refurbishing of existing stores on Church Street and master planning by community for developing it as a covered mall linked to Burlington Square.”⁷⁰ The covered mall idea was eventually discarded but two blocks of Church Street between Pearl and Cherry streets, including the entrance to Burlington Square, were closed to vehicular traffic in 1981 in order to create the Church Street Marketplace pedestrian mall. Soon after, an additional block to the south was closed to automobiles and, in 2004, the southernmost block, between College and Main streets, was also incorporated into the Marketplace. Thus, ironically, urban renewal work in Burlington increased civic pride in the historic resources of the city and the region. In fact, in the late 1970s, a concerted effort on the part of Burlington city officials, the press and the state managed to block a suburban regional mall proposed to be built in nearby Williston.⁷¹

Fire Damage and Loss

Without a doubt, fire has been the greatest thief of historic resources within the district. Large sections of city blocks have been lost, erasing the presence of many significant commercial and residential buildings. One of the most serious fires occurred in July, 1974 and destroyed most of the large city block along Bank Street between Church Street and South Winooski Avenue. The three new buildings (#20, #21 and #22) constructed after that fire are non-contributing structures within the district. A 1977 fire destroyed the Walker Block (site of #91) on Bank Street and severely damaged the upper floors of the adjacent Union-Central-Allen Blocks (#92, #93 and #94). Earlier calamitous fires claimed other structures within the district. Beach’s original bakery

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was consumed by fire in 1867; it was replaced two years later by a new Beach's Bakery (#44). An 1881 fire displaced Kelsey & Brodie's establishment (site of # 40) on Church Street and required them to move temporarily to the Howard Commercial Block (#78) on Bank Street.⁷² They built a new four story brick block on the same site shortly after the fire, but it too, was destroyed by fire between 1960 and 1972.

The Central House Hotel (site of #95A) was completely lost to fire in February 1883. Coon's commercial block (site of # 96) at the southwest corner of Church and Cherry was severely damaged in an 1895 fire, which spread to Mr. Coon's adjacent home. Another significant fire in 1895 consumed part of the Sherwood House Block (site of #97) at 29 Church Street, gutting the New York Household Store and causing over \$12,000 in damages. The construction of the Howe's Market (#59) at 132-134 Church Street was the direct result of a fire that consumed the previous structure in 1900. Howe's Market subsequently lost an upper story to another fire in 1965.

Probably the most spectacular conflagration in the district was the loss of the New Sherwood Hotel at the northwest corner of Church and Cherry on Valentine's Day in 1940. Photographs recorded images of this monumental seven-story structure as it was engulfed in flames, and of its burnt-out shell encased in ice the following day. Another major loss was the Majestic Theatre in 1946. It was located on the corner of South Winooski Avenue and Center Street and later replaced with a gas station (#25) and parking lot.

Several structures within the district have survived disfiguring fires. The Exchange Block (#55) at the corner of Main and Church streets lost seven third floor bays to fire on its Church Street (west) elevation in 1962. A serious fire in 1970 at the Parker Building (146-148 Church Street, #56) robbed the building of its prominent gable roof.⁷³ Other buildings were even more seriously damaged. A fire in January, 1963, left only part of the ground story of 11-17 Church Street (site of #101) standing; the upper two stories and façade collapsed onto the street.⁷⁴ An 1866 fire at James Brinsmaid's shop (#72) likely destroyed an upper story. The family suffered a string of bad luck because his brother's shop at 99-101 Church Street (#73) also suffered from fire loss.

Other blazes have left shells of buildings that required substantial renovations. Chauvin's Block (#2) in 1981 and Corley's Grocery Store (#98) in 1972 suffered extensive fire damage; both are non-contributing structures because of subsequent alterations. Four buildings that have endured

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fires are still considered contributing structures: Henry's Diner (#79) in 1969, Hiram Blood's Grocery (#99) in 1983, the Leavenworth Block (#48) in 1877 and the Standard Steam Laundry (#16) in 1924. All suffered interior fire damage but retain their exterior architectural integrity.

Despite these significant losses to fire, approximately eighty percent of the resources within the district remain contributing structures. By and large, non-contributing status within the district is related to loss due to fire, alteration after fire damage, or to a recent construction date. It is significant that fire did not consume *more* resources within this dense, urban area over the course of its long history as a commercial district, and it is notable that more of these resources were not lost because of development pressure or urban renewal. Property owners within the district have made a concerted effort to retain their historic structures, in some cases even despite damage caused by fires.

Criteria Considerations

As a local and regional commercial center since the 1830s, the Church Street Historic District is steeped in layers of history. Its function has not changed in more than one hundred and seventy years, and its architecture retains a high level of continuity and integrity. It is significant for its contributions to the growth of Burlington, for its reflection of national economic, social, retail, transportation, education, and entertainment patterns (Criterion A), and for its outstanding nineteenth and twentieth century architecture (Criterion C). The district's superior workmanship, materials, character, feeling, association, setting, and design are all exceptionally intact. These qualities were created by past and, in some cases, present property owners within the district working together with local and regional builders and designers, as well as with nationally and internationally renowned architects. Burlington's residents, Vermonters and visitors from around the world visit Church Street regularly. Much as the beauty of the city's setting attracted early settlers, the Church Street Historic District remains a vibrant commercial, business and entertainment magnet today.

Two of the 104 properties, although built within the last fifty years, are considered contributing resources because of their relevance to the character of the Church Street Historic District as a whole. These are Hiram Abraham's Store (#41) and Woolworth's (#96).

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Hiram Abraham's Store and Woolworth's represent the only extant examples of buildings in the district constructed during the decade of the 1960s. Both are exceptional regional examples of their style and both retain most of their historic architectural integrity. Hiram Abraham's Store, a small, two bay-wide commercial building built in 1961 to replace a structure destroyed by fire in 1947, is now forty-seven years old. It is located on Church Street adjacent to the Howard National Bank (#42) and opposite the Sherman Block/Abraham Building (#69, #70), two of the most prominent resources within the district. Hiram Abraham, in fact, was also the owner of the Sherman Block/Abraham Building. He and his family were responsible for the alterations to its façades in 1933, 1946 and 1956, so the store he commissioned to be built across the street forms part of a four-decade long evolution of building styles, from Art Deco to Streamlined Moderne (both on #69/#70) to International Style (on #41) along a concentrated section of Church Street. Hiram Abraham's Store incorporated a number of features that were innovations, including an exposed structural steel frame, white plastic sheathing panels and louvered windows. Because of its relationship with the Sherman/Abraham Building and because it is the earliest example of an International Style building on Church Street, it contributes to the commercial character of the district.

Woolworth's, built in 1964, is now forty-four years old. It is a large, single-story, concrete block structure occupying a prominent site at the southwest corner of Church and Cherry streets. With its sleek enamel paneled façade, large fully-glazed storefront windows and false corner tower, Woolworth's represents the only example of the 1960s transitional commercial style, between Streamlined Moderne and full-blown Modernism, within the district. It also displays some modest "Googie"-style detailing in the folded plate façade with geometric embossed panels. Although the structure no longer houses a Woolworth's franchise, it retains much of its integrity in design, materials, workmanship, feeling and association. The site has historically been associated with discount retail commercial usage. As early as 1906, a Five and Dime store was located here; it was followed by Woolworth's during the 1940s. Currently the building is occupied by Old Navy, a discount clothing franchise. The structure is physically connected to the adjacent Burlington Square complex (#95). There is a secondary entry to its large commercial interior just inside the main Church Street entry to the indoor shopping mall (#95A). The former Woolworth's building is also connected historically to the Burlington Square complex (#95). When the F. W. Woolworth Company built the new structure, at a cost of \$350,000, in 1965, it was the first retail store to open within the area that had been cleared for urban renewal.

Future Considerations

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Burlington Square (#95) is by far the largest single property within the Church Street Historic District. It is made up of three semi-detached structures: a large indoor shopping mall (#95A), an office building (#95B) and a parking garage (#95C). The complex, moreover, is located close to the center of the district, with frontage along both Church Street and Cherry Streets. It was constructed following urban renewal efforts within the city center initiated in the late 1950s. The Office of Mies van der Rohe, in Chicago, was the principal architectural firm for the design of this mixed-use development, from c. 1972 until its completion in 1976. The Burlington firm of Freeman French Freeman served as associated architects for the project. The complex, then, represents the work of an internationally renowned firm, with the collaboration of a regionally well-known firm.

Although the two original entries to the shopping mall (#95A) along Church Street and Cherry streets have been lost, the attached office building (#95B) and attached parking garage (#95C) are intact examples of Miesian architecture, built during the apogee of the style's popularity. The Burlington Square complex complements three other Modernist buildings nearby: the Burlington Federal Savings and Loan Association Building (#90), built in 1958; Woolworth's (#96) built in 1964 and attached to the complex in 1976; and the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception, located across Cherry Street (just outside the Church Street National Register District), designed by Edward Larrabee Barnes and built in 1977. Together, these buildings form an enclave of Modernism in the center of Burlington's commercial district. Furthermore, the complex of three buildings that make up the Burlington Square property has local and state significance, both because of the involvement of the Office of Mies van der Rohe and because its development during the 1960s and 1970s engendered a broad public awareness of the qualities and the value of Burlington's historic commercial and industrial districts.

Burlington contains perhaps the only significant cluster of Modernist and International Style buildings in Northern New England. Several structures completed after 1964 are located within the Church Street National Register District: Burlington Square Shopping Mall (1976) and Garage (1976), the New Vermont Federal Savings and Loan office building (c. 1974), and the Burlington Free Press Buildings (1969), or adjacent to it: the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception (1977). At a future time, these buildings should be considered as contributing to the district or, in the case of the Immaculate Conception Cathedral, for inclusion within it.

¹ Mrs. Eliza[beth] White Root, "Reminiscences of Early Days" *Vermont Antiquarian*, Vol. 3, 1905, 192.

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² Zadock Thompson. *History of Vermont*. (Burlington: Chauncey Goodrich, 1842), 40.

³ Captain Dan Lyon, "Burlington's Progress," *Burlington Free Press and Times*, June 16, 1890, 5.

⁴ Town of Burlington Land Records, John Howard to Daniel Kern, 9:400-401.

⁵ Eliza[beth] White Root, "Reminiscences of Early Days" *Vermont Antiquarian*, Vol. 3, 1905, 190. Mrs. Root was the eldest daughter of Burlington Harbormaster Robert White and his wife Parthena, who lived at 43-45 King Street in Burlington from 1815-1822. Mrs. Root died in San Diego in 1905.

⁶ W. S. Rann, ed. *History of Chittenden County Vermont*. (Syracuse: D. Mason & Co., Publishers, 1886), 409.

⁷ *Burlington Sentinel*, August 19, 1830, 3/1. Johonnott & Smith operated their store at the head of Church Street on the west side.

⁸ John Johnson, Plans. "Andrew Thompson, Moody Haskel and Nelson & Gates/ Isaac Warner." University of Vermont Bailey Howe Library, Special Collections. Box 8, 1835.

⁹ *Ibid.*, May 15, 1834. Interestingly, Starr's home was eventually purchased by James Shedd of Shedd & Walker. The brick parapeted gable front home appears to have been remodeled into a "French Roof" structure, and was eventually absorbed into the adjacent block after an 1894 block fire. The block was replaced in 1964 when Woolworth's was built.

¹⁰ W. S. Rann, ed. *History of Chittenden County Vermont*. (Syracuse: D. Mason & Co., Publishers, 1886), 411.

¹¹ See City of Burlington Land Records, 1:294.

¹² *Burlington City Directory* (Burlington: Free Press Steam Printing Establishment, 1865), 22. Ballard and his brothers operated the pottery works on the south side of Pearl Street.

¹³ T.D. Seymour Bassett, "The Leading Villages of Vermont in 1840," *Vermont History* 26: (July 1958), 169.

¹⁴ *Ibid.* For population figures, see Zadock Thompson, *History of Vermont* (Burlington: Chauncey Goodrich, 1842), 40.

¹⁵ H.F. Walling. *Map of Chittenden County, Vermont*. New York: Baker, Tilden & Col., Publishers, 1857. For information about E. A. Fuller, see also Decree to Heirs, Estate of Stephen Whitney, City of Burlington Land Records, 7:56.

¹⁶ "The Warner Block: The New and Handsome Places of Business in the New Building," *Daily Free Press*, February 8, 1887, 8/2.

¹⁷ Letter to the editor, signed "X", *Daily Free Press and Times*, May 13, 1884, Vol. 39, No. -, 3/3.

¹⁸ *Daily Free Press and Times*, October 4, 1853, 2/3.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ *Ibid.*, May 13, 1884, 3/3.

²¹ Abby Maria Hemenway, *The Vermont Historical Gazetteer: A Magazine Embracing the History of Each Town*. Vol. 1, (Burlington: Miss A.M. Hemenway, 1868), 723. Matthew Buckham would become president of the University of Vermont four years later, serving in that position until from 1871 until 1910.

²² Michael Sherman, Gene Sessions, P. Jeffrey Potash, *Freedom and Unity: A History of Vermont* (Barre: Vermont Historical Society, 2004), 291.

²³ Jean Innamorati, *The Burlington Waterworks: 1865 to 1915*. Unpublished MS prepared as a Masters Degree thesis the University of Vermont Preservation Program, 2008.

²⁴ Barry Salussolia, "The City of Burlington and Municipal Incorporation in Vermont," *Vermont History*, 54.1 (1986): 13.

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²⁵ Innamorati, op. cit.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ "Report of the Superintendent of Streets, 1873," 37. "Report of the Superintendent of Streets, 1873," 37.

²⁹ Rann, 441.

³⁰ John Murrin, Paul Johnson, James McPherson et al., *Liberty, Equality, Power: A History of the American People*, Vol. 2 (Belmont, CA: Thompson Wadsworth, 2004), 465.

³¹ "Burlington," *Tenth Annual Report, 1875.*" 131-132.

³² "City Ordinances (No. 10, An Ordinance in relation to the erection of wood buildings, roofs and awnings)," *Twelfth Annual Report of the City Government of the City of Burlington, Vermont for the Municipal Year Ending December 31, 1876* (Burlington: R. S. Styles Steam Book and Job Printer, 1876), 76-77.

³³ "Report of the Superintendent of Streets," *Annual Report of the City of Burlington, Vermont* (1873), 40.

³⁴ *Daily Free Press and Times*, August 5, 1874, 3/1.

³⁵ Ibid., September 28, 1877, 3/1, Morning Edition.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ *Daily Free Press and Times*, July 28, 1877, Morning Edition, 3/1.

³⁸ Historic Burlington Photos, Vermont Historical Society, Vermont History Center, Barre Vermont.

³⁹ *Daily Free Press and Times*, August 3, 1877, Evening Edition, 3/1.

⁴⁰ Ibid., September 28, 1877, 3/1, Evening Edition.

⁴¹ Ibid., August 10, 1877, 3/1, Evening Edition.

⁴² Letter to the editor, signed "X", *Daily Free Press and Times*, May 13, 1884, 3/3.

⁴³ *Daily Free Press and Times*, August 27, 1877, 3/1, Morning Edition. See also August 2, 1877, 3/1, Evening Edition. "It [the number of businesses on Church Street with low awnings] is most intolerable and not to be endured."

⁴⁴ Hamilton Child, pub. *Gazetteer and Business Directory of Chittenden County, Vermont for 1882-1883* (Syracuse: The Journal Office, 1882), 113.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 114.

⁴⁶ *Burlington Free Press and Times*, September 25, 1877, 3/1, Morning Edition.

⁴⁷ Hamilton Child, pub. *Gazetteer and Business Directory of Chittenden County, Vermont for 1882-1883* (Syracuse: The Journal Office, 1882), 115.

⁴⁸ T.D. Seymour Bassett, "500 Miles of Trouble and Excitement: Vermont Railroads, 1848-1861," *Vermont History* 49 (1981): 144.

⁴⁹ *Burlington Free Press*, January 14, 1963, 5/4.

⁵⁰ *Burlington Free Press and Times*, July 8, 1877, 3/1.

⁵¹ Ibid., July 12, 1877, 3/1.

⁵² Ibid., July 26, 1877, 3/2, Morning Edition.

⁵³ Ibid., August 1, 1877, 3/1 Morning Edition; November 12, 1883, 3/2; also November 26, 1883, 3/2.

⁵⁴ Ibid., Saturday, June 8, 1935.

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Church Street Historic District
Burlington, Chittenden County, Vermont

Statement of Significance (continued)

⁵⁵ Fanny Spaulding purchased 169-171 Cherry Street in 1864 (#13), but upon its sale a few years later, the grantor is listed as Milton R. Spaulding (& wife). Town of Burlington Land Records, 31:714, see also City of Burlington Land Records, 9:180.

⁵⁶ *Daily Free Press and Times*, January 1, 1886, 4/3.

⁵⁷ City of Burlington Land Records, 34:198.

⁵⁸ *Daily Free Press and Times*, June 24, 1896, 5/5; April 3, 1897, 5/2.

⁵⁹ *Daily Free Press and Times*, "Bacon's New Market," July 22, 1874.

⁶⁰ *Daily Free Press and Times*, April 1, 1876, 3/2.

⁶¹ Gideon Lathrop, "Steamboating on Lake George and Lake Champlain 1823-1829", University of Vermont Bailey Howe Library, Special Collections. Captain Lathrop details the delivery of a young girl (his sister?) to music lessons via his sloop.

⁶² *Burlington Free Press and Times*, September 12, 1904, 10.

⁶³ *Daily Free Press and Times*, April 3, 1878, 3/3.

⁶⁴ *Daily Free Press*, April 12, 1881, 3/4, Morning Edition.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Ibid, 103.

⁶⁷ Jeanne M. Davern, "Four U. S. projects under development by Mondev International," *Architectural Record*, December (1977): 96.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Ibid, 102.

⁷¹ Roberta B. Gratz, *The Living City* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1989), 232-241.

⁷² *Daily Free Press and Times*, April 12, 1881, 3/4 Morning Edition; and October 31, 1881, 3/2;

⁷³ *Burlington Free Press*, February 16, 1970, No. 39, 1.

⁷⁴ "Downtown Burlington Fire," *Burlington Free Press*, January 29, 1963, 1/5.