

# TIME & PLACE IN BENNINGTON

*A Handbook for the Central Bennington  
Historic District*

*Second Edition*

Town of Bennington Historic Preservation Commission

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Special thanks to the Bennington Region Preservation Trust for their generous support for the printing and promotion of the original (First Edition) Time and Place.

Cover image is from a “Birds Eye View of Bennington and Bennington Center, 1877”

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## A Handbook for the Central Bennington Historic District

Prepared By  
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### Second Edition

This is the second edition of *Time and Place in Bennington*. It includes a partial addendum to the handbook which was created by the Bennington Historic Preservation Commission in January 2005 to address changes to the Town of Bennington's ordinance and other district changes. The handbook also includes many new photographs and references which were not part of the original publication. Unless otherwise noted, all photographs found within this edition were taken between September 2004 and December 2005 by Michael Allen of Bailliere Consulting.

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Photographs by William Higgins & Company, Inc., Town of Bennington, Bailliere Consulting and Vermont Division for Historic Preservation. Historical photographs courtesy of Images from the Past, Bennington, VT. Graphic design assistance by Abigail Shapiro.

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### Some General Principles

This handbook discusses a whole range of issues which relate to historic preservation in the Town of Bennington, from history and architectural styles to remodeling, demolition, new construction, and archeology. Ultimately the subject goes beyond buildings and streets to something larger: the quality of life in Bennington.

It is important to keep this in mind when reading any part of this handbook and when thinking about any of the matters it discusses. The idea of historic preservation in Bennington is based on the fact that past and present are both a part of real life. In this book, each issue is discussed and each street and building is studied with three basic ideas in mind. These ideas are true now and they were true in the past, every time a building has been built or changed in Bennington.



### You've Got To Be Practical

Every building, new or old, is built to serve a purpose. If a building doesn't work, it misses the point. Historic preservation is meant to keep buildings working, not to make it harder for them to do so. Part of practicality is cost, and it is not the role of historic preservation to set standards nobody can afford. But the most practical way is more than just the cheapest way. The best buildings, and the best towns, are built by people who understand that practicality and quality cannot be separated.



### You Can't Freeze Time

Historic preservation is not about stopping change. Some of the finest historic towns have buildings and streets from every period of their development, from the earliest times through the present day. Some of the finest historic buildings are not pure examples of one time or style, but have changes and additions which reflect continuing growth and use throughout their history. Responsible historic preservation encourages keeping good construction from every period. It encourages high-quality changes to existing buildings, and construction of high-quality new buildings where these will contribute to a town's ongoing growth and health.



### There Are No Bad Guys

Historic preservation is a good cause, but it is not a battle. It recognizes that real people build towns, not just historians. When historic preservation works well, it is because a community acts to keep itself together and to improve itself. Every town has buildings and alterations which detract from its character as well as those which contribute to it. This handbook cites some examples of both, but it does so not to offer praise or blame. It does so to help people in Bennington to think more about what makes their town the place it is now, and what to do to make it the best place it can be in the future.

*Photos: Bennington Free Library on Silver Street (top); 206 Pleasant Street (middle); The Putnam Hotel, Putnam Square (bottom).*

## Planning & Zoning Issues



*Photos: 400 Main Street on the corner of Putnam Square (top); parking near School Street and Pleasant Street (middle); residential apartments at 326 Pleasant Street (bottom).*

Traditional land uses in central Bennington include commercial development along Main Street and North Street; large, high-style single family houses and institutions along much of Pleasant Street; and smaller scale, denser residential development along Union Street. The smaller side streets reflect the character of the larger streets which surround them. Although much of their original character still remains, serious intrusions and deletions have eroded the historic and esthetic qualities of Bennington's primary streets.

The once-continuous line of buildings along Main Street has been interrupted by new buildings whose design has not been carefully thought out, and by voids left after fires and demolition. Parking lots along Main Street and Pleasant Street break up streetscapes. The west end of Union Street has taken on a commercial character in contrast with the residential nature of the street. While current zoning sometimes reflects use changes that have been made in the past, in some cases it also serves to encourage more of the same, to the potential detriment of the town's character.

A look at the recent zoning maps for the center of Bennington will help explain this evolution. Central Bennington was overlaid by three separate land-use zones as defined by the Town of Bennington's Zoning By-Laws adopted in April, 1982. The western half of the area falls in the Central Business Zone (CB-10). This zoning permitted the kinds of uses which have traditionally been found here - public and semi-public uses, retail, offices and financial institutions, restaurants, hotels, places of commercial amusement, services, dwellings and, under certain conditions, warehouses.

A small area in the northwest corner is zoned Village Commercial 12 (VC-12). VC-12 zoning permits public and semi-public uses, retail, offices, restaurants, hotels and motels, commercial amusement, services, funeral homes, dwellings and, under certain conditions, warehouses. These uses are consistent with the patterns of use which have evolved in this area over the years.

However, the eastern portion of Central Bennington, including all of the south side of Union Street, is zoned Office and Apartment Use (OA-20). OA-20 zoning permits public and semi-public use, dwellings for up to six families, new residential development, offices and customary home occupations. Conditional uses include restaurants, motels, public parks, public buildings, clubs, community care homes, services and retail. The overwhelming character of the streets covered by OA-20 zoning is now single-family residential, and has been so historically. While many of the permitted uses can be accommodated by the existing buildings, many cannot

be. For new construction, the OA-20 zoning required lots which are much larger than most existing ones. This could encourage demolition of existing buildings to assemble larger lots, resulting in a loss of historic buildings and a radical change in scale, character and use. The results of this kind of zoning have been seen at the eastern end of Pleasant Street, where a few insensitively designed apartment buildings have been constructed. Their massing, placement and poor design have harmed the street, and new buildings like them could do more of the same.

Carefully modifying the existing zoning would help eliminate the possibility for damage like this in the future. Planning and zoning can be powerful tools for protecting the sense of place and history which gives central Bennington its special identity. If thoughtfully designed, they can be powerful forces for growth at the same time, encouraging positive development in harmony with the existing environment.

Residents and visitors alike can feel a particular character - a sense of time, place and architecture - in Bennington's historic commercial and the residential streets. Just what makes up this character? Familiar landmarks like the clock at the Chittenden Bank? The way buildings curve around the corners at Putnam Square? Porches on Union Street houses? Storefronts along Main Street? Does character come from elegant neo-classical ornament or from straightforward factory walls; from Greek Revival cottages or from Queen Anne mansions? The answer is that Bennington's sense of time and place comes from all of these, from the largest buildings down to the smallest details. Bennington's character has built up piece by piece, and it continues to evolve as its buildings and streetscapes change every day.



This handbook looks closely at historic character in the center of Bennington - an area including much of Main Street, North and South Streets, Union Street, Pleasant Street, and the smaller streets around them. It is intended to help in understanding the features and forces which create the area's character, and the different ways in which this character is diminished and enhanced.

Much of what made Bennington in the past still makes Bennington today. Many houses and a good number of commercial buildings have kept their historic character over the years. Thoughtful owners have helped others to regain it. Examples like the rehabilitation of the yellow brick Ritchie Block and the dramatic uncovering of the Pennysaver Building's original facade show what an eye for detail and a sense of pride in Bennington's architectural resources can accomplish.

But deterioration, hard use and changes in taste and function have caused Bennington to lose something, too. Industries and businesses which once thrived in Bennington, such as the nationally famous Norton and United States potteries, now remain only as archeological sites underneath yards and pavement. Old buildings, demolished or burned, have been replaced by parking lots or uninteresting one-story infill buildings that weaken the continuity of streets or blur the lines defining important places like Putnam Square. Destruction of ornamental details, covering of walls and decorative trim with aluminum siding, and removal or covering of historic storefronts have all contributed to a slow erosion of the very things that make Bennington a place with character.

Character and use have always gone hand in hand. The ways in which land and buildings are used, and the planning and zoning regulations which govern this use, play a powerful role in shaping the fate of all historic places. This is clearly true in Bennington, where use trends and current zoning regulations hold the power to build on the town's traditional character, or to transform it profoundly.



*Photos: Bennington Police Station on South Street, formerly the Post Office (top left); window along River Street (top right); view outside the Putnam Hotel on Main Street (bottom).*

## The Central Bennington Historic District

Under Vermont State law (the Municipal and Regional Planning and Development Act), zoning regulations may establish local historic districts which include structures and areas of historic and architectural significance.

In 1987, the Town of Bennington established an Historic Preservation Commission to advise and assist the Bennington Planning Commission on historic preservation issues. Part of the Historic Preservation Commission's work is to study the feasibility of designating local historic districts, and to develop preservation guidelines which promote and protect the historic character of these areas. After careful study, the Historic Preservation Commission developed the concept of a Central Bennington Historic District, whose boundaries generally follow the flow of the Walloomsac River on the north, Union Street on the east and south, and North Street on the West. The district and its boundaries are shown in the map on page 6.

The Central Bennington Historic District includes roughly twelve city blocks representing the core of Bennington's urban history from the 1700s through the present day. The diverse building types found in the district are living evidence of the residential, commercial, institutional and industrial patterns which have given rise to Bennington's history as a thriving industrial community and regional commercial center.

The district boundaries reflect Bennington's location at the intersection of the main north-south and east-west thoroughfares through the state, as well as the importance of the Walloomsac River, the source of water power which fueled the town's industrial base in textile and other mills. Represented in the Central Bennington Historic District are both vernacular and high-style examples of a variety of architectural styles, including Federal, Greek Revival, Italianate, Queen Anne, Second Empire, and Colonial Revival. The houses, stores, churches, warehouses, and factories in the district reflect the periods of Bennington's history, and they create much of the town's distinctive visual quality and sense of place. Particular parts of the district have individual identities and use patterns, expressing their roles within Bennington's overall development. Some, like parts of Pleasant, North and South Streets, include factory buildings from several periods. Union Street and some of the smaller streets around it include houses for workers at various levels. Pleasant and Elm Streets include substantial houses built for factory owners, merchants, and professionals. Much of Main, North and South Streets are commercial, with stores and public buildings in a range of styles. Architectural detail, building mass, siting, and other factors combine to make the district a prime example of the sense of place and history that sets Bennington apart from other Vermont towns.

Establishing the historic district ensures that central Bennington's buildings and streetscapes will keep their integrity in the years to come. The historic preservation guidelines developed for the district protect its special character, and at the same time promote the growth and good new construction needed to carry Bennington's sense of quality into the future. The guidelines allow informed decisions to be made in repairing and altering existing buildings, in demolishing buildings which do not contribute to the character of the district, and in designing new buildings within the district. In the Central Bennington Historic District, preservation, planning, and zoning can join to reinforce the best of existing character and to ensure wise future growth for Bennington's core.

*Photos: The former Vermont National Bank on Putnam Square (top); the Bennington Brush Company building on North Street (middle); view outside 620 Main Street (bottom).*



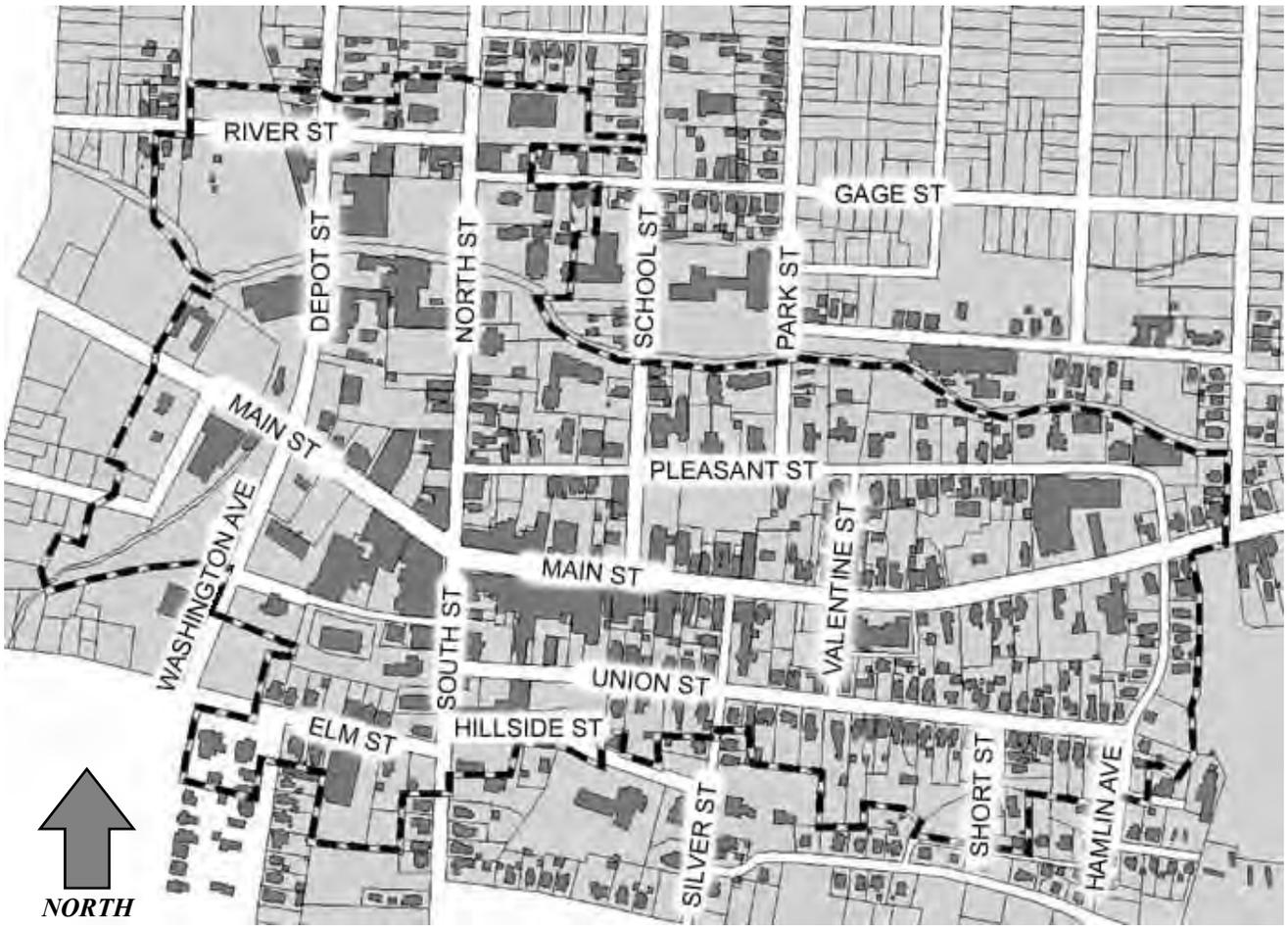
The Central Bennington Historic District



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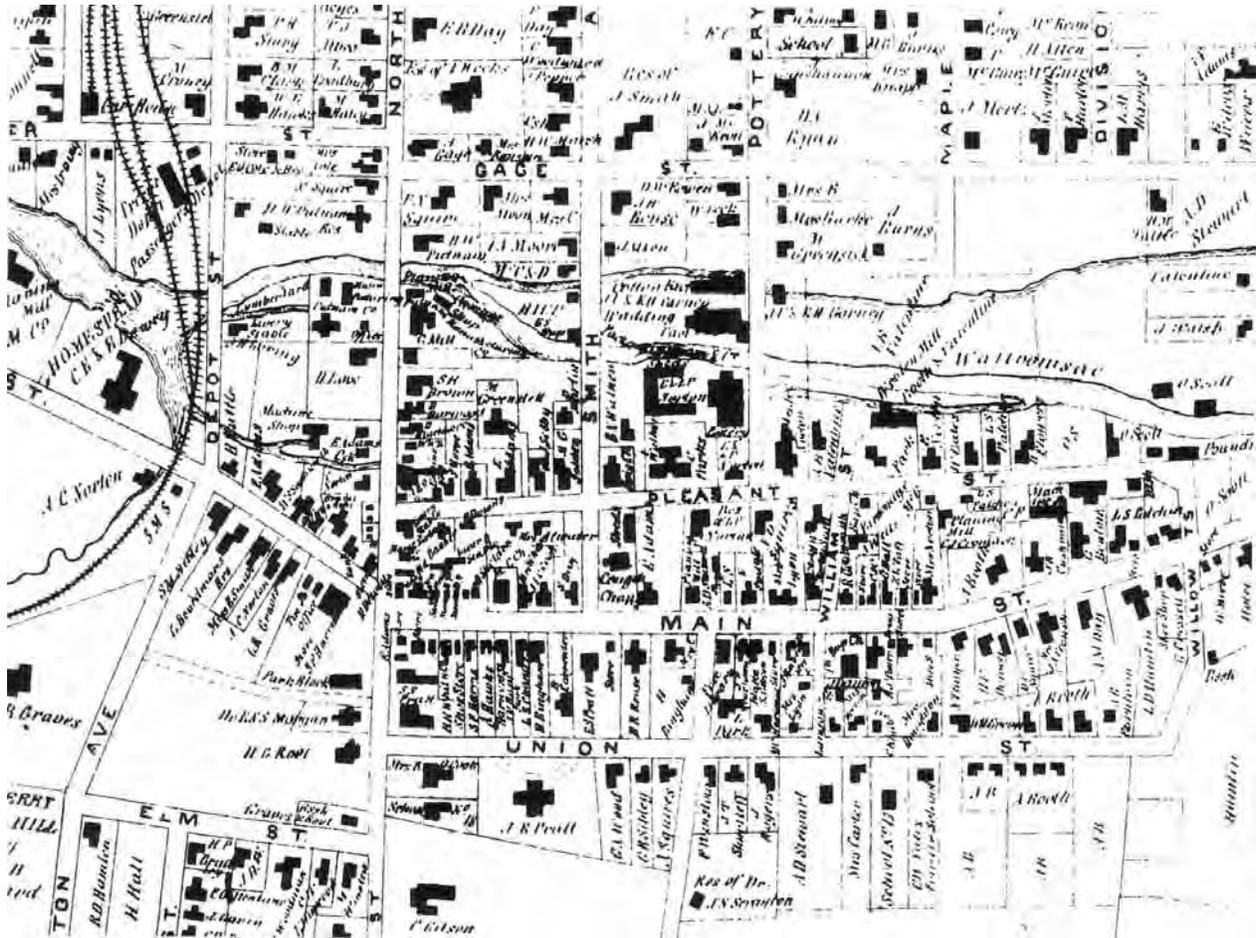
## Map showing boundaries of the Historic Central Bennington Design Review District

(Note: Some buildings within the district boundaries may not be indicated individually on the map.)



The Historic Central Bennington Design Review District

Detail from 1869 F.W. Beers Atlas of Bennington County



The map shows the streets and buildings within the Central Bennington Historic District as they existed in 1869. By this date, Bennington had expanded substantially beyond the earlier settlement which began up the hill and to the west, in Old Bennington. In contrast to the village character of Old Bennington, central Bennington developed a denser, more urban character, and became the town's residential, commercial and industrial center by the mid to late 1800s.

Comparing the 1869 map and the modern historic district map will show that the basic street pattern and many individual buildings have survived to the present day in central Bennington. Other buildings have been demolished and replaced by later structures at various nineteenth and twentieth century dates. While no longer extant above ground, many of the buildings shown on the 1869 map still remain as archaeological sites beneath modern lawns and pavement.

## Character & Streetscape: Introduction



Character is the quality which makes a place interesting and individual. While it may take only an instant to sense, character is really something like a mosaic, combining a whole range of properties from the most obvious to the most subtle. Character comes from dimensional aspects of a place, like the width of streets and the height and spacing of buildings. It comes from solid aspects like the choice of paving and construction materials; from visual aspects like windows, porches and other architectural details; from fragile, changing aspects like light and shadow, sounds and temperatures, colors and textures, levels of maintenance, or a sense of age and history.



Part of the fascination of knowing a place like Bennington is understanding the variety of parts and pieces which make up its character. There is simply more interest in a place when you know what makes it tick, what causes it to look and feel as it does. At the same time, understanding the causes of character helps make it possible to do the things which will make character grow, and to avoid those which tend to take it away.

The following section is organized as a walk through the streets of central Bennington, with frequent stops to think about what is seen. It begins with a map and a description of a street and its history. Then, by keying comments and information to particular parts of photographs, it assesses the details which create character and those which diminish it, focusing in on different levels from streetscapes down to individual buildings and smaller details.



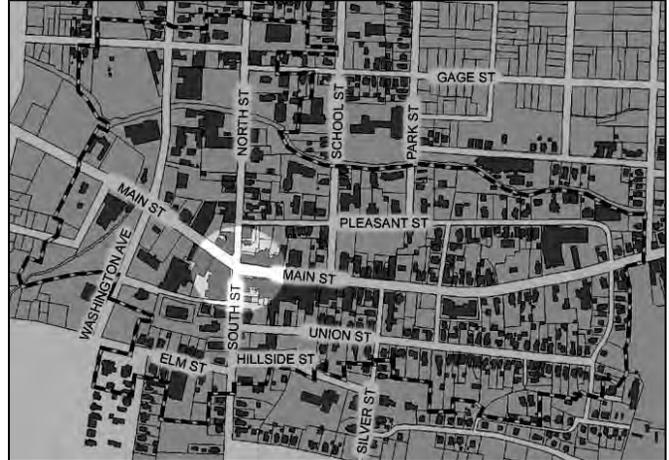
A careful reading of this section will not only help explain the variety of details which make up the character of individual streets. It will help provide the tools for further looking and thinking - for seeing more of what creates Bennington's sense of time and place, and for knowing how to make it grow.



*Photos: View east along Main Street (top); view west at corner of Main Street and Valentine Street (second from top); north side of Main Street in downtown (third from top); view east along Union Street towards the intersection of Silver Street (left); view east along Elm Street (above).*

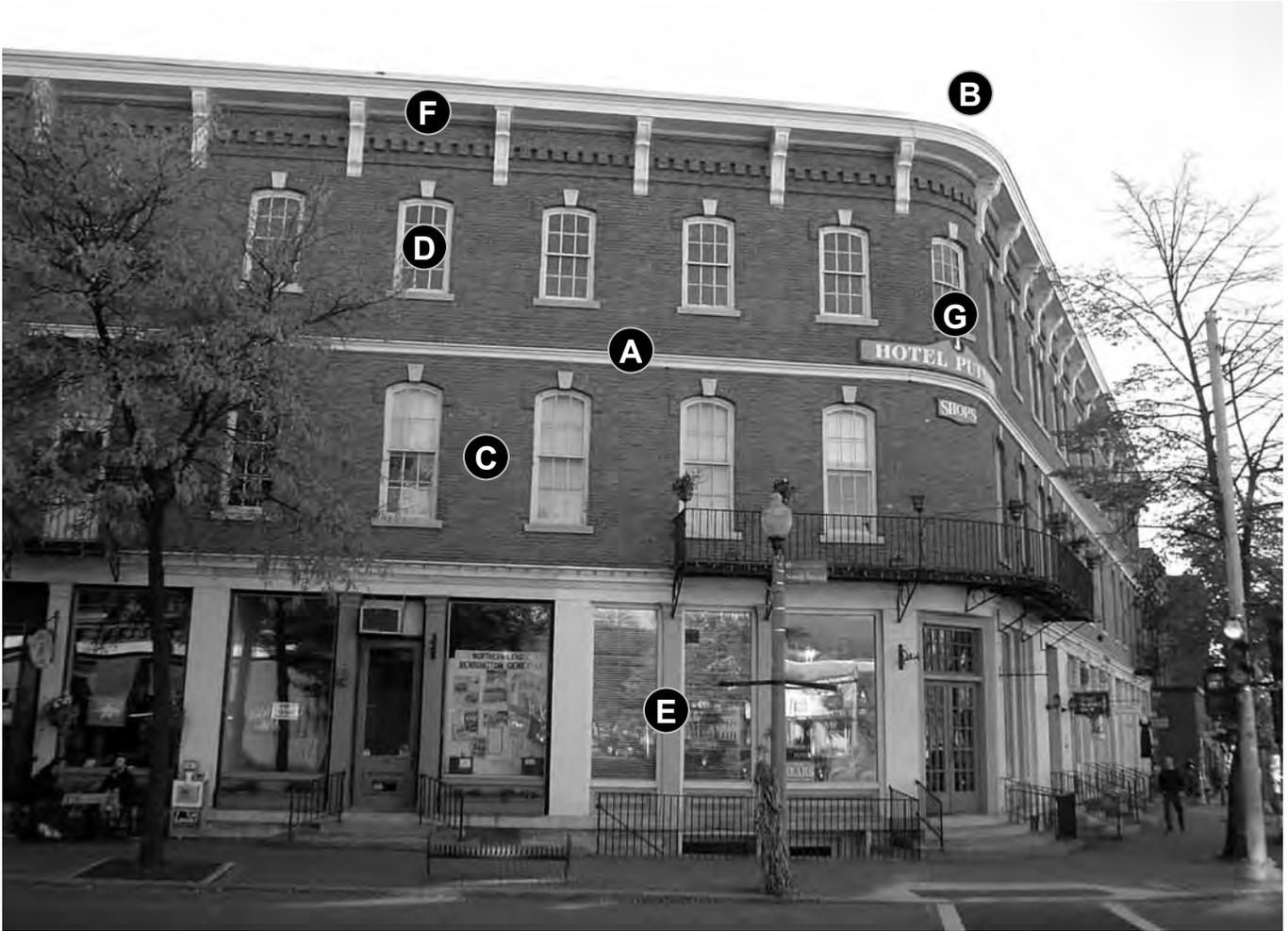
## Character & Streetscape: Putnam Square

Located at the intersection of Main Street and Route 7 (North and South Streets), Putnam Square, or Four Corners, is the hub of commercial activity in downtown Bennington. Putnam Square derives its name from the old Putnam Hotel which dominates the southwest corner. As the major intersection of two heavily-traveled and well-developed streets, Putnam Square presents an opportunity for design excellence that is only partially realized by the existing conditions. The strength of the Square lies in the monumental character of the three masonry buildings on the southeast, southwest and northwest corners. Because of the off-set nature of the intersection, the Italianate style hotel building, constructed of brick, serves as a strong terminus for the vista down Main Street; and the sweep of its curved wall provides a graceful transition from Main Street to South Street. This transition is echoed in the former Vermont National Bank building constructed in 1930; while the architectural style is later and the building is faced in marble rather than brick, its angled shape allows it to maintain a distinctive presence on the corner. The Chittenden Bank building on the southeast corner of Putnam Square also plays a crucial role in the definition of the Square as its rounded corner flows from Main to South Streets. The Bank's clock is a fine street accessory which adds a dimension of detail to the intersection. Today, modern one-story commercial construction occupies the northeast corner site. The design of these buildings, their materials and small scale do not enhance the monumentality of the Square. Historically, a masonry bank building and the Opera House occupied the site, closing the space and providing a dramatic solidity to the major intersection in Bennington, a quality to be encouraged in new construction.



*Photo: Chittenden Bank building at the corner of Main Street and South Street, Putnam Square. (See next page for key legend.)*

## Character & Streetscape: Putnam Square



### Contributes to sense of place & history

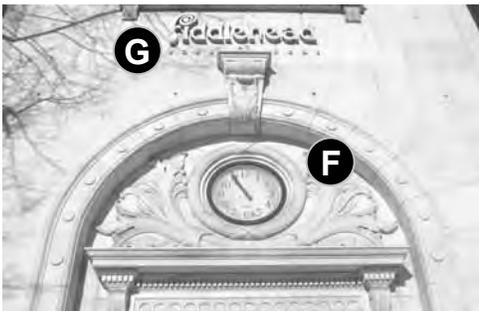
- A** Scale and materials reflect the building's prominence on the corner.
- B** Building shape emphasizes corner location.
- C** Rhythm of window openings creates continuity.
- D** Original window design is preserved.
- E** Rhythm of storefront openings creates continuity.
- F** Cornice emphasizes roof line and building shape.
- G** Signage integrated into facade design.
- H** Freestanding clock is retained.

### Detracts from a sense of place & history

- 1** New storefronts not in keeping with historic design.



*Photos: Putnam Hotel at the corner of Main Street and South Street, Putnam Square.*



**Contributes to sense of place & history**

- A Scale and materials reflect the building's prominence on the corner.
- B Building shape emphasizes corner location.
- C Rhythm of window openings creates continuity.
- D Original window design is preserved.
- E Cornice emphasizes roofline and building shape.
- F High quality of exterior materials and detail.
- G Sign design integrated with building architecture.
- H Historic design for street lighting.

**Detracts from a sense of place & history**

- 1 Loss of street-wall with one story buildings.
- 2 Sloped roof design and building set back farther from road than others – does not tie in to neighborhood development pattern.

*Photos: The former Vermont National Bank at the corner of Main Street and North Street, Putnam Square (top); detail above entry (middle); view of bank building along Main Street (bottom).*

## Character & Streetscape: Putnam Square



### Contributes to sense of place & history

- A Building shape emphasizes corner location.
- B Cornice emphasizes roofline and building shape, though could be stronger.
- C Sign design integrated with building architecture.
- D Rhythm of storefront windows creates continuity.

### Detracts from a sense of place & history

- 1 One story height weakens prominent corner location and is not in keeping with the buildings on the other corners.
- 2 Rhythm and proportions of openings contrast with buildings on the other corners.
- 3 Blank wall areas isolate building from the street.
- 4 Roofline is weakened by lack of a strong cornice.
- 5 Materials not in keeping with historic character such as modern brick, sheet metal or External Insulation Finish System.
- 6 Busy street intersection has obtrusive signage, lighting and traffic signals.



Photos: 400 Main Street on Putnam Square (top); view looking east along Main Street (bottom).

## Character & Streetscape: Main Street

Main Street is significant today as the historic center of commercial, industrial and residential development in Bennington. Beginning in the mid 18th century as a road from what is now known as Old Bennington east to the grist and saw mills along the Walloomsac River, Main Street grew during the mid 19th century as industrial activity flourished along the river, and it became a major east-west thoroughfare through the state of Vermont. Much of Bennington's commercial development focused on the intersection of Main Street with Route 7. The intersection is often referred to as "Four Corners" or "Putnam Square" after the Putnam House, a 19th century hotel which still dominates the southwest corner. Other institutions near the intersection, included the Stark Hotel and its replacement, the Opera House, which no longer exist.



Residential development began in earnest during the 1830s in the eastern portion of Main Street; the western portion was developed later, mostly at the end of the 19th century. Most of Bennington's religious structures were sited on Main Street beginning in the 1830s. Today, the Baptist, Methodist and Catholic Churches still stand on Main Street. Other institutions were drawn to Main Street, including the Bennington Free Library, the Masonic Temple and the former Mount Anthony Union Middle School. Industrial activity declined during the 20th century and most construction in the past 50 years has consisted of replacement structures, gas stations and convenience stores.

Largely commercial in character, Main Street includes stores, banks and institutions with a high concentration of residential buildings and houses converted to commercial uses at the eastern end. Main Street was the site of constant development activity through the 19th and 20th centuries. It contains a diversity of building types and architectural styles including Federal (#550 and 600-604), Greek Revival (#493, 507, 606-608, 628, etc.), and Italianate (#625) houses. Many commercial buildings were also designed in the Italianate Style including Adams Hardware Store (#497) and the Nichols Block (#457). Various revival styles are represented along Main Street including Classical Revival (the Ritchie Block), Tudor Revival (the Masonic Temple), Neo-Classical (the Fienberg Block and the Vermont National Bank).

Most of Main Street's commercial buildings nearest Putnam Square are masonry, lending to a monumental quality befitting the center of town. Residences toward the eastern end of Main Street are generally constructed of wood and sheathed in wood shingles or clapboards. A good number of Main Street buildings retain architectural integrity, especially on upper floors where fewer alterations have occurred. Many of the residential buildings have been converted to commercial or office uses with little negative impact. However, gaps in the streetscape have been created where small, one-story buildings have replaced historic buildings. Like other streets, parking lots have eroded the visual continuity of the Main Street and detract from its special character. Recent changes in material and removal of ornamental detail from individual buildings have also affected the cohesiveness of the street as a whole. Because of its commercial character, Main Street is most vulnerable to ill-considered changes and alterations and has been affected by them more than other streets.



*Photos: View looking east outside 463 Main Street (left); 512-518 Main Street (right).*

Character & Streetscape: Main Street





Photos: 447-449 Main Street (above); 457 Main Street (previous page, top); 532 Main Street (previous page, bottom).

### Contributes to sense of place & history

- A** Buildings maintain a consistent street wall, but with a sense of variety in height, shape and materials.
- B** Many buildings retain original materials and designs above the ground floor.
- C** Many buildings retain original cornices.
- D** Some original storefronts and entrances remain.
- E** Some buildings include alterations which add to the sense of quality and character.
- F** Some buildings of relatively recent 20th century date may also contribute to historical and architectural character.
- G** Street trees provide a sense of shelter between road and sidewalk.

### Detracts from a sense of place & history

- 1** Some storefront windows, awnings and canopies not in keeping with building's overall character.
- 2** Large areas of unarticulated walls or lack of cornice design detract from depth and 3-dimensional character of surrounding buildings.
- 3** Some buildings re-clad in modern materials which detract from sense of quality and character.
- 4** Some windows and ornament on upper floors out of scale with the rest of the street.

## Character & Streetscape: Main Street

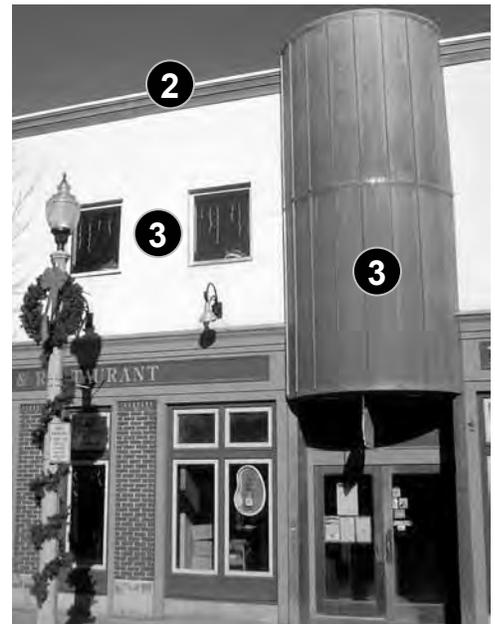


### Contributes to sense of place & history

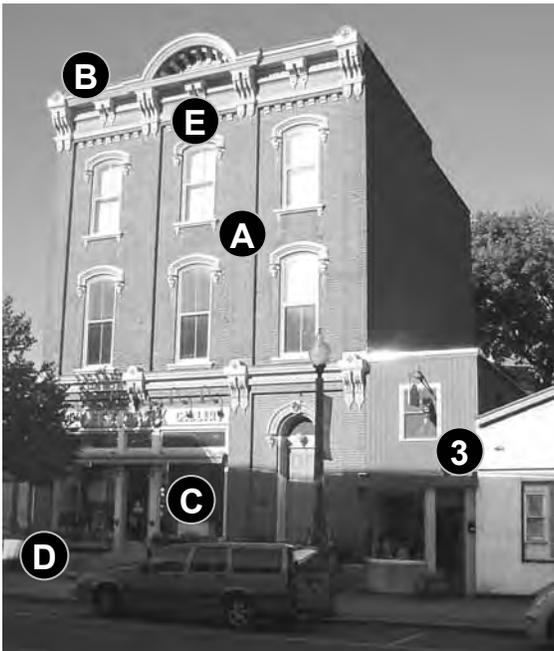
- A** Buildings maintain a consistent street wall, but with a sense of variety in height, shape and materials.
- B** Many buildings retain original materials and designs above the ground floor.
- C** Many buildings retain original cornices.
- D** Some original storefronts and entrances remain.
- E** Special buildings such as churches, schools and government buildings are an exception to the street-wall continuity, and are set back farther from the street to highlight their importance in the community.
- F** Different building designs sometimes work together to have common cornice lines or similar features.

### Detracts from a sense of place & history

- 1** Some storefront windows, awnings and canopies not in keeping with building's overall character.
- 2** Lack of cornice design detracts from depth and 3-dimensional character of surrounding buildings.
- 3** Some buildings re-clad in modern materials which detract from sense of quality and character.



*Photos: View looking west along Main Street (top); 428 Main Street (bottom).*



Photos: 337 Main Street (top); 332 Main Street (bottom).

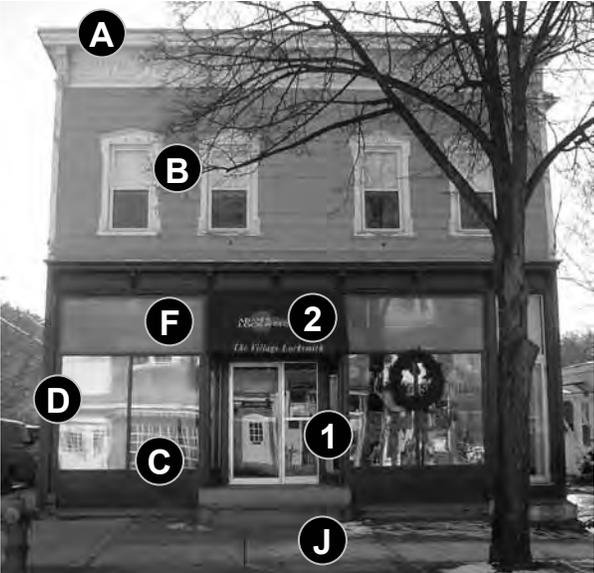
**Contributes to sense of place & history**

- A** Many buildings retain original materials and designs above the ground floor.
- B** Many buildings retain original cornices.
- C** Some original storefronts and entrances remain.
- D** Some original steps remain, providing interesting change in sidewalk level.
- E** Historic paint schemes which reinforce depth and three-dimensionality of facade features.

**Detracts from a sense of place & history**

- 1** Some storefront windows, awnings and canopies not in keeping with building's overall character.
- 2** Some original features removed or covered by later storefronts or cladding.
- 3** Some buildings clad in modern materials which detract from sense of quality and character.

Character & Streetscape: Main Street





Photos: 437 Main Street (top).  
 Previous page: 469 Main  
 Street (top); 497 Main Street  
 (bottom left); 489 Main Street  
 (bottom right).

### Contributes to sense of place & history

- A** Cornices with brackets and decorative details.
- B** Original windows and related details on upper floors.
- C** Basic rhythm of historic storefront openings maintained.
- D** Original storefront transoms and columns.
- E** Original entrance with paneled doors and semi-circular transom.
- F** Some 20th century storefront features (1930s Carrara glass panels for example) add interest.
- G** Store signs placed in transom panels or other historic locations.
- H** Original brickwork carefully cleaned and repaired.
- I** Modern storefront infill maintains scale, rhythm and materials of original.
- J** Street trees, original steps and variety of sidewalk paving add interest and human scale.

### Detracts from a sense of place & history

- 1** Recent aluminum doors keep basic shape of openings, but bare aluminum and modern hardware contrast with historic color and texture.
- 2** Some original storefront features removed or covered by signs or panels.
- 3** Replacement windows do not match scale or character of the rest of the building.

## Character & Streetscape: Main Street



### Contributes to sense of place & history

- A** Residential buildings along east portion of Main Street reflect a variety of historic use patterns.
- B** Building heights and roof shapes of the houses along the road are similar enough to maintain a sense of continuity, yet still have many variations.
- C** Rhythm of window openings express continuity.
- D** Porches and landscaping add interest in ornament and scale.

### Detracts from a sense of place & history

- 1** Contemporary siding covers over cornices and other details underneath.
- 2** Enclosed porches not in keeping with historic character.
- 3** Modern utilitarian devices such as power lines and antennas distract from historic character.



*Photos: View east outside 606 Main St. (top), view east outside 626 Main St. (bottom).*

Character & Streetscape: Main Street



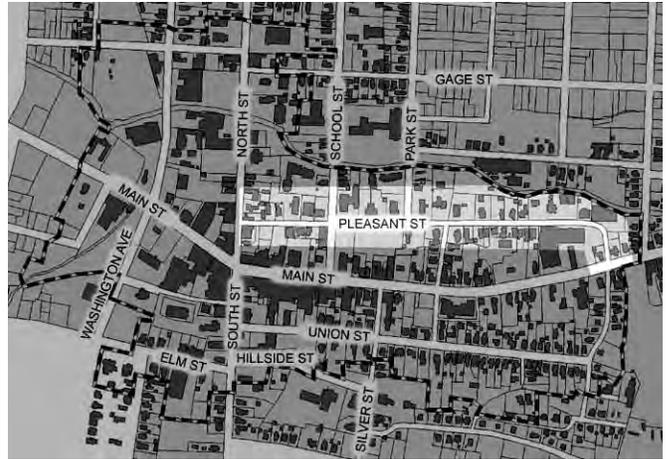
## Character & Streetscape: Pleasant Street

### Pleasant Street

Pleasant Street runs parallel to the Walloomsac River and Main Street. It was the first east-west street opened after Main Street, during the early 19th century. Three water-powered factories were located here when the street was opened, and additional ones were constructed subsequently. The industrial landscape of Pleasant Street was defined by the Norton family pottery; the Valentine woolen mill; Allen A. Safford & Co; and the Bennington Machine Works. The latter was developed by Olin Scott in 1865 and its vernacular Italianate office building (#330) and foundry (#334) still survive.

In 1990, the intact ruins of parts of the Norton Pottery were discovered during an archeological study on the site of the former Marshall's Garage. Several owners of these business enterprises built imposing houses on Pleasant Street next to their mills and shops, and much of the street's character derives from these prominent residences. Residential development historically extended from the 1820s through the 1890s. Civic and religious structures include the engine house of the Stark Hose Company (#102), and the Baptist Parsonage (#301) and St. Peter's Episcopal Church (#200). The 20th century has seen the demise of industrial activity along Pleasant Street and the development of institutional and multi-family use.

Pleasant Street is most notable for its high-style 19th-century residential architecture. There is a Federal Style house at #215. The Greek Revival Style which dominated the development of the 1840s is exemplified by the double house at #204-208 and the Julius Norton House at #300. Italianate (#304), Queen Anne (#327), and Colonial Revival Style (#219) houses were constructed from the mid- to late- 19th century. The character of Pleasant Street is defined by its important, grandly scaled residences with their wide lawns and mature trees. Most of the houses retain their architectural features including porches and ornamental detail. Original materials include brick, wood clapboards and polychromatic shaped slate shingles. However, the effects of late-20th century development have eroded some of the grandeur of Pleasant Street. Buildings have been demolished at the western end to create parking lots, and new construction includes some poorly designed infill buildings.



Photos: View east across parking lot from School Street shows the large homes of Pleasant Street on the left (left); view west along Pleasant Street (right).



Photos: 212 Pleasant Street (top); 300 Pleasant Street (bottom).

### Contributes to sense of place & history

- A** Large scale residential buildings of various 19<sup>th</sup>-century styles give the street part of its character.
- B** More modest houses reflect historic use patterns in other parts of the street.
- C** Variety of materials and textures.
- D** Diversity and high quality of ornamental detail.
- E** Building heights and roof shapes maintain a sense of continuity, but create variety at the same time.
- F** Prominent porches.
- G** Mature trees and landscaping.

### Detracts from a sense of place & history

- 1** Demolition and parking lot.
- 2** Sidewalks in some areas need maintenance.
- 3** Some incompatible alterations include the addition of modern elements which are not in keeping with original design.

## Character & Streetscape: Pleasant Street



### Contributes to sense of place & history

- A Slate roof and brick chimney.
- B Strong cornice line.
- C Later addition uses compatible foundation materials and details to original building.
- D Prominent porch.
- E Bay window – an historic later addition.
- F Deep front yard with mature plantings.
- G Original marble walks still in use.

### Detracts from a sense of place & history

- 1 Aluminum siding.
- 2 Unpainted aluminum storm windows and storm door.
- 3 Later addition does not have roof design compatible with original building.
- 4 Original fence missing.
- 5 Portions of original marble walks in need of repair.



Photos: 302 Pleasant Street (top); 304 Pleasant Street (bottom).

Character & Streetscape: Pleasant Street



## Character & Streetscape: Union Street

### Union Street

Union Street runs south of and parallel to Main Street. It derives its name from the old Union Academy located at the foot of what is now Valentine Street during the first half of the 19th century. The street was developed mainly from the 1860s through the 1880s, although there are a few earlier structures. Asahel Booth was the principal early developer of the street; he owned much of the land along the east half of the block between Valentine and Hamlin Streets and, in 1869, at least eight of the houses. The most intensive development came during the next two decades. Another member of the Booth family, E.A. Booth, continued the development of the south side of the street and later opened Short Street which intersects Union. Randall J. Crawford, a leading Bennington builder of the period, lived at 232 Union Street and built several houses nearby.

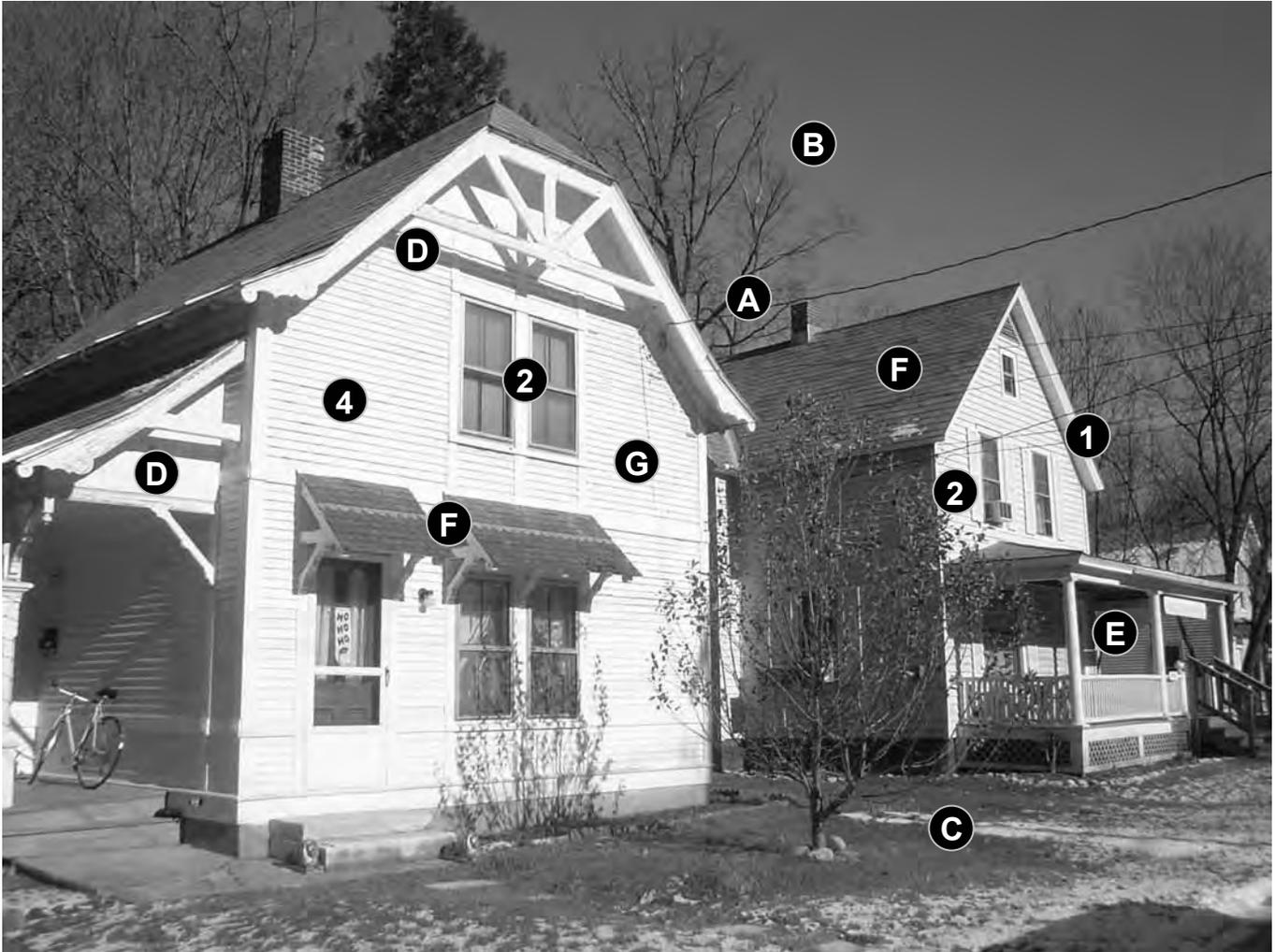


Union Street is primarily residential in character with the exception of a former livery stable (#279) and a commercial block (the Cone Building) on the west end. The Cone Building (#108) was constructed in 1936 and still stands as a reminder of the commercial activity of the late 1920s and 1930s. Some houses have been demolished at the west end to make way for parking lots and rear additions to buildings on Main Street. Architectural styles range from Greek Revival (#126-128) to Colonial Revival (#144), with the Italianate Style and its vernacular expressions representing the most active period of development. While modest in scale, the buildings along Union Street display a variety and frequency of ornamental features. Porches occur in several styles and bear many different turned, jig-sawn and cut-out details. Eaves are decorated with brackets, bargeboards, valances and gable screens. Original siding is mostly wood clapboards or shingles; and many roofs are covered with polychromatic and shaped slate shingles. Union Street's architectural character remains largely intact; however, many significant features have been removed, covered or replaced in recent years. Porches are particularly vulnerable to alteration and removal. Much original siding and ornamental detail has recently been removed or covered by aluminum and synthetic siding.

Union Street forms a strong boundary for the Central Bennington Historic District because it represents primarily residential development patterns generally contemporary with the commercial, institutional and residential development along Main Street. The streets to the south of Union Street include later residential developments less clearly related in scale and style to those in the district.



*Photos: View looking west along the north side of Union Street (left); view looking west along the south side of Union Street (right).*



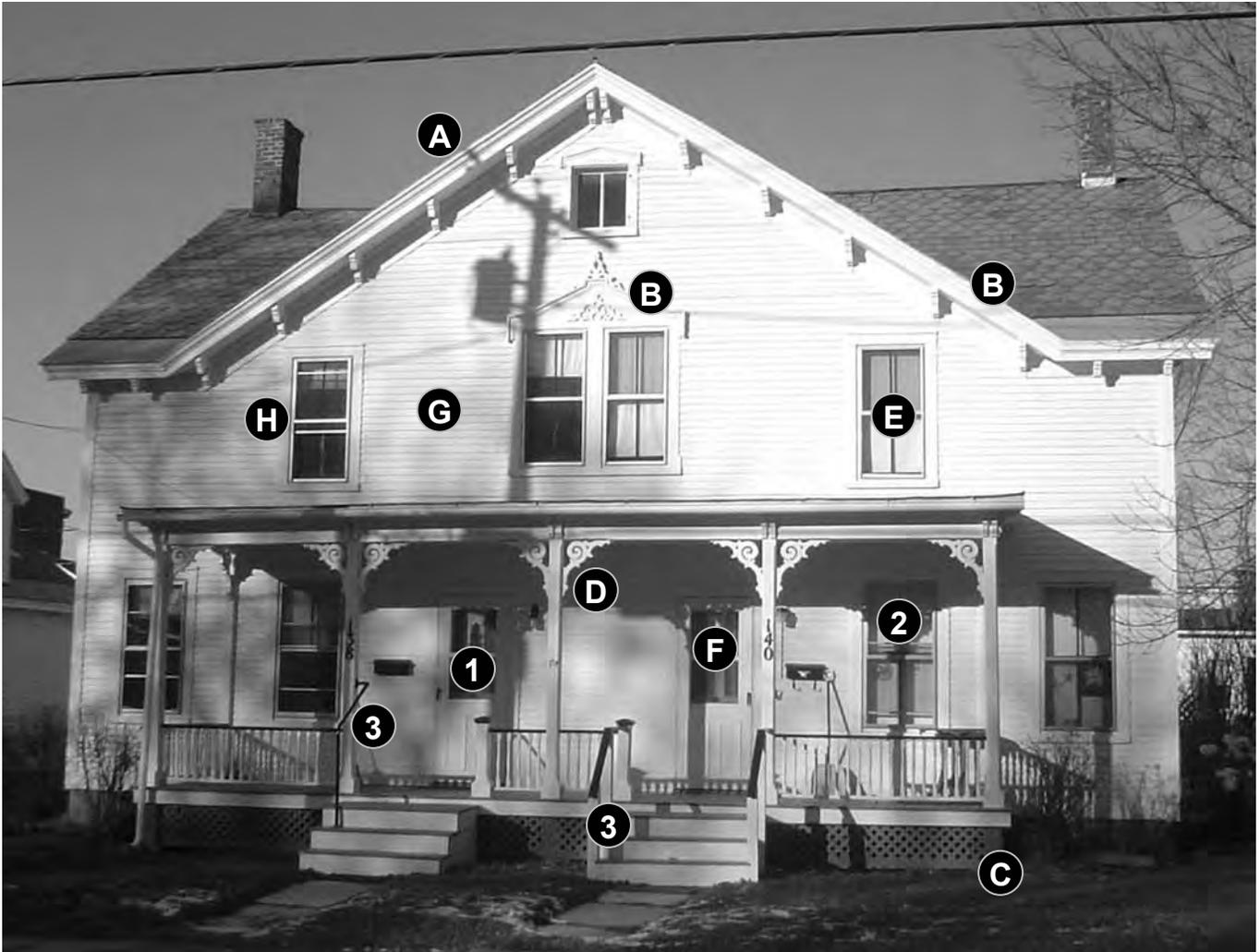
Photos: 242 Union Street (top); 238 Union Street (below).

**Contributes to sense of place & history**

- A** 19<sup>th</sup>-century houses reflect historic use patterns along most of the street.
- B** Building heights and roof shapes maintain a sense of continuity, but create variety at the same time.
- C** Consistent setback of buildings from street, with modest front yards and plantings.
- D** Diversity and high quality of ornamental details.
- E** Prominent porches.
- F** Original slate roofs with ornamental patterns, colors and associated ornamental woodwork.
- G** Double-hung wood windows and frames.

**Detracts from a sense of place & history**

- 1** Synthetic siding on some walls and cornices.
- 2** Artificial shutters and unpainted aluminum storm windows.
- 3** Some porches enclosed in ways which are not in keeping with historic designs.
- 4** Some exterior areas in need of repairs or painting.



Photos: 140 Union Street (above).

**Contributes to sense of place & history**

- A** Original roof form and massing preserved.
- B** Original slate roof, cornice and decorative window trim retained.
- C** General maintenance very good.
- D** Historic porch with decorative details retained.
- E** Original double-hung windows retained.
- F** Original doors retained.
- G** Original siding and trim design maintained in good condition.
- H** Painted aluminum storm windows upstairs, properly installed and recessed within wood window trim.

**Detracts from a sense of place & history**

- 1** Aluminum storm door conceals most of original door.
- 2** Bare aluminum storm windows used downstairs.
- 3** New stair railing materials and design inconsistent with original design.

Character & Streetscape: Union Street



# Character & Streetscape: Hamlin Avenue

## Hamlin Avenue

Hamlin Avenue is a short north-south street which begins at the bend near the eastern end of Union Street and terminates at Hillside Avenue, one block to the south. Three Hamlin Avenue buildings are included in the district because of their proximity to and visibility from Union Street. One is a nondescript brick residential/commercial building; the other two are handsome vernacular bungalows probably dating to the early years of the 20th century.



*Photos: View south on Hamlin Avenue from Union Street (top left); 5 Hamlin Avenue (top right), 3 Hamlin Avenue (bottom left); view north looking down the hill outside 2 Hamlin Avenue (bottom right).*

## Character & Streetscape: Short Street

### Short Street

Short Street runs south from Union Street. Most of the buildings along Short Street are similar in character to their neighbors on Union Street. The dwelling at the top of the hill looking down over Union Street is a handsome Victorian residence faced with clapboard and shingles, and ornamented by scalloped barge boards, with an interesting and eccentric umbrella-shaped corner porch.



*Photos: View south on Short Street (left); view south on Short Street from Union Street (bottom).*



## Character & Streetscape: Silver Street

### Silver Street

Silver Street runs east of and parallel to South Street. It originates at Main Street and continues into the residential area south of Union Street. Only the short block between Main and Union Streets, containing the library and one residence, is included in this district; the area south of Union Street represents a different period of residential development.

The library site has long been associated with the Luther Park family whose house occupied the Silver Street site until the early 20th century. In 1865, Luther's son, Trenor W. Park, gave the Town of Bennington the Free Library building facing Main Street which adjoins the Silver Street property. Trenor's son, Trenor L. Park donated the Colonial Revival style library building in 1935. The modern connecting wing was constructed in 1987.

Silver Street, with the institutional building on one side and an 1875 vernacular residence on the other, creates a smooth transition between Main Street and the residential Union Street to the south.



*Photos: Bennington Free Library (left); 201 Union Street at the corner of Silver Street (top right); 108 Silver Street (bottom right).*

## Valentine Street

Valentine Street is a two-block north-south street running between Pleasant and Union Streets. The block north of Main Street was opened c. 1830 and named Willow Street. The extension to the south appeared c. 1850, as an alley leading to the Union Academy. The street name was changed in 1905 to honor the Valentine family, which operated a mill at the north end of the street on the Walloomsac River. The mill buildings burned in 1980.

The buildings now standing along the north block of Valentine Street consist of four single houses and two duplexes built between the 1860s and the 1890s. The southeast corner of Main and Valentine Streets is dominated by the Baptist Church facing Main Street. The remaining buildings are part of a lively complex which have been converted to apartments.

The architectural styles found in Valentine Street are predominantly vernacular expressions of Greek Revival and Queen Anne styles; and most of the ornamental details and original cladding remain. The street retains much of the original residential character defined in the course of its growth during the 19th century.



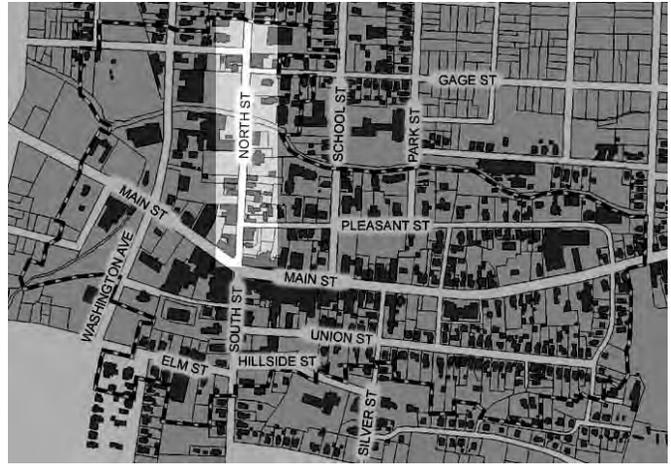
*Photos: Baptist Church viewed from Valentine Street (left); view looking south on Valentine Street near Pleasant Street (top right); Valentine Street (bottom left); view looking north along Valentine Street (bottom right).*



## Character & Streetscape: North Street

### North Street

Route 7 is the north-south thoroughfare through Bennington; its intersection with Route 9 (Main Street) is the hub of commercial activity in Downtown Bennington and is known as "Four Corners" or "Putnam Square" for the old Putnam Hotel. North of the intersection, Route 7 is known as North Street and today is characterized primarily by commercial development up to the Walloomsac River. South of the intersection, the road is known as South Street and is dominated by substantial civic buildings which line both sides of the street as far south as Elm Street. From the Walloomsac River to Elm Street, North and South Streets constitute a National Register Historic District which was listed in 1980.



North Street was opened by 1835; by mid-century it was the site of Calvin Norton's livery, Isaac Week's stage proprietorship and Oatman's store. Like Pleasant Street, North Street attracted industrial enterprises because of its proximity to the Walloomsac River. Enos Adams operated a tannery and a pottery; the Eagle Iron Works were established in 1850; and other potteries, tanneries, iron works and machine shops were set up near the river. Industrial use of North Street continued steadily through the 19th century and was supplemented by commercial and some residential construction south to Putnam Square.

The historic district along North and South Streets is firmly anchored by two early buildings constructed during Bennington's industrial heyday. The Bennington Brush Factory (#190 North Street) was constructed in the mid- 19th century for the Eagle Iron Works; across the street is an 1840s foundry constructed of stone, which was converted to a grist mill and later to an automobile garage. Of note north of the Walloomsac River is the Catamount Elementary School, constructed in 1899. Southward to Putnam Square, North Street is characterized by Greek Revival and Italianate stores and residences constructed of wood. While many remaining structures retain original siding and ornamental detail, the commercial buildings have suffered neglect and numerous alterations have diminished their historical appeal.



*Photos: Catamount School Building (top left); 170 North Street (top middle); 190 North Street (top right); 169 North Street (bottom right); Bennington Brush Company (bottom left).*

## Depot Street

Depot Street is an east-west street running parallel to and one block east of North and South Streets. Only the portion of Depot Street north of the Walloomsac River at the intersection of River Street is included in the Central Bennington Historic District, because the area south is characterized by parking lots and large modern commercial structures. Depot Street derives its name from the railroad depots which have been located here. The remaining depot, located on the southwest corner of Depot and River Streets, was constructed in 1897-98 in the Richardsonian Romanesque style. It was in service as a passenger station until 1933, and is currently used as a restaurant. The building is listed in the National Register of Historic Places. The other three corners of this intersection are occupied by the site of the former Columbia Hotel constructed in 1876; a Greek Revival gable-front house; and a Gothic Revival house. The latter occupies the northeast corner and was constructed in 1850. Possessing steeply sloped roofs with cutout bargeboards, board and batten siding and eccentric window patterns, this is an important local example of the Gothic Revival style.



*Photos: Bennington Station – former railroad depot (top); 207 Depot Street (bottom left); detail of the Bennington Station windows and roof overhang (bottom right).*

# Character & Streetscape: River Street

## River Street

River Street is an east-west street one block north of the Walloomsac River. The portion of this street included in the district runs from North Street to the west side of Depot. Building types on River Street include single and multiple family houses and stores. Structures are generally modest, reflecting their original construction as residences for mill workers and railway employees. The street also includes the H.W. Putnam Hose Company, a two-story vernacular brick fire station constructed c. 1890.

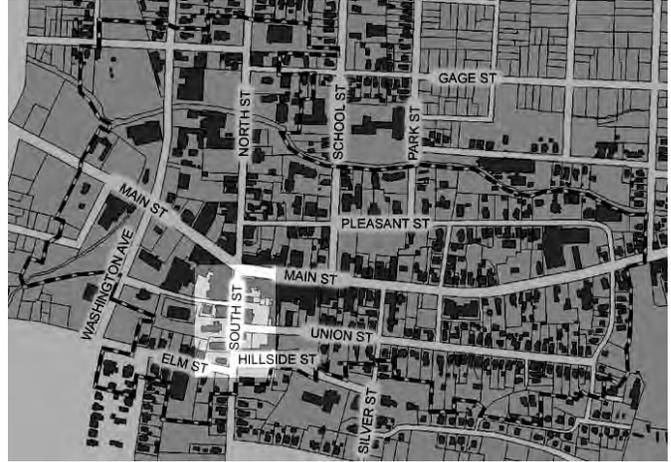


*Photos: Putnam Hose Co. building (top left); 138 River Street now in use as a convenience store (top right); detail of steps outside 198 North Street on River Street side (bottom left); 211 River Street (above).*

## South Street

Route 7 is the north-south thoroughfare through Bennington; its intersection with Route 9 (Main Street) is the hub of commercial activity in Downtown Bennington and is known as "Four Corners" or "Putnam Square" for the old Putnam Hotel. North of the intersection, Route 7 is known as North Street and today is characterized primarily by commercial development up to the Walloomsac River. South of the intersection, the road is known as South Street and is dominated by substantial civic buildings which line both sides of the street as far south as Elm Street. From the Walloomsac River to Elm Street, North and South Streets constitute a National Register Historic District which was listed in 1980.

The most prominent buildings below Putnam Square on South Street include the Welcome Center constructed as a blacksmith shop in 1833; the Court House; the Town Offices, originally a Greek Revival residence; the Police Station constructed as the Post Office, formerly the Federal Building; the Pennysaver Building; and the Putnam Hotel. Intrusions within the historic district on South Street have been minor, and the street largely retains the historic character and flavor of Bennington.

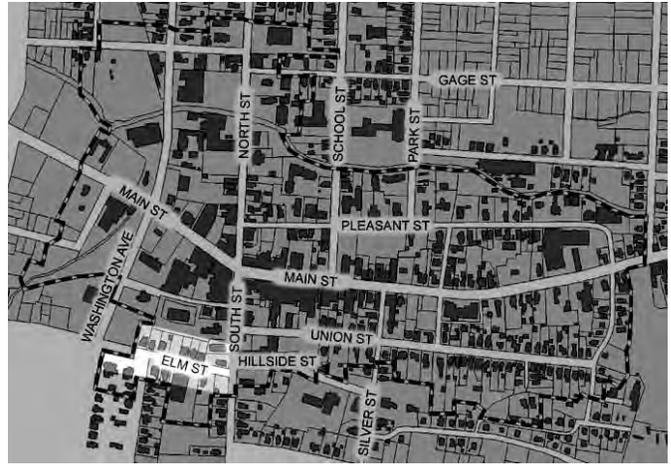


*Photos: Bennington County Courthouse (left);  
Marshall's Garage Building (top right);  
Bennington Police Station (bottom right).*

## Character & Streetscape: Elm Street

### Elm Street

Elm Street is an east-west street running from South Street to Monument Avenue. The two easternmost blocks of the street are included in the Central Bennington Historic District, excepting the 1970s apartment complex on the northeast corner of Elm and Washington Avenue. While the earliest house, a vernacular Greek Revival style building, was constructed in 1860, the street is dominated by the monumental Queen Anne style houses built during the 1890s. Two of these (#124 and 126) were constructed by members of the Graves family, prominent metal manufacturers and distributors. Both houses display the variety of materials, eccentric rooflines and free adaptation of classical details characteristic of the Queen Anne style. Other houses along the street date from the early 20th century to World War I and were built in the Colonial Revival mode, one with some Prairie School influence. Originally residential in character, Elm Street is now undergoing a partial change to commercial character, with conversion of individual houses to offices and similar uses. The Post Office, constructed in 1965, is the only major intrusion along the street.



*Photos: 133 Elm Street (top left); 124 Elm Street (top right); southeast corner of Elm and Washington Streets (bottom left); southeast corner of Jefferson and Elm Streets (bottom right).*

The preservation guidelines in this section are designed to assist property owners in making plans for work on their buildings in central Bennington. The guidelines are based on the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation, ten general principles which are used nationwide in planning for rehabilitation and new construction in historic areas. The Standards are listed below, and the illustrated guidelines in the pages which follow provide specific advice for dealing with many individual aspects of repair, alteration and construction within the Central Bennington Historic District.

### ***The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation:***

- 1. A property shall be used for its historic purpose or be placed in a new use that requires minimal change to the defining characteristics of the building and its site and environment.*
- 2. The historic character of a property shall be retained and preserved. The removal of historic materials or alteration of features and spaces that characterize a property shall be avoided.*
- 3. Each property shall be recognized as a physical record of its time, place and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or architectural elements from other buildings, shall not be undertaken.*
- 4. Most properties change over time; those changes that have acquired historic significance in their own right shall be retained and preserved.*
- 5. Distinctive features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a historic property shall be preserved.*
- 6. Deteriorated historic features shall be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature shall match the old in design, color, texture and other visual qualities and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features shall be substantiated by documentary, physical or pictorial evidence.*
- 7. Chemical or physical treatments, such as sandblasting, that cause damage to historic materials shall not be used. The surface cleaning of structures, if appropriate, shall be undertaken using the gentlest means possible.*
- 8. Significant archeological resources affected by a project shall be protected and preserved. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures shall be undertaken.*
- 9. New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment.*
- 10. New additions and adjacent or related new construction shall be undertaken in such a manner that if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.*

### Porches and Stairs

Porches and stairs play an important role in Bennington's buildings. Their shapes and outlines are interesting, and they often include some of a building's most important decorative features: columns, railings, balusters, newel posts, brackets, molded cornices. Porches and stairs also create a lively transition between opposites: inside and outside; building and street; light and shade. A large number of Bennington's porches and stairs survive in good condition; others suffer from a lack of maintenance, especially around roofs and cornices. Some of the most common changes which diminish architectural character occur at porches and stairs. These include replacing original wood columns with open wrought iron supports, and replacing ornamental wood railings with incompatible new ones in wood or wrought iron.

### Basic Guideline

Maintain the form and ornamental features of porches and stairs. Where columns and railings need to be replaced, match the original materials and use designs as close to the original as possible. New columns and railings need not have all of the ornament and detail found in historic designs, but they should keep basic forms and proportions.

#### Appropriate

- A** Repairing and retaining porches, stairs and related decorative features.
- B** Maintaining porch roofs, cornices and gutters to prevent water-related damage.
- C** Matching or closely approximating original materials, proportions and details when replacing deteriorated features.
- D** Keep original work whenever possible, and try to integrate any new modern elements as inconspicuously as possible.

#### Not Appropriate

- 1** Stripping porches of columns, cornices or other decorative features.
- 2** Enclosing open porches on highly visible portions of a building.
- 3** Replacing railings or columns with new ones in wrought iron, wood or other materials whose design and appearance are not in keeping with the original.
- 4** Adding new stair railings in materials or designs which are not compatible with originals (black ornamental railings next to white wood railings, for example).
- 5** Carpeting stairs and porches in colors and materials which contrast strongly with original character (bright green astroturf, for example).



Fig. 5-1: 213 Main St. The ornamentation has been retained along the eaves, columns and porch railings, but the stair railings have been replaced with wrought iron.



Fig. 5-2: Grand Isle Lake House, Grand Isle, VT. Original porch railings were very low, but new pipe has been added along the top to meet code requirements while still preserving the original scale of the railing design. Photo by Meg Cambell.



Fig. 5-3: 206 Main St. Porch roofs should be flashed properly and kept at least 10" below any windows to help prevent snow and water build-up at the window sill.



Fig. 5-4: 202 Main St. The front steps and railings up to this porch are similar to the style and character of the porch overall, and are painted to match. The underside of the porch is concealed with grillwork which allows the structure underneath to breathe.



Fig. 5-5: The removal of this front porch completely changes the scale and character of the original home. [Date unknown.]



Fig. 5-6: 115 McKinley St. The front steps and railings up to this porch do not match the original porch design, and are instead constructed of standard framing lumber. The porch railings have themselves been replaced with blank wood panels which changes the scale of the facade. The underside of this porch has been completely enclosed as well, and likely does not provide enough ventilation to prevent moisture buildup and rot.



Fig. 5-7: 138 River St. The front porch of this structure has been partially filled-in with an addition.

**Doors and Entrances**

Much of Bennington's character comes from the entrances to its buildings. Entrances include doors, together with the moldings, transom windows and other decorative features around them. Some entrances are plain, with simple wood doors surrounded by wood moldings; others have elaborately paneled doors, with columns, pilasters, cornices and other ornamental features around them. One of the most common entrance changes to residential buildings in Bennington is adding aluminum storm doors to conserve heat in winter. While storm doors are usually appropriate, it is important that they be in keeping with the design and color of the original entrance.

**Basic Guideline**

Maintain the form, materials and dimensions of historic doors and entrance features, including surrounding moldings, columns, transom windows, etc. If adding storm doors, match the color and form of the existing door as closely as possible, and avoid ornament which clashes with the original design.



Fig. 5-8: 507 Main St. This existing entry has been maintained in its original design.



Fig. 5-9: 507 Main St. The storm door which has been added here is designed to match and reveal the original front door behind it.

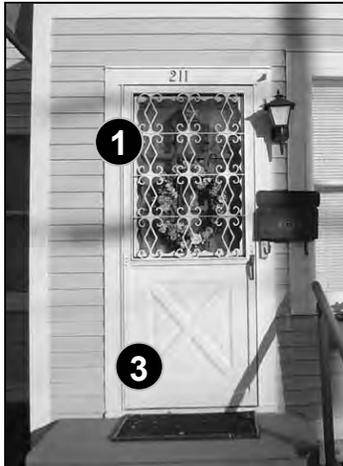


Fig. 5-10: 211 Park St. Example of an inappropriately styled storm door.



Fig. 5-11: This entryway has been altered by the removal of the original woodwork found above the door. [Date unknown.]



Fig. 5-12: 218 Park St. The commercial storefront door shown here is not appropriate on a residential structure.



Fig. 5-13: 213 Washington St. The painted wood storm door on this entry blends in with the entry design.



Fig. 5-14: 102 Jefferson St. The bare aluminum storm door here would blend in with the architecture of the doorway more if it were recessed slightly, and painted.

### Appropriate

- A** Keeping historic doors and entrance features, repairing them where necessary. Weather-strip existing historic doors to avoid heat loss instead of replacing them, if possible.
- B** Adding storm doors if necessary to conserve heat, following these principles:
  - Try to match original materials: when historic doors are wood, it is best to use a wood storm door.
  - If using aluminum storm doors, make sure they are a color similar to the historic door or entrance features. Do not use unpainted aluminum doors.
  - Select the sizes and proportions of glass and panels on storm doors carefully to avoid covering or conflicting with those of the historic doors.
- C** Painting existing aluminum storm doors, preparing the surface properly and using colors which blend with existing doors and entrances.
- D** The street address should be clearly visible from the street and displayed either directly above or next to the doorway.

### Not Appropriate

- 1 Using storm doors with inappropriate ornament like scallops around glass, curving metal grilles, eagles, imitation hinges, x shaped bottom panels, or bare metal finish.
- 2 Removing historic doors or entrance trim.
- 3 Replacing existing doors with new ones of incompatible design or material (examples: replacing wood doors with steel; using colonial style paneled doors to replace doors from another period and style).
- 4 Changing the size of existing doors or entrance openings.



Fig. 5-15: 216 Park Street. The existing colored glass doorway on this house has been preserved and left visible, however the metal kick-plate on the bottom could be painted to match the door to make it less obvious.

## Windows

Windows are crucial to every building's character. In their size, shape and spacing, window openings create a sense of rhythm and proportion which sets the tone for an entire building. Moldings and other decorative trim reinforce the effect of the openings and set them apart from the surrounding walls. The windows within the openings are full of important design features. These include the materials of the windows and frames, the number and spacing of the panes, the recessing and shadow lines of the window frames, the reflective quality of the glass, and the width, profile and shadow lines of the wood muntins in which the panes are set. Details like these may seem subtle, but the eye can tell immediately if they are wrong, and mistakes with windows can be a visual disaster.

So far, downtown Bennington has been lucky to avoid many of the window problems which have badly damaged the character of many other places. The worst of these include enlarging or reducing the size of window openings to create picture and bay windows, or accommodate manufacturers' stock window sizes; and removing original wood windows to substitute new aluminum or vinyl-clad windows. Replacement windows often have artificial grids which are supposed to imitate the appearance of real window panes. The intention is good, but the artificial grids almost always look flat and pasted-on. Bennington's most common window problem is one of the easiest to solve: over the years, many buildings have had unpainted aluminum storm windows installed. With proper surface preparation, the bare metal can be painted to blend with a building's other painted surfaces.

For additional background, see National Park Service Preservation Briefs 3 ("Conserving Energy in Historic Buildings") and 9 ("The Repair of Historic Wooden Windows"), and other publications listed in the Information Sources section of this handbook.

## Basic Guideline

Maintain existing windows and frames in their original materials, design and dimensions. Avoid changing window sizes or installing replacement windows in aluminum, vinyl or other inappropriate materials. Avoid artificial grids which attempt to imitate the appearance of real multiple window panes. Use storm windows of appropriate materials, design and color.

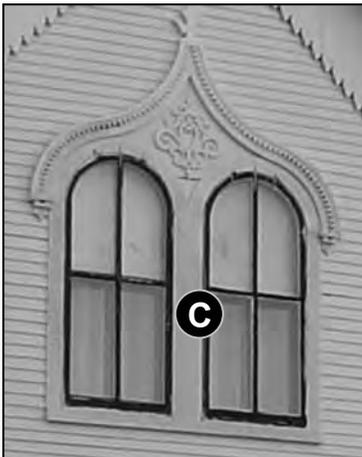


Fig. 5-18: 125 Jefferson St. Wood storm windows match the unique window design.

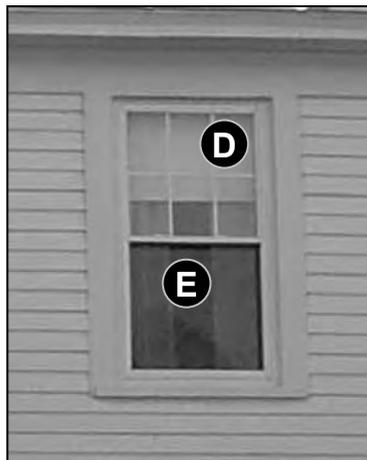


Fig. 5-19: 213 Washington St. The storm windows are recessed inside the window trim, and are designed to blend into the overall design.

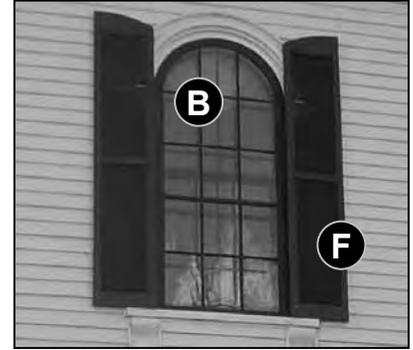


Fig. 5-16: 213 Main St. Custom wood storm windows and working shutters match the design and blend nicely with the historic architecture.



Fig. 5-17: 120 Benmont Ave. It is best to try to repair existing historic windows before replacing them altogether.



Fig. 5-20: 217 Washington St. Many different window types and sizes can make a façade appear confusing.



Fig. 5-21: 102 Jefferson St. Bare metal storm windows are mounted onto and covering the window trim, which is not ideal. Also, shutters are not consistently mounted to the windows.



Fig. 5-22: 105 Holden St. Window shutters should be used realistically and consistently on a façade. The imitation window shutters like the one shown here are often seen used on only one side of a window, or on alternate sides of a pair of windows. Such installations are not historically accurate.



Fig. 5-23: The original historic windows have been removed in this picture and replaced with smaller vinyl clad windows. [Date unknown.]

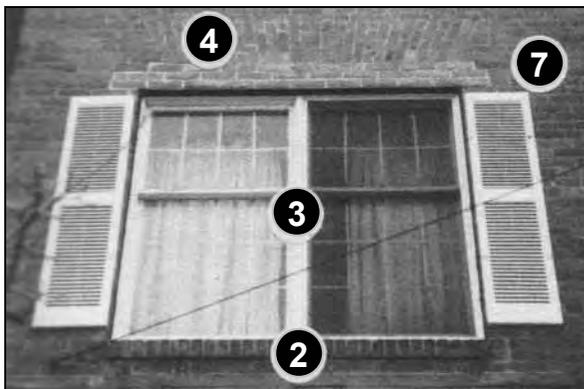


Fig. 5-24: The imitation window shutters like the ones shown here do not make any sense on either side of this large window opening since they would not be able to cover the window. Also, the original arched top of the window has been filled-in and replaced with a straight metal lintel. [Date unknown.]

### Appropriate

- A** Repairing, reglazing, painting and weatherstripping old windows and storms which are basically sound.
- B** Matching the original design and materials when replacing old windows which are beyond repair.
- C** Installing wood storm windows, or storms of other materials which are compatible with the color and design of the existing windows.
- D** Recessing new aluminum storm windows within the frame of the existing window, rather than covering the frame.
- E** Painting aluminum storm windows, using proper surface preparation and colors which blend in with the existing windows and frames.
- F** Repairing and keeping wood shutters and fabric awnings which are in keeping with a building's historic character.

### Not Appropriate

- 1** Replacing windows which are in sound or reasonably repairable condition.
- 2** Removing old windows and replacing them using inappropriate materials like aluminum or vinyl, or boarding the windows up.
- 3** Replacement windows with applied grids to imitate multiple panes.
- 4** Enlarging or reducing the size of old or original window openings.
- 5** Making new window openings in visible portions of a building, or in ways which clash with the size, spacing and design of existing openings.
- 6** Installing aluminum storm windows which are not properly recessed within original openings, or which do not match the color of the existing windows and frames.
- 7** Installing metal awnings or imitation shutters in vinyl or metal.
- 8** Adding vinyl, metal or wood imitation shutters where shutters never existed previously.
- 9** Removing original wood shutters or fabric awnings.

## Preservation Guidelines: Windows

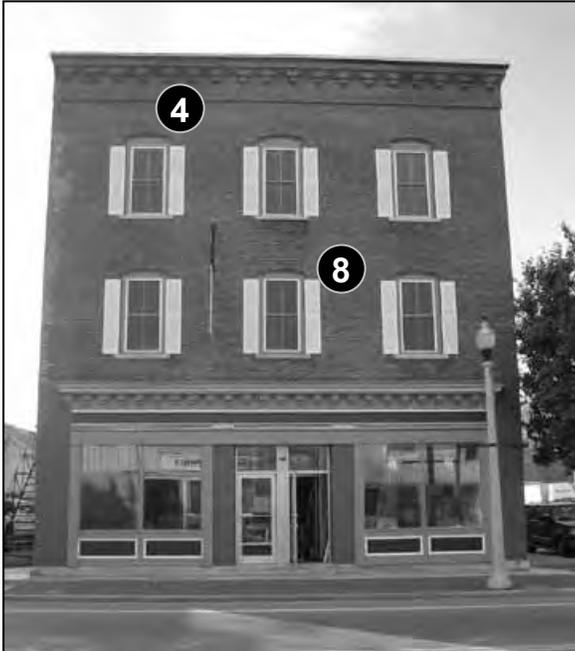


Fig. 5-25: 198 North St. The original windows have been removed and replaced with smaller ones without the arched top. The original windows of this building never had shutters, yet new vinyl ones have been added here. This does not match the original design, and doesn't even match the windows on the side of the building, as shown in Fig. 5-26.



Fig. 5-28: 512 Main St. Windows that are no longer used should not be boarded up or filled in on the outside. Instead, the wall can be in-filled on the inside, leaving the existing window to remain on the outside.

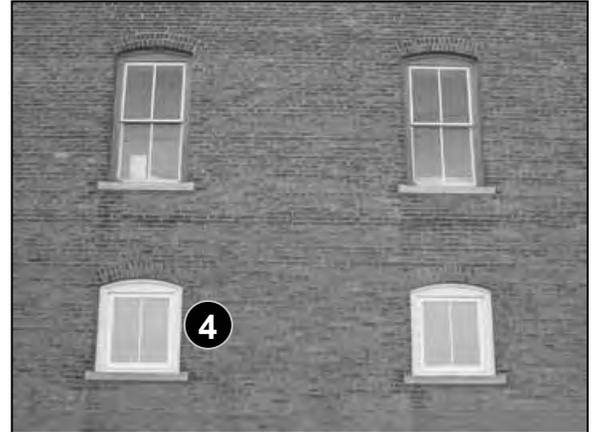


Fig. 5-26: 198 North St. The original arched top windows have been replaced with smaller, flat-top windows, and don't match from the second to the third floor.

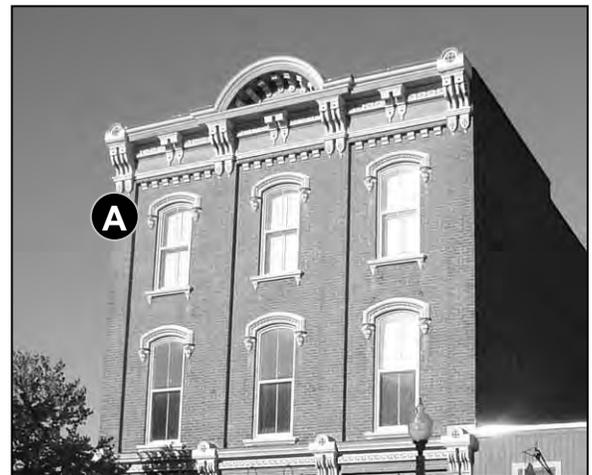


Fig. 5-27: 332 Main St. The original arched top windows have been maintained.



Fig. 5-29: 532 Main St. The original building façade here has been replaced with a large, post-modern window in the center which is inconsistent with the building and its surroundings.

## Wall Materials and Surfaces

Wall materials and surfaces make a building what it is. They are crucial parts of architecture, determining not only how a building is made, but also how it looks. Most older buildings in central Bennington have outside walls of clapboard or brick, sometimes with foundation walls of marble or other stone. Some prominent buildings are trimmed or completely clad in marble; wood shingles, stucco or concrete, and metals are primary or secondary materials elsewhere. The most common problem with wall materials in Bennington is the covering of original wall surfaces with aluminum and vinyl siding, asphalt and asbestos cement shingles, or other synthetic materials. This changes a building's character radically in many cases, and it usually causes more maintenance and construction problems than it solves. Another common wall problem in Bennington is heavy cleaning and improper repointing of brick, especially on the commercial streets.

For additional background, see National Park Service Preservation Briefs 1 ("The Cleaning and Waterproof Coating of Masonry Buildings"), 2 ("Repointing Mortar Joints in Historic Brick Buildings"), 6 ("Dangers of Abrasive Cleaning to Historic Buildings"), 8 ("Aluminum and Vinyl Siding on Historic Buildings"), and other publications listed in the Information Sources section of this handbook.

### Basic Guideline

Retain old or original exterior wall materials. Avoid covering wall surfaces with metal or synthetic cladding, and avoid improper cleaning, repair, repointing or coating of masonry walls.



Fig. 5-30: 124 Elm St. Original curved shingles are used here to highlight the sculptural nature of the façade enclosure.



Fig. 5-31: 206 Main St. Original scalloped shingles are used only on the gable ends of this home to give them a more unique appearance.



Fig. 5-32: 118 South St. Light colored stone surfaces such as this often need to be cleaned, but the cleaning process should never permanently change the appearance of the materials.



Fig. 5-33: When cleaning masonry surfaces, avoid using harsh or abrasive cleaning agents that can permanently discolor the surface.



Fig. 5-34: 150 Depot St. This rough ashlar masonry wall surface adds texture and depth to the façade.

### Appropriate

- A** Repairing and keeping clapboards and other wood wall materials.
- B** Using matching wood to replace missing or badly deteriorated wood wall material.
- C** Cleaning brick or other materials using the gentlest means possible. Sandblasting, high pressure water blasting and harsh chemicals can damage even the hardest brick.
- D** Removing only the worst staining on masonry rather than trying to make the surface look "like new".
- E** Removing deteriorated mortar with hand tools only, and repointing masonry with soft, high-lime mortar which matches the original in color, texture and dimensions. A mortar made up of 6 parts sand, 1 1/2 parts cement and 3 parts lime is recommended.

### Not Appropriate

- 1** Covering wall surfaces with metal or vinyl siding, or other synthetic cladding which differs greatly from original materials.
- 2** Sandblasting, high pressure water cleaning (over 500 psi), highly concentrated chemical cleaning or other harsh methods of cleaning or paint removal for masonry or wood.
- 3** Removing and repointing mortar which is not deteriorated, or using power tools to remove any mortar from masonry.
- 4** Repointing masonry with hard, portland cement mortar. Sloppy repairs, using brick or mortar which does not match the color, texture and dimensions of the original mortar.
- 5** Painting masonry walls if they were not painted in the past. Stripping paint from wood or masonry surfaces if they were painted in the past.
- 6** Applying stucco or imitation stone or brick to exposed brick or other surfaces which are not now stuccoed. Adding brick or stone veneers to walls which never had them.
- 7** Applying acrylic, silicone or other sealers to masonry.



Fig. 5-33: 115 McKinley St. Vinyl siding hides the original wood trim that gives a façade definition and scale.

Fig. 5-34: 518 Main St. Repair work done to this brick has resulted in an uneven appearance and discoloration.

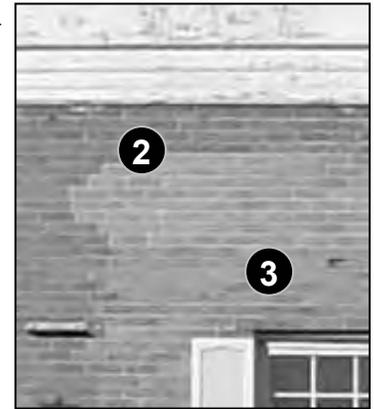


Fig. 5-35: 449 Main St. Joint repair which uses the wrong mix or mortar can result in highly visible joints. Be sure that test-mixes are tried before real work commences.

**Materials – Historic & New**

The following chart should act as a guide to the materials which are generally appropriate and non-appropriate within Bennington’s Historic Districts. Whenever possible, existing historic materials should be maintained and repaired in lieu of replacement. If replacement is necessary, materials which are similar in style, scale and character should be used. New construction which is an addition to an existing historic structure should use materials which are at least similar or complement the original materials.

ELEMENT	APPROPRIATE	NOT APPROPRIATE
<b>Façade</b>	Common Red Brick	Multi-Colored Brick
	Bare (Consistent tone)	Imitation Brick Siding
	Painted (approved color, if painted before)	Plain (bare) Concrete Masonry Units
	Natural Stone / Imitation Stone	Metal Siding
	Wood Clapboard	Exterior Insulation Finish Systems
	Wood Shingle	Special Masonry Units
		Textured Concrete Block
		Colored Concrete Block
		Split-Faced Block
		Asphalt Siding
		Plywood Panels (T-111)
		Synthetic Panels
	Bare Wood	
	Unfinished / Lumber Grade	
<b>Trim</b>	Wood (painted or stained)	Bare Wood
	Finished Grade	Unfinished / Lumber Grade
	PVC Synthetic Wood	Aluminum
		Fiber Reinforced Cement
		Composite, MDO/MDF Board
<b>Windows</b>	Anodized Aluminum Frame (if appropriate)	Vinyl Clad
	Approved Color	
	Wood Frame	
	Painted or Stained Approved Color	
	Wood Shutters (if appropriate)	Imitation Shutters
	Expressed Lintels (over façade openings)	Steel Plate or Angle Lintels
	Brick	
	Limestone	
	Colored Concrete	
	Clear, Etched or Frosted Glass (if appropriate)	Mirrored Glass
Stained Glass (if appropriate)		
<b>Roof</b>	Natural Slate	Imitation (Rubber) Slate
	Standing Seam Metal	
	Small Seam Width, Approved Color	
	Asphalt Shingles	
	Parapet Caps / Chimney Caps	
	Stone, Pre-Cast Concrete or Limestone	
<b>Other</b>	Canvas Awnings	Plastic or Vinyl Awnings
	3 Color Maximum, Approved Colors	
	Walkway Pavers/Sidewalk	
	Stamped or Poured Concrete	Asphalt Walkways
	Brick or Colored Paving Stone	

## Preservation Guidelines: Roofs

### Roofs

Roof shapes, patterns and colors are important to the character of buildings, both individually and as they are repeated along a streetscape. Bennington roofs are mostly traditional gables on residential streets and flat roofs in commercial areas; mansards, hipped roofs and other forms occur as well. Roofs in Bennington are often Vermont slate, with the colors and shapes of individual slates creating pattern and visual interest. Original slate roofs in Bennington have often been changed to asphalt shingle, almost always detracting from their character and interest. Buildings with their original roofs intact have a special quality that replaced roofs simply cannot match.

For additional background, see National Park Service Preservation Brief 4, "Roofing for Historic Buildings" and other publications listed in the Information Sources section of this handbook.

### Basic Guideline

Maintain old or original roof forms, materials, patterns and colors.



Fig. 5-37: 150 Depot St. The sweeping curve of this roof defines much of the character of the building, and should not be changed or added to.



Fig. 5-39: 125 Jefferson St. New slate has been used here to replace portions of the roof that have been damaged.



Fig. 5-36: 207 Depot St. The intricate trim details of this eave define much of the character of the entire home, and should be preserved whenever possible.



Fig. 5-38: Corner of Elm & Washington. The tower roof on this house, although difficult to maintain, largely defines the architectural character and style of the residence.



Fig. 5-40: 220 Main St. Intricate metal roof design.



Fig. 5-41: Corner of Weeks & Jefferson. This flat roof design is not in keeping with the historical roof forms of the residential neighborhood.



Fig. 5-42: 128 Main St. This small porch has been added to the front of the house which can alter the shape and scale of the structure.



Fig. 5-46: 501 North St. The porch roof here has been replaced with newer materials which don't match the look and feel of the original slate roof.

### Appropriate

- A** Keeping and repairing original roofs where they still survive.
- B** Using original materials to make repairs.
- C** Keeping original roof forms.
- D** Adding gables or changing roof slopes only at the backs or less visible sides of buildings.
- E** Using replacement materials only where original roofs and materials cannot be saved. Choose replacement materials with colors, textures and patterns similar to the originals.

### Not Appropriate

- 1** Changing roof shapes by raising or lowering, or by adding dormers or other new roof construction in prominently visible parts of the building.
- 2** Removing historic roofing materials which can reasonably be repaired.
- 3** Replacing historic roof coverings with new materials very different in color or pattern.
- 4** Trying to repair leaks in slate roofs by covering parts with asphalt or other coatings. This will only harm the roof's appearance, and will do little to stop leaks in the long term.

Fig. 5-44: 138 McKinley St. The shape of the dormer roof here matches the roof design of the rest of the building. If dormers or other changes to the roof are added at a later date, they should attempt to match the original design, and be placed out of view from the street.



Fig. 5-45: 206 Main St. The appearance of this original slate roof has been tarnished by the rust from nails and splattered paint.



# Preservation Guidelines: Chimneys

## Chimneys

Chimneys usually make an important contribution to a building's architectural character. They create visual interest by adding balance, variety and liveliness to roofs and walls. Most Bennington chimneys are brick, with stone, stucco and other materials occurring sometimes as well. Early Bennington chimneys usually emphasize the balance and symmetry of the Federal and Greek Revival styles; later chimneys reflect the variety and richness of later styles. Chimneys are especially subject to damage because of their exposure to wind, rain and temperature extremes; but with occasional maintenance they can last as long as any other part of a building.

## Basic Guideline

Maintain the dimensions, design and materials of old or original chimneys. Avoid sloppy repairs, repointing with hard mortar, or coating of masonry with asphalt.

### Appropriate

- A** Keeping old or original chimneys at their existing height and design.
- B** Repointing chimneys and replacing missing bricks using materials which closely resemble the existing in color, texture and hardness. A mortar made up of 6 parts sand, 1 1/2 parts cement and 3 parts lime is recommended.
- C** Installing necessary new chimneys only at the rear of buildings or other less visible places.

### Not Appropriate

- 1** Painting chimney masonry which was never painted before, or coating chimneys with stucco, asphalt or other surface materials which clash with the original appearance.
- 2** Replacing masonry chimneys with metal, concrete block or other materials out of keeping with a building's character.
- 3** Installing new chimneys through walls or in other highly visible locations.
- 4** Removing chimneys which are sound or can be reasonably repaired.

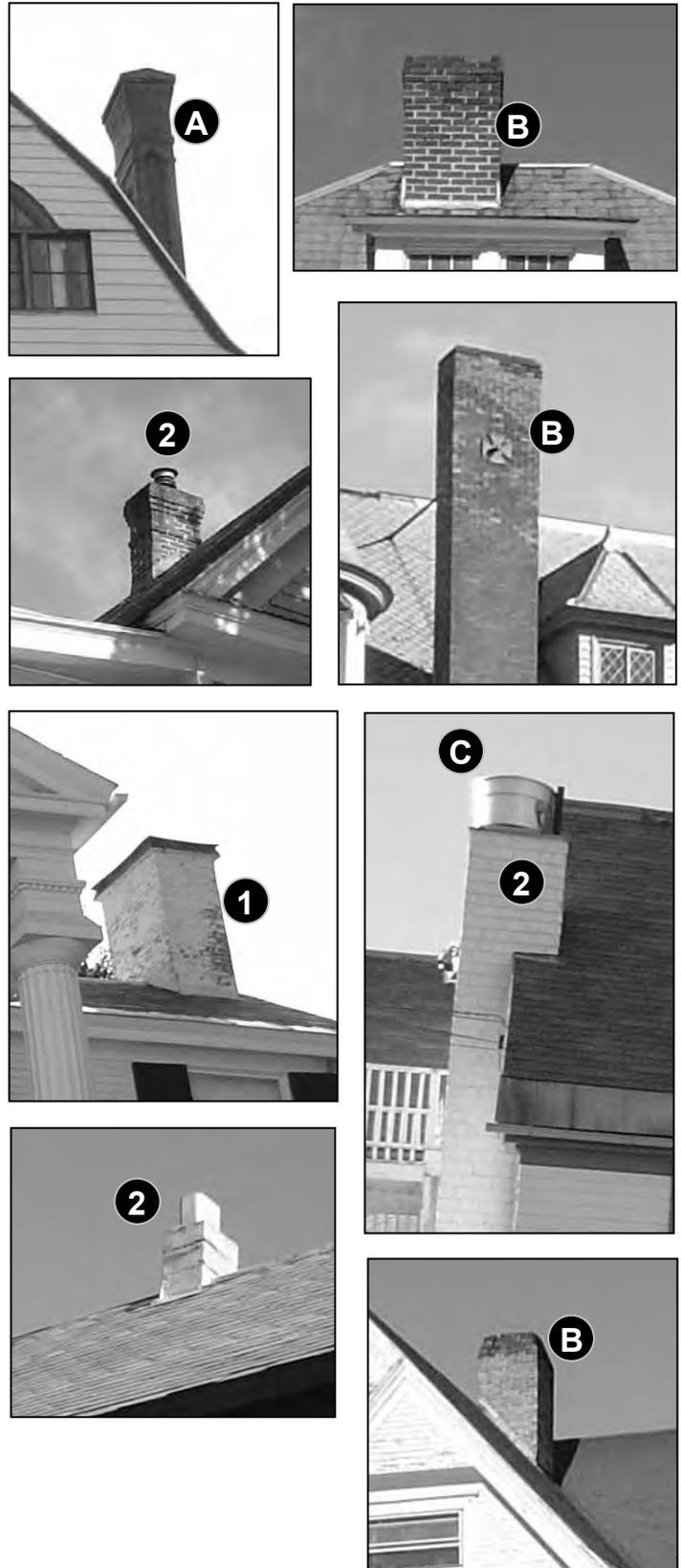


Fig. 5-47: Examples of different chimneys within the Historic District.

### Cornices, Gutter Systems & Flashing

Cornices and the decorative moldings around them add to character by creating lines of color, contour and detail at the edges of rooflines. Cornices and gutters direct water away from walls and roofs, and flashings protect the joints between different roof sections. Flashings may also protect the joints between roofs and chimneys, porches and other building parts. Bennington buildings often have ornamental moldings, sometimes with elaborate openwork wood trim, which especially add to their visual interest. A considerable number of cornices in Bennington are covered with aluminum or synthetic siding which conceals their original details and moldings. This is one of the most obvious problems in the downtown commercial and residential streets, and it notably diminishes the quality of many buildings. Bennington gutters, downspouts and flashings are sometimes deteriorated and leaking, or partly missing and not replaced. This not only looks bad, but also leads to expensive long-term damage both outside and inside a building. Inappropriate repairs can also be a problem. One common example is covering leaking areas of roof, gutters and flashing with asphalt or synthetic sealing materials. Coatings like these generally only mask the problem for a short time, and ultimately make repairs more expensive when they have to be removed and replaced.

### Basic Guideline

Maintain old or original cornices, gutter systems and flashings. Avoid covering cornices with sheet metal or synthetic sheathing.

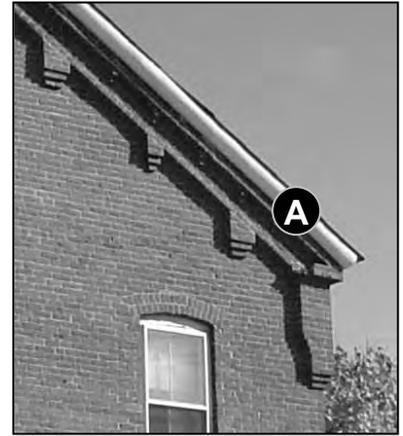


Fig. 5-48: 120 Benmont Ave. The eave detail here creates an intricate shadow and helps water drip away from the surface of the façade.



Fig. 5-49: 207 Depot St. The intricate eave on this house defines much of the architectural character, and should be protected.



Fig. 5-50: 150 Depot St. The original soft-metal flashing along the bottom of this chimney remains in good condition, and has weathered to match the color of the stone.

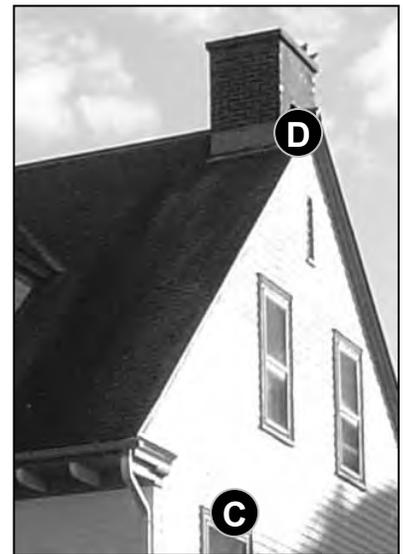


Fig. 5-51: 124 Elm St. Although the flashing and gutter system have been replaced, they match the general design and materials of the original home.

## Preservation Guidelines: Cornices, Gutter Systems & Flashing

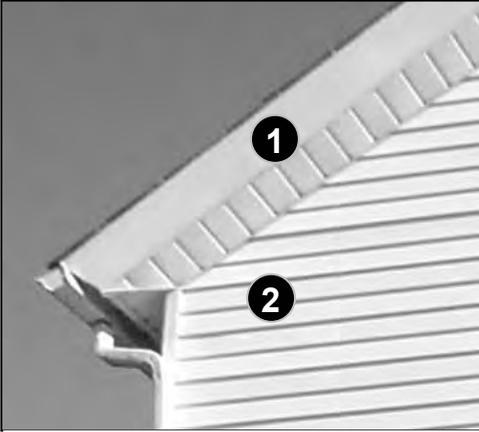


Fig. 5-52: 115 McKinley St. Vinyl siding conceals the original trim design of the façade.



Fig. 5-53: 133 Elm St. The wood trim here is showing signs of moisture damage, and will get worse if left un-repaired.



Fig. 5-54: 116 South St. A new copper downspout has been installed here to match the original materials.

### Appropriate

- A** Repairing existing gutters and downspouts, using materials which match the existing where parts are missing or beyond repair.
- B** Repairing and retaining latticework and other decorative features located near cornices.
- C** Repairing and retaining cornices, making them watertight and keeping their moldings and other decorative features in place.
- D** Keeping existing flashings, or repairing them with the same materials. Maintaining cornices and gutters by inspecting them regularly and repairing any leaks or broken parts before they cause damage.

### Not Appropriate

- 1** Removing cornices or related decorative features.
- 2** Covering cornices with sheet metal or synthetic siding.
- 3** Allowing clogged, leaking or missing parts of a gutter or flashing system to go un-repaired.
- 4** Removing sound parts of flashings, especially if they are copper or other high quality materials.
- 5** Replacing gutters or downspouts with materials which are poor in quality or not in keeping with a building's original design.
- 6** Coating surfaces of flashings or gutter system elements with asphalt or synthetic sealing materials.



Fig. 5-55: 220 Silver St. The original copper eave flashing still remains along the edge of this roof.

## Site and Landscaping

Bennington's character comes not only from buildings, but from their surroundings as well. Features such as fencing, walkways, lighting, trees, lawns and other plantings are as much a part of the town as the buildings themselves. Marble walkways are especially important as characteristic local features, and they are becoming increasingly scarce. Lawns and plantings become more important as areas of pavement and parking lots increase. Protecting and adding to such site and landscape features is crucial to maintaining the sense of history and place in Bennington.

## Basic Guideline

Maintain significant site and landscaping features such as fencing, walkways, trees, lawns and other plantings. Avoid parking lots or other paved areas which are highly visible or which destroy older site features. Avoid installing electrical lighting fixtures which are incompatible with the scale and style of existing buildings, or which produce a light which is too strong or harsh.



Fig. 5-57: 213 Main St. Small shrubs along the foundation of the building still allow sunlight, ventilation and access for maintenance.



Fig. 5-59: 207 Depot St. The chain link fence here does not match the character of the house. A wooden picket fence would be more appropriate.



Fig. 5-56: 217 Main St. The large bush to the right of this house has overgrown and may cause moisture damage to the exterior.



Fig. 5-58: 137 Benmont Ave. When larger trees cannot be saved, new ones should be planted to replace them.



Fig. 5-60: 204 Main St. These hedges have been trimmed to keep from overwhelming the porch, but could be trimmed more in the back to prevent water damage to the porch.

# Preservation Guidelines: Site & Landscaping



Fig. 5-61: 216 Elm St. This driveway leads around to the back of the house, where a parking area and garage are concealed in the rear.

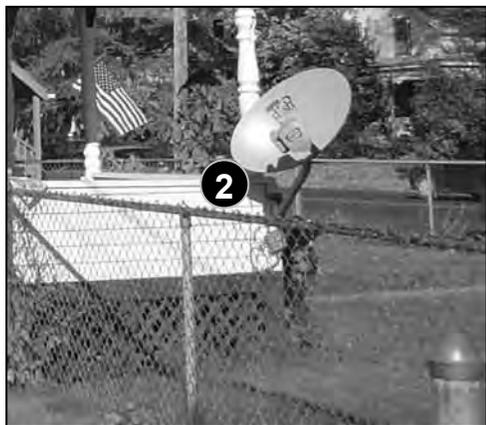


Fig. 5-62: 138 River St. Satellite dishes, chain link fences and similar modern devices should not be plainly visible from the front of the property.



Fig. 5-63: Corner of Weeks & Jefferson. Although the electric meter has to be accessible, it doesn't need to be so visible.

- ### Appropriate
- A** Keeping existing trees and plantings in healthy condition, and replacing missing ones to fill in gaps.
  - B** Removing inappropriate plantings which obscure buildings or endanger them by collecting water, growing into walls or preventing proper maintenance.
  - C** Keeping existing historic features such as stone or brick walkways and wood or iron fencing.
  - D** Locating driveways, parking lots and other paved areas unobtrusively to the side or rear of buildings, and screening them with trees and carefully designed plantings where possible.
  - E** Replacing inappropriate features such as chain link or split rail fences with features more in keeping with historic precedent, such as painted board or picket fences.
- ### Not Appropriate
- 1** Removing mature or healthy trees and other plantings which contribute to a site's character.
  - 2** Installing utilitarian devices such as chain link fences, satellite dishes, electric meters clearly visible at the front of the building.
  - 3** Allowing bushes or trees to grow such that they obscure buildings, collect water and cause damage to the foundation and wall surfaces of the building.
  - 4** Adding new walks, driveways or parking lots which are in highly visible areas or out of scale with their surroundings.
  - 5** Removing historic walkways or fences.



Fig. 5-64: North St. This large parking lot is clearly visible from the sidewalk, and should be screened more properly.

### Service Structures

Besides the main building, many properties in Bennington include service structures such as garages and sheds which contribute to their historic character. In other cases, character is damaged by obtrusive or inappropriate garages and sheds, and by highly visible television and radio antennas adjacent to buildings.

### Basic Guideline

Maintain historic garages, sheds and other service structures which contribute to a site's historic character. Avoid new service structures which conflict with historic character in size, design, materials or placement.

<p><b>Appropriate</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><b>A</b> Retaining original or old service structures which contribute to a site's character, making appropriate repairs.</li><li><b>B</b> Removing service structures such as recent garages, carports, sheds, antennas, etc. which conflict with a site's historic character.</li><li><b>C</b> Constructing new garages or other service structures on minimally-visible side or rear portions of a site where possible, and with scale, design and materials in keeping with the existing structure.</li></ul> <p><b>Not Appropriate</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><b>1</b> Constructing new service structures on highly visible portions of a site, with scale, design, materials or placement not in keeping with historic character.</li><li><b>2</b> Placing satellite dishes, antennas and similar features in visible portions of a site.</li></ul>
---



Fig. 5-65: 216 Elm St. The garage here is set way in the back behind the main building, allowing it to take on a more secondary role and keeping the large garage doors out of sight from the street.



Fig. 5-66: 126 Jefferson St. Sheds, garages and similar utilitarian structures are best kept away from the street whenever possible and shielded behind the primary building.

# Preservation Guidelines: Additions

## Additions to Existing Buildings

Additions to existing buildings can either maintain historic character or damage it. Bennington includes some examples of addition - some recent and others quite old - which have maintained historic character and even enriched it. But in other cases additions have damaged historic character when their scale, placement, materials or design are not in keeping with the building's original architecture. In working with the character of Bennington, it is important to preserve old additions which contribute to it, and to ensure that new additions are designed appropriately.

### Basic Guideline

Maintain existing additions which, because of age and quality of design, contribute to the character of historic buildings. Make new additions the minimum size necessary, so as not to overpower or compete with existing buildings. Place new additions in minimally-visible side or rear locations wherever possible, and make them compatible with existing buildings in scale, materials and design.



### Appropriate

- A** Maintaining existing additions which contribute to historic character.
- B** Designing necessary new additions to be compatible with existing structures. Although a good designer can create compatibility in many ways, some basic possibilities for making additions compatible with existing structures include:

- Following existing roof shapes, slopes and materials.
- Using similar wall materials and paint colors.
- Making the size and spacing of window openings similar.
- Using windows of similar type, materials and pane pattern.
- Using moldings and other decorative details which are generally similar, but somewhat simplified or otherwise distinguishable from the originals.

- C** A new addition should relate to the design, materials and ornamental detail of the old building; but it is important that a new addition not resemble the old building so closely that it becomes a counterfeit, in which new construction is confused with old. The addition should always be distinguished from the original building in one or more of the following ways:

- Change in plane of the façade.
- Change in height of the roof.
- Subtle change in materials or design.

### Not Appropriate

- 1** Demolishing additions which contribute to historic character.
- 2** Designing new additions which erase the line between the original building and the new one.
- 3** Designing new additions which are unnecessary or incompatible in size, massing and architectural detail with existing buildings.

Fig. 5-67: These three images show example of both good and bad additions. The original historic building is shown at top, with two different additions below it. The second image shows a poor addition – there is no differentiation between the old and new portions of the building. The bottom design is better because it allows you to see where the old building ends and the new addition begins.

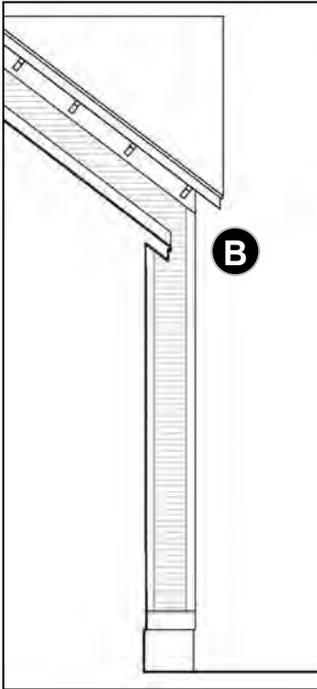


Fig. 5-69: Side view of new addition up against historic building. By stepping the new façade back from the original one, the existing trim-work and details are preserved, and a clear line is established where the new addition begins. The new roof also matches the pitch of the old roof, but steps down to leave enough room for flashing without disturbing the original wood trim.

Fig. 5-68: Additions to historic buildings should complement to original design, yet not overwhelm it, and are usually smaller than the existing building. By setting the new addition slightly farther back and lowering the roof, it takes on a secondary role.

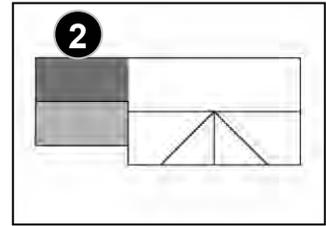
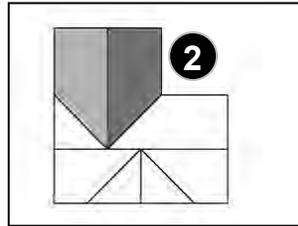
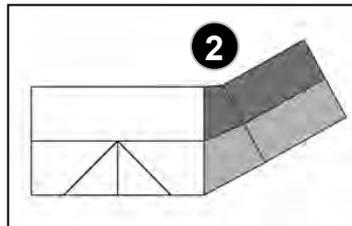
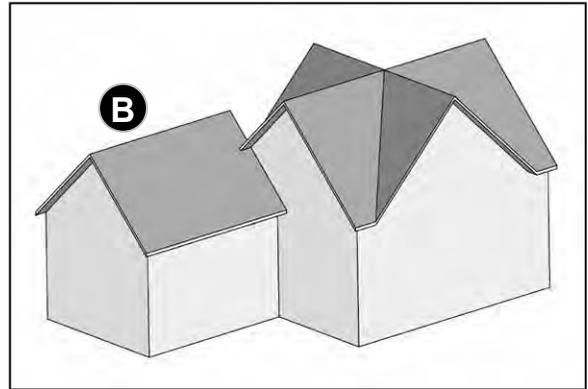


Fig. 5-70: Three examples of improper methods of placing an addition on a historic building. New addition shown shaded. Each example builds directly from the plane of the existing facades. This blurs the line between the new addition and the historic structure.

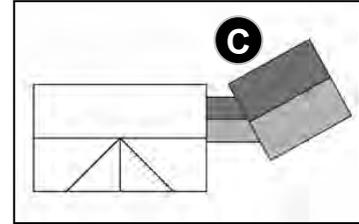
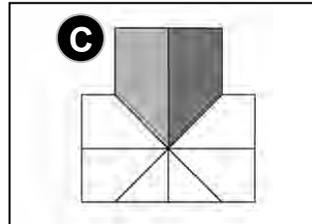
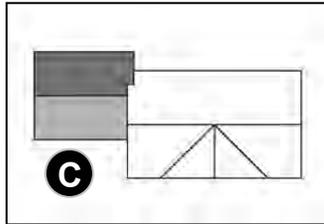
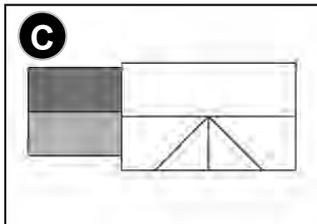


Fig. 5-71: Four examples of the proper method of placing an addition on a historic building. New addition shown shaded. Each example builds off from the original building in such a way that it is offset from the existing facades slightly. This helps to preserve the original scale and character of the historic structure. There are often structural reasons for wanting to do this as well, since the new addition will likely settle over time.

# Preservation Guidelines: Paint Colors

## Paint Colors

Color is perhaps the most immediately noticeable part of any building. Many of Bennington's buildings are painted white, following either the original paint scheme or long-standing local tradition. Others, especially from the late 1800's, are more colorful. While it is usually appropriate to continue painting a building in its current traditional colors, a new color scheme in keeping with the building's date and style can add character and interest.

For additional background, see National Park Service Preservation Brief 10, "Exterior Paint Problems on Historic Woodwork" and other publications listed in the Information Sources section of this handbook.

## Basic Guideline

When repainting a building, consider maintaining existing traditional paint colors or else using appropriate historical colors based on historical or physical evidence.



Fig. 5-72: 126 Jefferson St. The strong use of contrast in the paint colors of this building highlight the trim work.



Fig. 5-73: Corner of Jefferson & Elm St. This house uses only a single paint color for all façade elements which is typical of more modern structures.

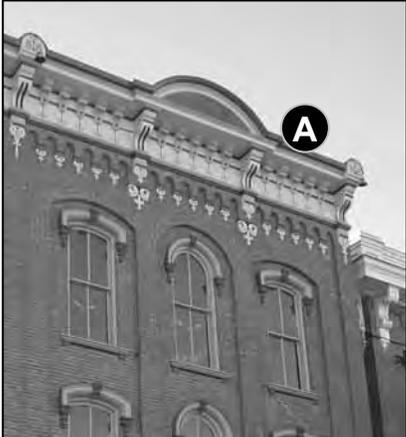


Fig. 5-74: 113 South St. The cornice of a multi-story building can be its most impressive design element, and is often where most color is used.



Fig. 5-75: 185 North St. Different paint colors are used consistently to distinguish clapboards, shingles and stonework on this building.



Fig. 5-76: 12 Pleasant St. Paint colors are used here to highlight the different façade materials in this Tudor style house.

**Appropriate**

- A** Maintaining existing paint colors if they have been used on the building for a long time.
- B** Carefully scraping small portions of paint in different parts of a building to determine which colors were used in the past. (See the Information Sources section for background on methods of paint scraping to discover historical colors.)
- C** Repainting in a color scheme appropriate for a building's date and style. (Again, see Information Sources for background on appropriate historical colors.)

**Not Appropriate**

- 1** Using new paint colors which are not in keeping with a building's date and style.
- 2** Stripping wood to expose its "natural" surface or adding new unpainted wood when a building has always been painted in the past.



Fig. 5-77: 332 Main St. Subtle uses of color add intricacy and added depth to the cornice of this building.



Fig. 5-78: 213 Park Street. The darker color of the door adds contrast to the overall paint scheme, and draws the eye toward the entry. Here, the storm door has been painted to match the front door beyond.

# Preservation Guidelines: Storefronts

## Storefronts

Storefronts are the most prominent features in commercial buildings, and they are the ones most commonly changed in downtown Bennington. Older historic storefronts normally have windows and doors between vertical columns, topped by a horizontal cornice band which unifies all of the openings. Doors and wood surfaces are often paneled. Basic materials are usually wood, glass and metal, often with brackets, moldings and similar ornament. Storefronts which are later but still historically important may include larger plate glass materials in metal frames, with panels or transoms of leaded glass, onyx-like black "Carrara glass", bronze, marble or other materials. These basic storefront designs relate harmoniously to the wall plane and the rhythm of openings on the upper floors, and they create the scale and street-level feeling characteristic of most historic downtowns. While many downtown Bennington buildings retain their original or later historic storefront character, a large number have been changed significantly, with columns removed, large windows inserted, cornices removed, and flat aluminum or steel replacing the original materials. Recent storefronts which are out of character often include brick, rough-sawn wood, stucco, artificial stone and other inappropriate materials.

For additional background, see National Park Service Preservation Briefs 11 ("Rehabilitating Historic Storefronts") and 12 ("The Preservation of Historic Pigmented Structural Glass"), and other publications listed in the Information Sources section of this handbook.

## Basic Guideline

Where existing storefronts are non-historic and new storefronts are planned, design should be based on historic photos or other specific evidence if possible. New storefronts need not duplicate all historical details, but they should maintain the basic configurations and proportions typical of historic storefronts. Surviving storefronts in similar buildings can often help provide a basis for new design, but it is important not to create a false historical feeling by recreating a detailed storefront where it never existed. In such cases, it is better to design a storefront which is simple and modern but recalls historic materials, features and proportions in a general way.



Fig. 5-79: 497 Main St. Original storefront still exists.



Fig. 5-80: 475 Main St. Original storefront design has been preserved.



Fig. 5-81: 432 Main St. Compatible new storefront.



Fig. 5-82: 447 Main St. Historic storefront and sign have been preserved even though the business has changed.



Fig. 5-83: 449 Main St. Bare lumber framing for the storefront windows is not in keeping with historic designs.

**Appropriate**

- A** Retaining and repairing historic storefronts where they survive.
- B** Designing new storefronts to replace non-original ones using historical photographs and other documentary and physical evidence.
- C** Where specific evidence is not available or reproducing all historic detail is not feasible, designing storefronts which recall historic materials, features and proportions in a general way.
- D** Removing inappropriate later coverings to expose historic storefront features.

**Not Appropriate**

- 1** Removing historic storefront features.
- 2** Constructing storefronts whose materials and design is not in keeping with historic character.
- 3** Especially avoid such materials as brick, rough-sawn wood, stucco, artificial stone and flat sheet metal where they have no relationship to a building's historic design.



Fig. 5-84: 337 Main St. Original storefront has been replaced with bare aluminum framed picture windows and blank, unfinished panels.

# Preservation Guidelines: Business Signage

## Business Signage

While signs may or may not be directly attached to a building, they can significantly affect its character. Appropriate signage can enhance a building's historic character and visual interest; if not carefully designed, it can detract from character by obscuring or competing with historic design features, or even physically damaging a building. The good and bad effects of lighting and signage can be seen not only on Bennington's commercial streets, but in residential buildings as well, especially when these have been converted to office or commercial use.

## Basic Guideline

Maintain existing signs which contribute to the historic and architectural character of a building or street. All new signs should comply with both the general and historic preservation provisions of the Town of Bennington Sign Ordinance. The Ordinance provides detailed specifications for appropriate signage, and details compliance procedures. Do not install signs or related lighting fixtures which damage or cover important features of a building, such as storefront cornice moldings, windows, or substantial areas of wall. Signs and lighting should be compatible with the architectural style, scale, materials and color of the buildings they relate to. They should not have mechanical moving parts or lighting which is obtrusive in color or intensity. The primary recommended locations for signs in commercial buildings are across the flat fascias below the moldings of storefront cornices, and painted on the inside of display windows. Signs on converted residential buildings should be simple painted boards, smaller, less obtrusive and less prominently lighted than on commercial buildings. They may be either attached to the building wall, or on a non-obtrusive, free-standing post adjacent to the building.



Fig. 5-85: 469 Main St. These small signs work together by being similar in size, shape and color.



Fig. 5-86: 467 Main St. Sign is designed to blend in with the storefront materials and is framed by the structure.



Fig. 5-87: 441 Main St. Example of simple yet effective sign which is in keeping with the historic character.



Fig. 5-88: 471 Main St. Hanging signs like this often are the least obtrusive to the architecture of the original façade.



Fig. 5-84: 332 Main St. Applied lettering framed within the design of the façade is often the cleanest solution.

### Appropriate

- A** Installing new signs which respect the character of existing buildings, in conformance with the basic guidelines and the Town's sign ordinance.
- B** Maintaining existing signs which add to character because of their age or design quality.

### Not Appropriate

- 1** Removing existing signs which add to character.
- 2** Installing new signs which cover or obscure existing features.
- 3** Installing new signs which are incompatible in architectural style, scale, location, materials or color, or which do not comply with the Town's sign ordinance.
- 4** Installing new signs which imitate historic signage to such a degree that they may be confused with actual old signs.

The examples on the following pages illustrate some problems and solutions relating to commercial signage design in historic districts. The photographs, drawings and commentary are taken from *Main Street Guidelines, Signs for Main Street*, published by the National Trust for Historic Preservation. See the Information Sources section for more complete references to this and other related publications.

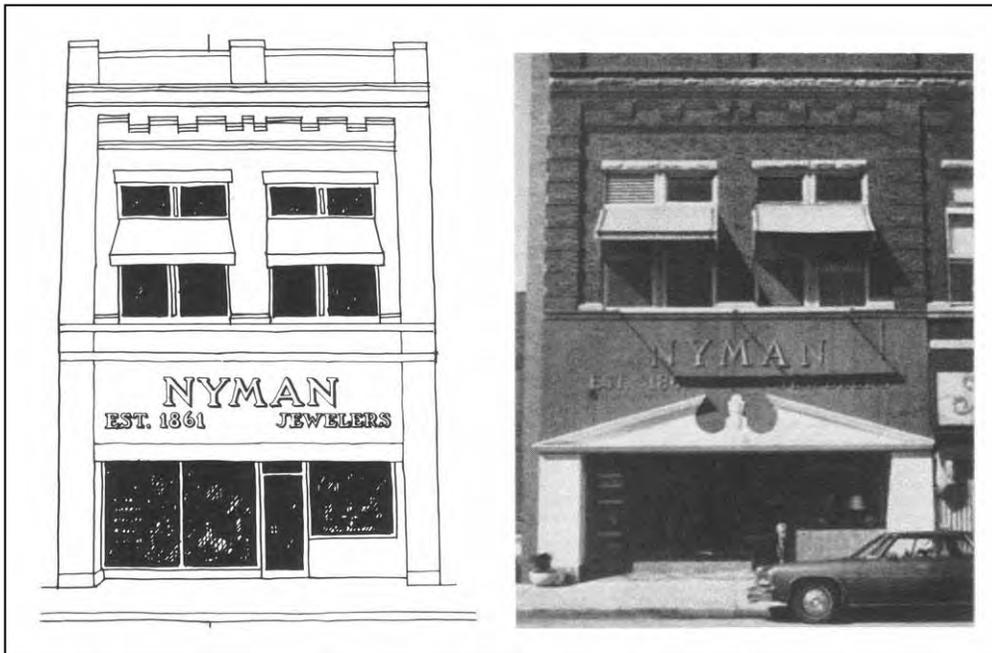


Fig. 5-85: On this storefront, the existing sign is too large, overpowering the building and its neighbors. The large colonial pediment detracts from the store name and is inconsistent with the building's architectural style. Removing this element and the paneling that extends to the second-story windows reveals more of the building fabric. A better proportioned sign that reuses the individual letters from the earlier sign can be placed in this space.

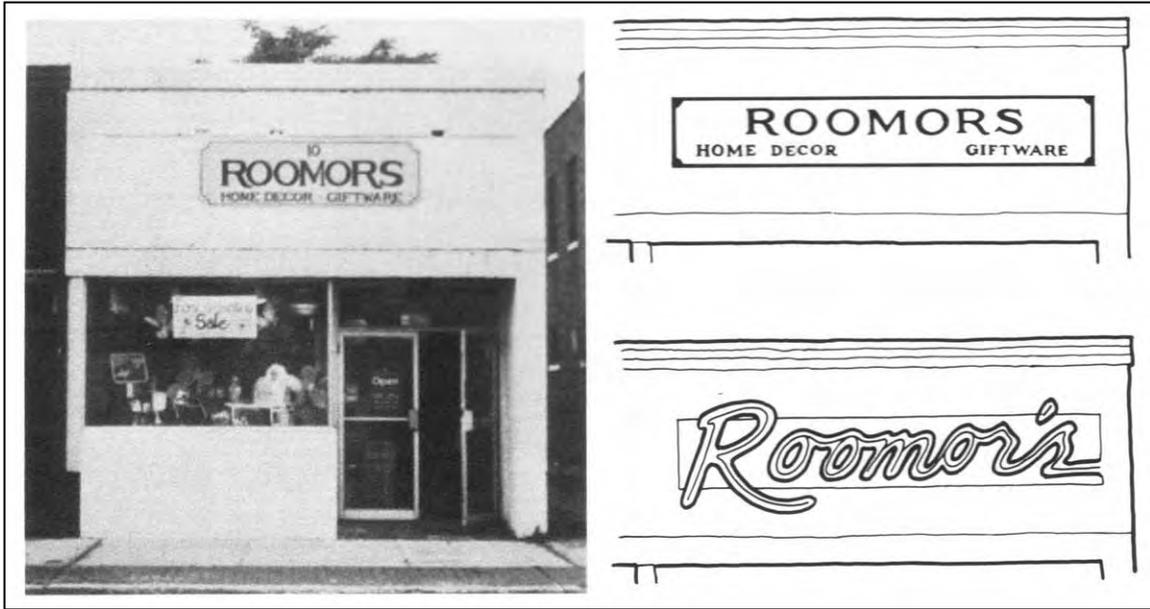


Fig. 5-86: Proper proportioning of a sign and its lettering can add distinction to a building of modest design. This brick facade has a recessed panel above the storefront that creates a natural area for sign placement. The same type of sign shown in the photograph becomes more impressive and relates better to the building when the sign board fills this area and the spacing and proportioning of its letters are corrected to project a different image of the business, neon or channel letters could be used in the same area.

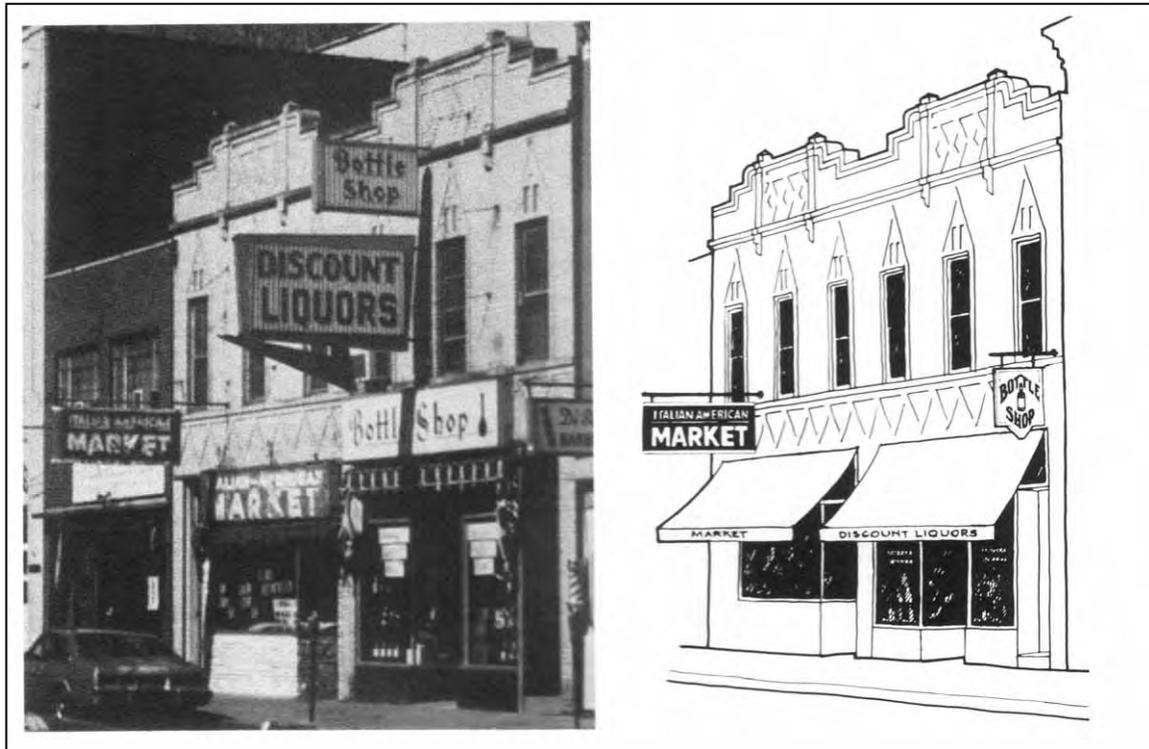


Fig. 5-87: If too numerous or too large, signs hung at right angles can easily overwhelm the proportions of a building, obscure its details and create a cluttered appearance along the street. In this illustration, the neon market sign has been moved closer the facade, the overscaled liquor signs have been removed and replaced by a smaller projecting sign and secondary information has been placed on awnings for both stores.

## Preservation Guidelines: Business Signage

Fig. 5-88: This drawing illustrates two solutions to covered transom areas. On the right, the corrugated aluminum has been removed, revealing transom windows. A sign that covers a minimum of the transom area has been installed. Additional information is placed on a sign over the entryway. On the left the metal paneling was removed, exposing an interior dropped ceiling. To disguise this, smooth plywood panels (painted dark gray to look like glass) were installed. Glass, painted a dark color on the backside, could also be used. The store name is painted directly on the wood or glass.

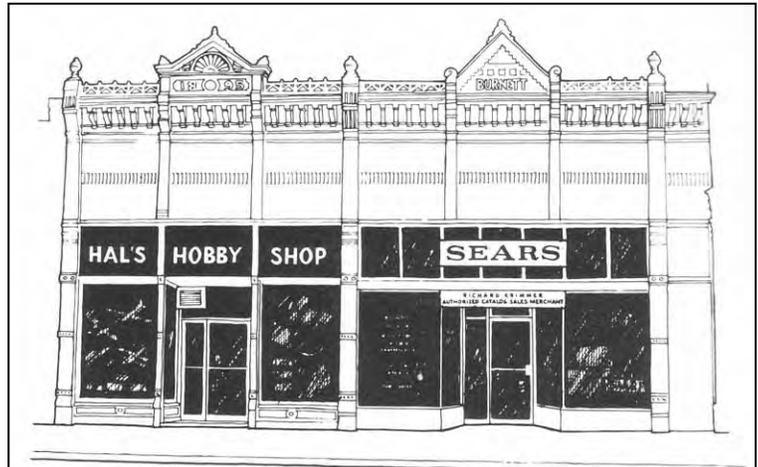
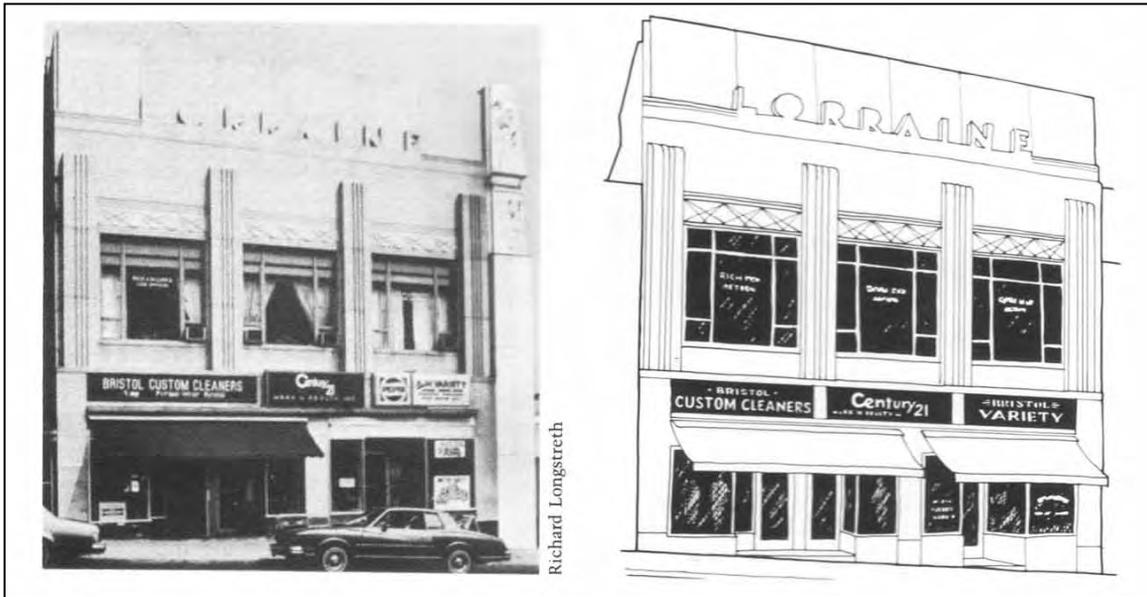


Fig. 5-89: When a business expands into one or more adjoining buildings, the owner will often hang a sign that spans them all. Such an oversized sign visually cuts buildings in half and diminishes the distinctive architectural features that differentiate them. As the drawing below illustrates, one solution is to install two smaller signs that expose the building piers, restoring proper verticality and scale in both facades.





Richard Longstreth

Fig. 5-90: When a large building contains more than one storefront and each houses a different business, the signs should relate well to each other in terms of height, proportion, color and background value. Maintaining uniformity among these characteristics reinforces the building's facade composition while still retaining each business's identity.



Harvey Kaplan

Fig. 5-91: Signs with too much information can be confusing. Keep the message clear and direct so that the name is easy to read. In the drawing, the shop name is the only message on the sign, and its lettering has been clarified, particularly the "G" in Gold. Secondary information appears in the lower third of the window, filling a void created by the raised window display. Other places for secondary signs include doors, awning valances, bulkheads and inside display windows.

# Preservation Guidelines: New Buildings

## New Buildings

Well-designed new buildings are not only allowed in Bennington - they are encouraged. The town's character comes from good architecture of many periods, and this tradition deserves to be continued with new buildings from the present and the future. While well designed new buildings can do much to enrich Bennington's character, badly-designed buildings can do just as much to destroy it. The quality of a new building depends on its relationship to the street and to neighboring buildings, as well as on its design as an independent piece of architecture.

## Basic Guideline

High quality contemporary buildings are encouraged on vacant sites in Bennington. New construction should be compatible with existing buildings and streetscape patterns in such aspects as scale, massing, materials, ornamental details, size and rhythm of openings, and set-back distance from the street. Significant historic buildings should never be demolished solely to make way for new construction.



Fig. 5-93: 400 Main St. Although this building would be better as two or three stories, exterior renovations have helped to improve the facades dramatically.



Fig. 5-95: 194 North St. The large blank wall facing the street is not in keeping with the historic neighborhood.



Fig. 5-92: 324 Main St. Adaptive re-use of this older building has maintained the exterior facades while modernizing the interior.



Fig. 5-94: 338 Main St. Simple details like the concrete cornerstones at this entry help to evoke earlier design styles.

## Appropriate

- A** Designing new buildings to be compatible with existing structures and streetscape patterns. A good designer can make a new building compatible with historic surroundings in many ways, ranging from a simple modern approach to a more highly detailed reference to historic designs. Regardless of the degree of detail, some basic possibilities for making a new building compatible with its context include:
- Maintaining a similar overall size and massing.
  - Maintaining a similar set-back distance from the street.
  - For commercial buildings, placing parking spaces behind the building rather than between the building and the street.
  - Following existing roof shapes, slopes and materials.
  - Using similar wall materials and paint colors.
  - Making the size and spacing of window openings similar.
  - Using windows of similar type, materials and pane pattern.
  - Maintaining a similar rhythm and glass-to-wall ratio in commercial storefronts.
  - Using moldings and other decorative details which are generally similar, but somewhat simplified or otherwise distinguishable from the originals.

*IMPORTANT NOTE: A new building should relate to the design, materials and ornamental detail of its historic surroundings; but it is important that a new building not resemble an old one so closely that it becomes a counterfeit, in which new construction is confused with old. A person looking at a new building should always be able to tell that it is a product of its own time rather than a piece of earlier historical construction.*

## Not Appropriate

- 1** Constructing new buildings which are incompatible with their historic surroundings in scale, massing, materials, rhythm of openings, street setback or other significant design features.

# Preservation Guidelines: Demolition

## Demolition

Destroying significant buildings is the ultimate damage possible in any historic district. Parking lots and inappropriate new buildings are evidence that Bennington has had its share of such damage in recent history. Demolition of historic buildings is never appropriate except where a building's character and integrity have been damaged beyond recovery by catastrophe, long-term deterioration, or radical alteration; or when documented economic hardship is so serious as to make it absolutely impossible to retain a building. Demolition may also be appropriate for buildings which are recent in date and make no contribution to a district's character. There are some such cases in Bennington, where demolishing recent or heavily altered buildings and replacing them with appropriately designed new structures could actually enhance historic character.

### Basic Guideline

Do not demolish any building in the historic district without certification from the Town of Bennington Historic Preservation Commission and all other appropriate town government authorities as required by Article 4 of the Bennington Land Use & Development Regulations.

<p><b>Appropriate</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><b>A</b> Retaining all existing buildings which contribute to historic character.</li><li><b>B</b> Demolishing recent or heavily altered buildings with proper approvals as outlined in Article 4 of Bennington's Land Use &amp; Development Regulations.</li></ul> <p><b>Not Appropriate</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><b>1</b> Demolishing any existing building without proper approval as described above.</li></ul>
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## Streets & Traffic Signage

Bennington's character has long been affected by traffic issues. Besides the actual flow of vehicles, these issues include the materials, placement and dimensions of streets, and the design of traffic signage and lighting. The center of Bennington has always been a place where major roads converge, and through which substantial traffic flows. While this adds a sense of activity and vitality, it also creates a strong contrast between vehicular and pedestrian areas. Successfully resolving this contrast is important to enhancing Bennington's character.

### Basic Guidelines

All government agencies and private parties dealing with street dimension and materials, route signage, traffic signals, street lighting and other related features should respect the historic character of central Bennington. It is not appropriate to widen existing historic streets, or to install overhead signage, obtrusive new street lighting or traffic signals, or similar features which conflict with the historic character and scale of central Bennington.

#### Appropriate

- A** Designing traffic signage using colors, typefaces, materials and other details which are compatible with historic character.
- B** Reducing the scale and changing the overhead location of existing obtrusive traffic signage.
- C** Changing pavement to more traditional, pedestrian-scale materials such as brick or stone in locations with prominent historic character.
- D** Maintaining existing street and sidewalk widths with no reduction of pedestrian space.

#### Not Appropriate

- 1** Installing signage and traffic signals of inappropriately large scale or in obtrusive or overhead locations.
- 2** Using signage designs with colors, typefaces, materials or other details which conflict with historic character.
- 3** Widening streets to increase vehicular traffic flow.



Fig. 5-102: New signage system.



Fig. 5-103: New signage system.

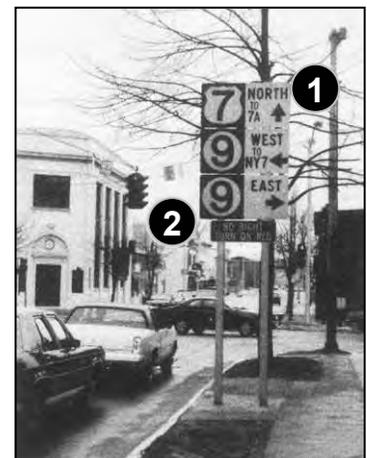


Fig. 5-104: [Date Unknown]



Fig. 5-105: [Date Unknown]

### Archeology

Many of Bennington's industries, commercial ventures, public buildings and farms were abandoned when they lost their economic and social viability. Often, the buildings decayed and collapsed, or were demolished or burned. The ruins and buried remains of these buildings with their associated features and deposits - kilns, wells, dumps, outhouses and outbuildings - have become part of Bennington's historic archeological heritage. Additionally, prehistoric Native American sites spanning thousands of years exist below Bennington's yards and pavements within 300 feet of the Walloomsac River. Such archeological resources can be rich sources of knowledge about the past, sometimes supplementing the written historical record, but often remaining as the sole source of information regarding small events and patterns of history that were never written down.

### Basic Guidelines

Archeological resources should be considered whenever property owners or developers are planning projects that will involve excavation. The Historic Preservation Commission and the Vermont Division for Historic Preservation can assist in examining maps and other documents to decide whether a project could have an impact on visible ruins or buried deposits which are important to Bennington's history.



Fig. 5-106: [Date Unknown]

#### Appropriate

- A** Designing new construction to avoid known archeological sites or at least to minimize impacts on them.
- B** Limiting soil disturbance to the minimum necessary on sites where testing for archeological sites has not been done.
- C** Preserving archeological sites by capping with clean fill and sealing with asphalt or turf.

#### Not Appropriate

- 1** Demolishing archeological features when sealing them is feasible.
- 2** Bulldozing an entire site that has not been tested for archeological resources.

## Applying the Guidelines

The following pages illustrate ways in which the preservation guidelines can be applied, through hypothetical examples of work on actual Bennington buildings. They include changes to existing buildings, as well as construction of new ones, and they cover both residential and commercial buildings.

In this section, each example of proposed changes includes before and after photos or sketches of places around the town of Bennington. Comments on how various changes affect the building's character positively or negatively, and how the changes relate to the Guidelines, are then included. The examples illustrate not only positive approaches to applying the guidelines, but negative ones as well - with the idea that it is equally important to know what to do and what not to do.

Another tool available which can help in preservation planning is the use of the Building Worksheet shown below. The worksheet lists the same building elements which are discussed in the guidelines - roofs, walls, doors, windows, etc. It leaves space for assessing the material of each feature, its condition, and its contribution to a building's history and character. If a change is being considered, space is left for a description. By organizing information about a building vertically on a single page, the form makes it possible to look at the building as a whole, to see at a glance what its parts are made of, which are original or not, which are in good condition, and what kinds of changes are needed or planned.

CENTRAL BENNINGTON HISTORIC DISTRICT  
BUILDING WORKSHEET

ADDRESS OF BUILDING (AND NAME IF APPLICABLE) \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

ASSESSMENT BY \_\_\_\_\_

FEATURE	EXISTING MATERIAL	ORIGINAL	ADDS TO CHARACTER	GOOD CONDITION	CHANGE PROPOSED	DESCRIPTION OF CHANGE	PROPOSED MATERIAL	CHANGE ADDS TO CHAR.
Roof								
Chimney								
Cornice/ Gutter								
Walls								
Windows								
Storm Windows								
Doors/ Entrances								
Storm Doors								
Porches/ Stairs								
Secondary Buildings								
New Additions								
Storefronts								
Signage/ Lighting								

**MATERIALS**

Wood      Stone      Y = Yes  
 Aluminum      Concrete/Stucco      N = No  
 Metal      Asphalt      ? = Don't Know  
 Vinyl      Other (specify)      Blank = Does Not Apply  
 Slate

**GOOD CONDITION** indicates that a feature can be repaired without removing or replacing more than 25% of existing material.

ADDITIONAL DESCRIPTION \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

SITE & LANDSCAPE \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

PAINT \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Both the worksheets and the hypothetical examples of work are meant to serve as practical models for real planning and decision making for future work on buildings in Bennington. Good work always starts with planning. Just taking time to look carefully can help focus on what will really help a building best, not only in terms of historic character, but for simple practicality!

Left: Central Bennington Historic District Building Worksheet. Worksheets like this can help property owners assess the strengths and weaknesses of a structure before making decisions on exterior renovations.

## Applying the Guidelines

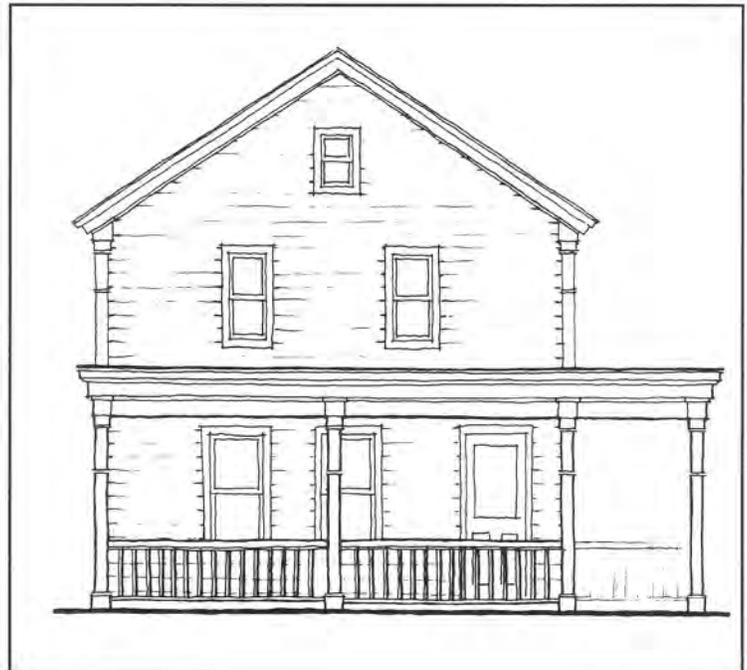


### Existing Conditions

Exterior walls are covered with aluminum siding; all trim around windows and at corners of the building has been removed or covered; cornices on the main roof and porch roof are covered with aluminum siding; the original wood porch columns and railing have been replaced with wrought iron. [Photo: Union Street c. 1990]

### Rehabilitation - Successful

Aluminum siding has been removed and replaced with new clapboard to match the original; the wood trim is restored around the windows and at corners; aluminum siding is removed from cornices on main roof and porch roof, wood cornices are restored; original wood porch columns and railing are restored - the new wood columns and railing are of simplified design, reflecting the original proportions and materials but not necessarily duplicating all moldings and details.





### Existing Conditions

All original exterior trim has been removed; the building is sheathed in unpainted plywood; original windows and window openings have been removed and replaced; original door has been removed and replaced; original porch has been removed and replaced; a bare concrete block chimney has been installed. [Photo: c. 1990]

### Rehabilitation - Successful

The exterior is rehabilitated to reflect historic materials, scale and proportions. By removing the large windows, replacing them with three smaller ones, and adding the clapboard siding, the overall scale of the structure has been significantly reduced and returned to a more historic character. Although it does not necessarily duplicate all original moldings and details, the overall spirit of the historic detail is expressed.



## Applying the Guidelines



### Historic Conditions

Historical photo showing building in original condition, with all windows, shingles, porches and other features in place. [Photo: Corner of Union and Silver Streets – 1904]



### Later Conditions

Original front porch has been removed; side window converted to door; new stairs and door hoods are installed; some window sash and openings are altered. [Photo: c. 1990]



### Existing Conditions

View of east and south facades.



### Rehabilitation – Successful

The front porch is restored and side entry returned to its original window configuration, based on historical photograph; all exterior shingles, roofing, windows, etc. are repaired using same materials as original.

NOTE: An alternate rehabilitation, also successful, would be to keep the existing side entry. Even though this entry is a change from original conditions, it has been carefully done: the new door, stairs and porch roof are compatible with the building's original design and materials.



### Rehabilitation – Unsuccessful

All exterior shingles are removed and replaced with horizontal aluminum siding (first floor) and vertical wood siding (second floor); Front porch is out of scale and poorly designed; all multi-pane windows are removed and replaced with single-pane windows and picture windows; an inappropriate dormer is installed on the side of the building: it is too large, and its roof shape is not in keeping with the original.



### Historic Conditions

Historic photo provides clues to the original design of storefronts and entries. The storefronts had tall plate glass windows between iron columns, with a decorative metal cornice above and narrow wood panels below. [Photo: 469 Main Street - c. 1900]

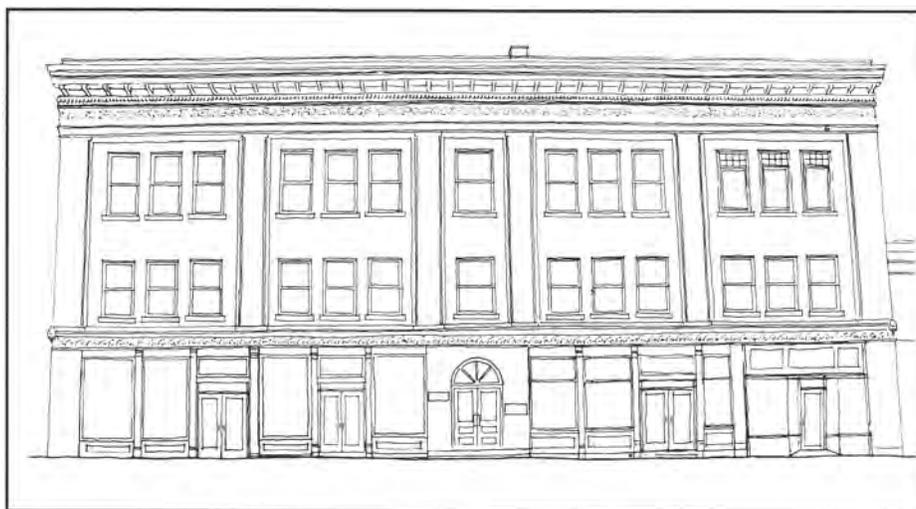


### Later Conditions

The existing storefronts combine surviving original material with later changes. Some changes cover or remove original materials (especially left of the main entry at the center of the building). Others include successful contemporary design which reflects the basic materials and character of historic storefronts without duplicating all details (storefront to right of main entry). In the far right storefront, recent changes are combined with earlier changes of c. 1930-40, which have historical significance of their own. Original brickwork, windows, cornices and other details have been preserved and maintained. [Photo: c. 1990]

### Restored Conditions

Brickwork and cornice have been restored. Decorative metal cornice has been retained, and new dark wood storefront infill has been provided along the ground floor shops.



### Rehabilitation – Successful

This successful storefront rehabilitation combines several approaches: original conditions are restored in all openings left of the main entry; the well-designed recent storefront remains to the right of the main entry; and the basic materials and proportions of the significant 1930-40 storefront are restored. Original brickwork, windows, cornices and other details continue to be preserved and maintained.

## Applying the Guidelines



### Historic Conditions

Careful study of an historical postcard of c. 1925 provides clues to the original design of the building (left – foreground). Storefronts included leaded-glass panels above plate-glass display windows. Entrances appear to have been at the center of each storefront. Also note that the second floor had one wide window in each opening.



### Later Conditions

The historic storefronts are largely covered or removed; existing storefronts have been altered with materials and design differing substantially from the original. Note that the second floor windows have been changed: there are two windows in each opening rather than one. [Photo: c. 1985]



**Existing Conditions (top)**

The original leaded glass above the storefronts has now been covered over completely by a long strip of vertical wood siding to act as a sign backdrop.



**Rehabilitation – Successful**

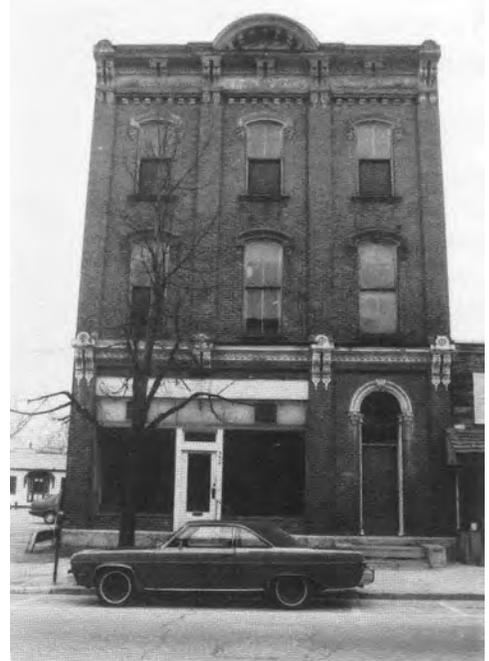
Recent storefronts are removed, with the original proportions and design restored. Note that the leaded glass is restored based on the historical photograph; areas not shown in the photo (entry doors, for example) have modern doors which are simple but in keeping with historic character. The double windows on the second floor are not restored to original; an alternate rehabilitation treatment, also successful, would be to replace the existing windows with single windows like those shown in the historic photo.

## Applying the Guidelines



### Historic Conditions (left)

Historical photo showing original condition. Note the two windows on the ground floor, left of the entrance; and the decorative details in the cornice between first and second floors. [Photo: c. 1895]



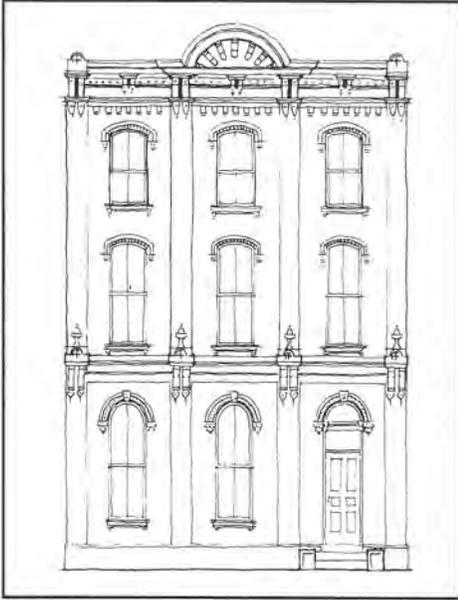
### Later Conditions (right)

Most original material still survives, but the first floor has a wide storefront in place of the original windows. The building suffers from a general lack of maintenance. [Photo: c. 1970]



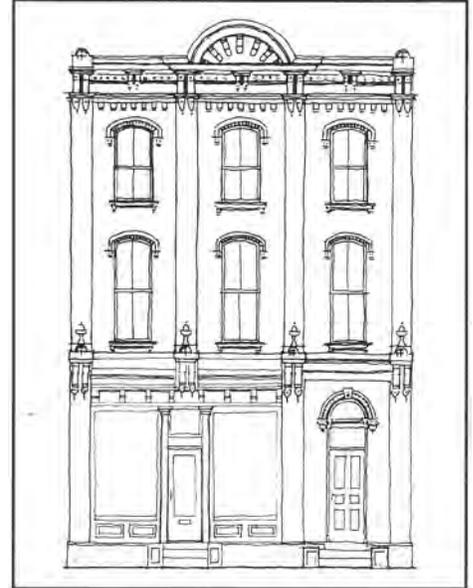
### Existing Conditions (left and above)

Most of the original woodwork has been restored, including the cornice above the storefront. Trim work has been painted in a detailed color scheme that accentuates its three-dimensional appearance.



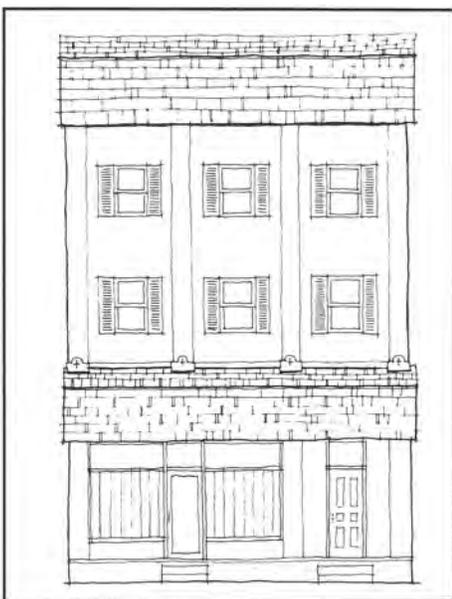
**Rehabilitation - Successful**

Original windows on ground floor and decorative cornice details are restored based on the historic photograph. All surviving original material - cornice, windows, brickwork, etc. - is repaired and preserved. The surviving original stone steps to entry door are preserved.



**Rehabilitation - Successful**

An alternative treatment, also successful, keeps the storefront but changes its proportions and details to bring it closer to the building's original design. Missing parts of the original cornice above the storefront are restored. All other original material is repaired and preserved.



**Rehabilitation - Unsuccessful**

The size and proportions of original window openings are changed; new windows are installed with artificial shutters; All cornices are removed or covered with wood-shingle mansard roofs; the storefront is covered with vertical wood siding; surviving original stone steps are removed.

# Applying the Guidelines

## Historic Conditions

Historic photo showing substantial public buildings which existed on the same site before 20th-century fires. [Photo: c. 1905]



## Later Conditions

The prominence of a significant corner site is diminished by the scale, materials, proportions, rhythm and details of existing recent one-story construction, not in keeping with the surrounding historic buildings. [Photo: c. 1990]



## Existing Conditions

The new one-story building at the corner is remodeled to improve its exterior appearance. Improvements include the expression of structural bays or pilasters on the exterior, and a more traditional cornice design.





**New Construction - Successful**

New buildings duplicate the scale, materials and detail of historic buildings, based on evidence from the photograph. The prominence of the corner site is regained.



**New Construction - Successful**

An alternative treatment reproduces the basic scale and materials of the historic buildings, but detail is simplified and more modern. This treatment is less ornate and expensive than the first, but still fits successfully with the site and surroundings.

## Applying the Guidelines



### Existing Conditions

The existing buildings at the center of the photo are lower in scale than the historic buildings to the left, and not related to them in detail or design character. They are set back from the street, in a large parking lot which breaks the line of the street wall established by the historic buildings. [Photo: c. 1990]



### New Construction - Successful

A new commercial building is contemporary in character, but reflects the scale, materials and general detail of its historic neighbors. Note that the walls are divided into varying planes and layers to provide variety and human scale; material is brick, typical of the district; size and rhythm of window openings reflect that of nearby historic buildings, without imitating them exactly; the cornice at the top of building provides unity and emphasizes the new building's scale and street wall.

# A GUIDE TO VERMONT ARCHITECTURE

This illustrated guide includes a description of eighteen architectural styles and eight distinctive house forms found in Vermont, and a glossary of architectural terms. All terms are defined as they are used in this publication. Some terms may also have other meanings that are not included here.

This guide is an excerpt from The Historic Architecture of Rutland County. The complete volume contains a short history of Rutland County, individual histories of each town in the county, and this guide to Vermont architecture.

Many of the photographic examples used in this guide have been replaced with photos from around Bennington, Vermont for use in this edition, and were not part of the original publication.

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## ARCHITECTURAL STYLES

Federal	c. 1790–c. 1835
Gothic Revival	c. 1825–c. 1870
Greek Revival	c. 1835–c. 1875
Italianate	c. 1850–c. 1890
Romanesque	c. 1855–c. 1895
French Second Empire	c. 1865–c. 1885
High Victorian Gothic	c. 1875–c. 1900
Stick Style	c. 1875–c. 1890
Queen Anne	c. 1885–c. 1905
Shingle Style	c. 1885–c. 1910
Colonial Revival	c. 1890–c. 1940
Adirondack Rustic	c. 1900–c. 1940
Neo-Classical Revival	c. 1900–c. 1935
Neo-Gothic Revival	c. 1900–c. 1935
Tudor Revival	c. 1900–c. 1935
Bungalow	c. 1910–c. 1935
Art Deco	c. 1925–c. 1940
Moderne	c. 1930–c. 1955

## HOUSE FORMS

Cape Cod	c. 1765–c. 1820
Georgian plan	c. 1765–c. 1940
I-House	c. 1765–c. 1860
Sidehall plan	c. 1805–c. 1875
Classic Cottage	c. 1830–c. 1870
Pavilion with ells	c. 1830–c. 1870
Tri-Gable Ell	c. 1875–c. 1910
Foursquare	c. 1910–c. 1930

*(Shrewsbury)*

## ADIRONDACK RUSTIC

Rustic, late 19th century log camps in the Adirondack Mountains and images of log cabins in a variety of publications were the models for vacation homes and recreational structures built in scenic areas of Vermont during the first third of the 20th century. These buildings were designed to blend into forests and tree-shaded lakeshores, with their log or log veneer walls, wood-shingled roofs, rough fieldstone foundations or chimneys, and imaginative “rustic” ornament made of tree branches and applied to porches, window surrounds, gable peaks, and other surfaces.

While many of the rustic camps in the Adirondacks were large, elaborate vacation homes for the wealthy with room for guests and servants, examples in Vermont were usually much simpler and smaller in scale. Some of these single-family camps and recreational buildings only have one or two rustic elements—a stone chimney, log veneer walls, or porches built of sticks. The rustic style was also used for the many lodges, cabins, and shelters along the Long Trail, begun in 1910, and those built during the Depression in the state parks and national forests by the Civilian Conservation Corps.

*(Hubbardton)*



## BUNGALOW

The word *bungalow* comes from India where, during the late 19th century, the British used it to describe the low, single-story houses with large verandas, which were well-suited to tropical environments. These same characteristics are also associated with American bungalows built in the early 20th century. These 1 or 1½ story residences are identifiable by their broad gable, hip, or jerkinhead roofs, and deep wide porches spanning the front facades.

The “homey” bungalow was first used on a large scale in California where it was suitable for the climate and life-style of burgeoning early 20th century suburbs. By the 1910s and 1920s companies such as Sears, Roebuck produced plans and even prefabricated bungalows for mail order at reasonable cost. Bungalows quickly became popular with middle class Americans from coast to coast. Vermont was not excluded from these national trends. The larger cities and towns have streets of homes built from the early 1900s through the 1930s that are designed in or influenced by the bungalow style. Even some rural towns have isolated examples, often the only 20th century buildings in primarily 19th century villages.

The characteristic broad, low roofs of bungalows, often interrupted by dormer windows, have deep overhanging eaves that are supported by large, open, wooden braces or brackets. Stretching across the front of these homes are ample, shaded porches with battered or Colonial Revival style columns that often rest on tall pedestals covered with wood shingles or cobblestones. Chimneys, which were built on exterior walls, are fieldstone, cobblestone, or brick laid in decorative patterns. Clapboard and wood shingle sidings are the most frequently used, but brick, stucco, or cast stone examples may also be found. Windows — multi-paned sashes over a large single sash, picture windows topped by transoms, Colonial Revival style Palladian windows, and small, square stained glass sashes — are asymmetrically placed,



adding pleasing variety to wall surfaces. Some bungalows are also ornamented with distinctive “Japanesque” style trellises and flared eaves.

Behind many bungalows are garages, which are reached by side driveways. These early garages were either built of purely functional fireproof metal or masonry, or matched the houses with similar siding, hip or gable roofs, exposed rafter tails, overhanging eaves, and sometimes wooden cornice braces or brackets. Their swinging or folding wooden doors often have multiple panes of glass in the upper panels.



(Rutland City)

## ART DECO

The Art Deco style became popular throughout the United States soon after it was introduced to an international audience by the *Exposition des Arts Décoratifs* held in Paris in 1925. Art Deco buildings in Vermont, although relatively rare, were built in the decade and a half before World War II in the cities and larger villages. The style was used primarily for masonry commercial blocks—1 or 2 story automobile showrooms and movie theatres, and taller office buildings—to project an image of modernity in keeping with their modern interior uses. Ornament, made of carved stone, colorful glazed terra cotta, intricate brickwork, or neon for movie marquees and store signs, consists of shallow, geometric, angular patterns. It is often used at rooflines and building corners, and around windows and entryways.



(Rutland City)



## FEDERAL

The Federal style, with its light and delicate detailing derived from the classical architecture of ancient Rome, was the first major style in Vermont and was widely used from the late 1700s through the 1830s. Elements of the style trim the symmetrical gable, hip, or gambrel roof houses of the period and grace the standard New England church form like frosting on a cake. The main stylistic focus is on the central entryway: a paneled door usually flanked by sidelights and thin columns or pilasters, and crowned by a semi-elliptical fan or fanlight, transom, or delicate entablature. Palladian windows may be centered above on the second floor.

Early settlers and skilled master builders originally from southern New England and New York brought the Federal style to Vermont. They and, later, locally trained builders both copied and were influenced by carpenters' handbooks that included building designs, floor plans, and ornament. Among the most popular books were *The Country Builder's Assistant*, published in 1797, and the 1806 *American Builder's Companion*, both written by Asher Benjamin, a noted Massachusetts master builder.

Many of the most elegant examples of the Federal style in Vermont were built in prosperous county seats, early centers of trade and commerce, and along key transportation routes. The style was used for houses, churches, stores, and other public buildings. Houses generally have five bay Georgian plan, I-house, or Cape Cod forms. Eaves on buildings of the period usually have little or no overhang. The gable ends are often pierced by decorative semi-elliptical fans or fanlights. Entry sidelights usually extend halfway down the length of the door. Spanning door and window openings in early brick houses are flat or shallow brick arches. Later masonry buildings have stone lintels with splayed ends, introduced after regional stone quarrying got underway, or applied splayed wooden lintels.



Ornament on Federal style buildings ranges from delicate and sophisticated carving to naive interpretations of pattern book details. The thinly stretched columns and pilasters that decorate doorways, wall surfaces, and Palladian windows are usually plain or fluted, and often have Ionic or Corinthian capitals. Running under eaveslines and over doors and windows are molded cornices that are sometimes enriched with dentils, and entablatures trimmed by intricately carved floral and swag motifs, fretwork, triglyphs, or other classical details. Curved lines made of wood or thin strips of lead trace weblike patterns in the glass of doorway fanlights, sidelights, and Palladian windows, while inset wall panels spring across brick facades in subtle arcing.



## COLONIAL REVIVAL

The Colonial Revival style, popular for buildings of all kinds across the country from the late 1800s through the 1930s (and still in use today), was derived from American architectural styles first used in the 18th century. Building forms vary and range from the traditional Georgian plan for houses to central pavilions with sprawling ells for large institutional structures. Decorative features are based on details from the earlier styles but can be distinguished from them by their large scale and often unusual placement on the building facade. Among the most typical details are Palladian windows, porches with classical columns, doorways topped by fanlights or pediments, and full entablatures under the eaves.

During the last decades of the 19th century the Colonial Revival style rose to prominence as architects across the country turned to the buildings of the American colonial and Federal period for study and inspiration. In Vermont the style can be found nearly everywhere, used for residences of the well-to-do in the cities and on countryside estates, for numerous homes built in new suburban neighborhoods and in established villages and towns, and for public and institutional buildings, commercial blocks, movie theatres, and gas stations.

In Vermont elements of the style, mainly Palladian windows and porches with classical columns and entablatures, were first used in the large, picturesque irregular Shingle and Queen Anne style houses constructed during the 1880s, 1890s, and early 1900s. Some of these residences, as well as smaller ones built from the early 1900s on, had gambrel roofs, which were derived from the "Dutch" colonial houses of the New York area. By the early 1900s Colonial Revival style buildings, particularly institutional structures and then houses, were more formal and symmetrical, usually 2 or more stories tall with a



central doorway and gable or hip roof. While a few were exact replicas of earlier styles (discernable today only by close scrutiny of materials and building techniques), most were much larger in scale.

Other Colonial Revival style features include entablatures with large dentils, modillion blocks, or ornamental swags; balustrades with bulbous turned balusters crowning rooflines; doors with sidelights and topped by transoms, fanlights, or pediments; quoins or pilasters on building corners; and by the 1910s cupolas and weather vanes. One or two of these details, usually a Palladian window or porches with columns, were also used during the period for simple gable front homes, Foursquares (popular into the 1920s), and to update older buildings.



## GOTHIC REVIVAL

The Gothic Revival style with its irregular forms and pointed details was used for churches in Vermont from the 1820s to 1840s, adding a note of medieval picturesqueness to an established landscape dotted with classical Federal and Greek Revival style buildings. Built in the common New England meetinghouse form, these churches were made Gothic by the use of such elements as pointed arch windows with small diamond-shaped panes, and pinnacles and cresting atop belfry towers. By the 1850s and 1860s the style was also being used for houses, although it was never as popular as the Greek Revival style. Whether a symmetrical Classic Cottage or a structure irregular in form, the Gothic Revival style house usually has a steeply pitched roof and wall dormer ornamented along eavelines by carved or scroll sawn bargeboards, decorative porches, and molded label lintels over window and door openings.

It was not until the 1840s that the Gothic Revival style became widespread in America, popularized for houses through three influential books written by landscape architect Andrew Jackson Downing and featuring designs of New York architect Alexander Jackson Davis. Downing and Davis asserted that the irregular Gothic Revival style was more suitable for the natural American landscape than the symmetrical forms of the Greek Revival style. In Vermont the style was advocated for churches by Episcopal bishop John Henry Hopkins of Burlington.

Early Gothic Revival style churches, with their light ornament and large, clear, pointed arch windows, project a somewhat delicate air, while the mainly stone churches of the 1850s to 1870s are seemingly more medieval in appearance with their heavy stonework, buttresses, stained glass, stone window tracery, crenellation, and lofty central spires or asymmetrically placed bell towers.

High style houses are irregular in form and ornately detailed. Bargeboards are cut in a variety of

fanciful geometric or naturalistic shapes such as waves, leaves, acorns, and vines. Porches often have octagonal posts with lacy cut-out brackets stretching between them. Opening onto these porches and into the landscape are full-length first floor windows and bay windows. Some houses are covered with board and batten siding, but in Vermont clapboards are more common. More modest houses, usually Classic Cottages, have porches and Gothic wall dormers trimmed with bargeboards, which are sometimes naively combined with Greek Revival style doorways, eaveline entablatures, and corner pilasters. Carriage barns, stables, and other outbuildings built in the middle decades of the 19th century sometimes also had Gothic Revival style features: board and batten siding, Gothic wall dormers, or simple bargeboards. (See also *High Victorian Gothic* and *Neo-Gothic Revival* styles.)



## FRENCH SECOND EMPIRE

Mansard roofs top all French Second Empire style structures — residences, public buildings, and commercial blocks. Popular in Vermont during the 1870s and 1880s, this elegant style shares many characteristics of the Italianate style, including cubical forms, prominent eaves supported by curved brackets, paired windows, and sweeping verandas with chamfered posts and matching brackets.

The style, named after the Mansard-roofed buildings constructed in France during Napoleon III's Second Empire in the third quarter of the 19th century, was introduced to America by the late 1850s. A number of imposing federal government and other civic buildings were built in the style, and by the 1860s its influence was felt in Vermont. Popular here into the 1880s, the French Second Empire style was used for municipal and commercial buildings, as well as for the residences of well-to-do urban manufacturers and village merchants and professionals.

French Second Empire style buildings are usually two or more stories in height. The steeply pitched sides of the crowning Mansard roofs (named after the 17th century French architect François Mansart) provide additional living space. The roofs often have either curved or straight lower slopes that are broken by elaborate dormer windows, and are decorated with colored slates laid in geometric patterns. High style examples may also have tall, projecting, central or side towers, which are topped by Mansard roofs and sometimes metal cresting. Other characteristic details of these buildings are projecting pavilions, windows with heavy hood moldings or molded lintelboards and surrounds, bay windows, and Italianate style porches. Later buildings may have Queen Anne style porches or Eastlake style ornament (see *Queen Anne* style).



(Rutland City)





## HIGH VICTORIAN GOTHIC

The High Victorian Gothic style of the last quarter of the 19th century continued the use of forms of medieval Gothic architecture, which were first popular in America in the 1840s and 1850s (see *Gothic Revival* style). Used mainly for churches and public buildings, the style is distinguished from the earlier Gothic Revival style by its almost exclusive use of masonry, lively wall surface patterns made of brick or stone in contrasting colors, ornate large-scale buttresses, window tracery, pointed arch windows and doorways, and abundant use of stained glass. Some examples of the style in Vermont are constructed of wood, with details that were originally painted in appropriate colors to imitate masonry.





## GREEK REVIVAL

Inspired by the ancient architecture of Greece, the Greek Revival style was the most popular 19th century style in Vermont, in widespread use from the 1830s through the 1870s, and even later in remote rural areas. It was used for residences, churches, courthouses, stores, and other buildings. Bold classical detailing—columns, pilasters, full entablatures, and pediments—ornament templelike gable-front as well as more traditional eaves-front buildings. As is the case with the earlier and more delicate Federal style, most stylistic emphasis is on the main entry—a paneled door flanked by sidelights, and robust columns or pilasters, and topped by a transom and three part entablature.

American architects in the first decades of the 19th century were influenced by books on the antiquities of Greece to adopt for their own designs the symmetrical, orderly forms of Grecian architecture as symbols of American freedom and democracy. By the 1830s the Greek Revival style was spreading throughout the country, popularized in part by newly published handbooks for carpenters. In 1827 Massachusetts master builder Asher Benjamin updated his 1806 handbook, *The American Builder's Companion*, substituting the original Federal style ornament with Greek details, and then wrote several more books that featured Greek Revival style designs. Vermont had one nationally renowned architect of the style, Ammi B. Young, who designed the second State House in Montpelier. Most Greek Revival style buildings in the state, however, were the work of local master builders and carpenters.

High style churches, courthouses, and the most elegant houses were built in the temple front form with monumental porticos spanning their fronts. Variations for houses include sidehall and pavilion with ells plans. Stylish examples of the latter are often found with colonnaded porches. Also common were the more traditional Georgian plans and I-houses, as



well as the popular 1½ story Classic Cottage, an evolution of the earlier Cape Cod.

Most Greek Revival style buildings are ornamented by richly molded three-part entablatures under eavelines and over doorways. They are visually supported by pilasters, plain or paneled, that trim building corners and surround entryways. Gable peaks or pediments are sometimes pierced by triangular fans or fanlights. Windows usually have six panes in each sash, although commercial blocks are often noted for their large multi-paned storefront windows. Topping windows and door openings in most brick and stone buildings are rectangular stone lintels with square ends. Most sidelights extend three-quarters of the way down the length of the door, although there are some that are full length. Churches and courthouses are often topped by classically detailed belfries or cupolas.



*(Rutland City)*

## MODERNE

Smooth, slick, and streamlined surfaces characterize the Moderne style of the 1930s to the 1950s, a style that was inspired not by the architecture of the past but by the new materials of modern technology. Although not very common in Vermont, it can be found in the cities and larger villages where it was used for diners, storefronts, gas stations, other roadside commercial structures, and some industrial buildings. Wall surfaces are made sleek by the use of such materials as stainless steel, chrome, enameled metal panels in a variety of colors, opaque carrara glass, and large plate glass windows or expanses of glass blocks.

The shiny chrome and stainless steel diners of Vermont, like their counterparts throughout the country, were mass-produced in factories and shipped to their roadside locations. Storefronts, both for new buildings and added to older 19th century commercial blocks, have large display windows of plate glass that curve or angle inward to a recessed central doorway. Often found above and below the windows are squares of shiny carrara glass. Gas stations are either covered with white enameled panels or have streamlined metal cornices.



*(Rutland City)*



*(Rutland City)*



## ITALIANATE

The Italianate style, influenced by the architecture of Italian countryside houses, was first brought to Vermont soon after the coming of the railroad in the mid 1800s, and became popular after the Civil War. The style was used mainly for houses, commercial blocks, and outbuildings. The houses are usually cube-shaped with shallow hip roofs and sometimes projecting pavilions or towers, or have the more traditional gable-roofed Georgian and sidehall plans. They are trimmed with cornice brackets under overhanging eaves, rooftop cupolas or belvederes, bay windows, and porches with chamfered posts and scrolled brackets. Related outbuildings often have one or more of these elements. Commercial blocks are noted for their elaborate bracketed cornices, large plate glass storefront windows, and arched upper story windows.

Like the Gothic Revival style, the Italianate style was recommended for American country houses by Andrew Jackson Downing, who by 1850 had published the picturesque designs of New York architect Andrew Jackson Davis and others in three popular books. Wealthy businessmen, who were early promoters and investors in Vermont railroads and other industries, were the first to use the style in Vermont, building handsome villas in some of the major towns. Later, prosperous farmers and successful village professionals and merchants built large, high style homes, while those of modest means had homes with simpler Italianate style details.

Brackets are the most common feature of Italianate style houses, and are found ornamenting eavelines, bay windows, door hoods, and porches, which are distinguished by their chamfered posts. Windows, usually with two panes in each sash, are often paired, have round or arched tops and may be spanned by peaked or heavily molded lintelboards or sometimes by triangular or round arched pediments. Doors, commonly double-leafed, are paneled and

have glass in their upper halves. Masonry buildings are sometimes ornamented on the corners by quoins, and wooden buildings by pilasters with inset, round arched panels. Some houses have a mix of stylistic elements—Greek Revival style sidelights, transoms, and entry pilasters, but Italianate style doors, door hoods or porches, cornice brackets, and window surrounds.

Italianate style commercial blocks, built in the second half of the 19th century, are characterized by heavy, bracketed cornices of wood, pressed metal, stone, or bricks laid in decorative patterns; round arched windows topped by cast-iron, pressed metal, brick, or stone lintels; storefronts with large plate glass windows and cast-iron columns; and quoins on the corners of freestanding buildings. Outbuildings constructed after the Civil War sometimes also have Italianate style details—peaked lintelboards over doors and windows, cornice brackets, and cupolas topped by finials or weather vanes.



### NEO-CLASSICAL REVIVAL

The classical architecture of ancient Greece and Rome and the Italian Renaissance was the model for the imposing Neo-Classical Revival style, used for libraries, museums, banks, courthouses, schools, and other public buildings in the first three decades of the 20th century. A number of influential American architects who received classical training at the *École des Beaux Arts* in Paris made the style popular throughout the country. Most Neo-Classical Revival style buildings were built of light-colored stone, much of the marble and granite supplied by Vermont quarries, and less commonly of brick. They can be identified by their impressive scale, monumental carved stone columns that support porticos or full pediments, full eaveline entablatures, and carved or cast stone balustrades or parapets rimming the edges of the characteristic flat or shallow-pitched roofs. Windows are usually topped by pediments and framed by carved surrounds or other elaborate stonework. Walls, which often have a tall basement story, can be ornamented by pilasters, beltcourses, stone laid in distinctive patterns, and carved stone or terra cotta medallions or other trim.



### NEO-GOTHIC REVIVAL

The forms of Gothic architecture continued to be popular in the early 20th century for churches, collegiate buildings, and other public structures. The Neo-Gothic Revival style can be differentiated from the more exuberant High Victorian Gothic style of the 1870s and 1880s by the use of subdued red or light-colored brick or stone. Window tracery, pinnacles, pointed arches, and trim on buttresses, towers, and steeples are often made of limestone or buff-colored terra cotta and are usually smaller in scale than those of the earlier style. (see also *Gothic Revival* and *High Victorian Gothic* styles.)



(Rutland City)



## QUEEN ANNE

Gaudy, colorful, and irregular describe the Queen Anne style, the frenzied culmination of the elaborate late 19th century architectural styles. Popular in Vermont from about 1885 to 1905 for churches, public buildings, commercial blocks, and particularly for houses, the style is distinctive for its asymmetrical building forms, rich wall textures, multi-colored paint schemes, unpredictable window spacing, towers, bay windows, gable screens, and porches with turned posts and balusters.

The Queen Anne received its first major exposure in America at the 1876 Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia, where the British government constructed several buildings in the style. American architects were inspired by these elaborate English "cottages" and by the end of the 1880s the Queen Anne style was popular from coast to coast. Numerous popular pattern books provided the designs, and woodworking mills mass-produced the moldings, turned elements, and other trim. In the cities and larger towns in Vermont there are many examples of the style, ranging from public buildings and mansions of wealthy entrepreneurs to row upon row of houses in middle-class neighborhoods.

Most Queen Anne style buildings are irregular in form, with hip, gable, or jerkinhead roofs, projecting towers, and bay and dormer windows. Wood-frame structures are often sided with imaginative combinations of wood shingles with decoratively cut ends, clapboards, and vertical or horizontal boards dividing wall surfaces. Original paint schemes were generally multi-colored to highlight the ornate trim, although many buildings were later repainted white. More modest homes often have simple rectangular forms with gable fronts and only one or two details of the style.

Porches are the most common decorative feature of the style and often were added to older buildings. They can be identified by their elaborately turned



*(Pittsford)*



posts and balusters, and valances with turned spindles or simply cut brackets that stretch between the tops of the posts. Skirts below the porch floor are made of latticework or vertical slats with cut-out designs in the shape of flowers, stars, hearts, or geometric patterns. Windows come in a variety of shapes and sizes and often contain panes of stained glass, while doors are usually heavily molded and inset with square or oval windows. Toward the end of the 19th century the exuberant forms of the Queen Anne style were sometimes combined with the more classical shapes and detailing of the Colonial Revival style. (See *Colonial Revival* style.)

Queen Anne style churches, often built with irregularly placed towers, and such public buildings as schools and town halls share many of the same features found on houses. Commercial blocks, either brick or wood, are similar in form to earlier Italianate style blocks, but may have oriel windows on upper levels and roofline turrets. Brick blocks are distinguished by elaborate cornices made of patterned, corbelled brickwork, and textured wall surfaces varied by inset panels, terra cotta ornament, and bands of decorative brickwork.



### EASTLAKE

A number of Queen Anne style buildings are also highlighted with the distinctive, elaborately worked, wooden ornament of the Eastlake style. The style was derived from the illustrations of interior furnishings in English architect Charles Locke Eastlake's book, *Hints on Household Taste*, which achieved great popularity in America after publication in Boston in 1872. Eastlake style ornament decorates gable peaks, roof edges, wall surfaces, and porches. Heavily turned porch posts and valance spindles, gable screens, and flat boards are gouged out with straight lines or simple designs, and embellished with geometric or floral patterns that are either cut out or applied to the surface.



(Fair Haven)



## ROMANESQUE

The American Romanesque style, named after the European Romanesque style of the 11th century, was used, although rarely, in Vermont for public buildings during the 1850s and 1860s. These buildings, usually constructed of brick, are notable for their round arches — atop doors and windows and forming inset wall panels and eavesline arcading. The style was reinvigorated in the 1870s and 1880s by the distinguished American architect H. H. Richardson, who used it in a bold new way that was widely emulated throughout the country. The buildings he designed, including the Billings Library at the University of Vermont, and others that were influenced by his work are usually built of dark rock-faced stone with massive, over-sized arches, but are often lightened by small touches of delicately carved stone ornament. Richardsonian Romanesque style buildings in Vermont, mainly libraries, are either stone or brick with large arched doorways and windows, and often have asymmetrically placed towers, some molded terra cotta trim, and steep hip roofs interrupted by either large dormers or eyebrow windows.





*(Fair Haven)*

## STICK STYLE

Stick Style houses, usually tall and irregular in form, often have steeply pitched roofs with deep, overhanging eaves supported by large, open wooden braces, and exposed rafter tails. Decorative details are flat, linear, and spare in appearance. The characteristic “stickwork” stretches across wall surfaces and divides floors, defines building corners, outlines doors and windows, and imitates corner braces. Other ornament includes wooden screens that fill gable peaks, simple bargeboards with incised linear ornament, and spacious porches with simple posts and large braces. When these details are combined with the forms and features of the Eastlake and Queen Anne, the resulting designs are a lively mix of late 19th century architectural styles.





*(Rutland City)*

## SHINGLE STYLE

The Shingle Style was first developed in the 1880s by New England architects who, in designing large, New England coastal vacation homes, were inspired by the shingled houses of the American colonial period. The design of these huge cottages, with their fluid, horizontal bands of dark shingles, broad roofs, and sweeping porches, became popular across the country and flourished until the end of the century. In Vermont the style was used mainly between the 1880s and 1910 for homes of prosperous families in the large villages and cities, and for some carriage houses, vacation homes, and recreational buildings.

Other features characteristic of the style are foundations and sometimes lower stories with walls built out of massive cut stone, large chimneys, and complex hip, gambrel, gable, or jerkinhead roofs that occasionally are interrupted by towers and dormer windows. One or more of these elements also can be seen in less elaborate homes of the period. Near the close of the 1800s Shingle Style designs also made use of Colonial Revival style porches and Palladian windows.



*(Rutland City)*



*(Rutland City)*



*(Rutland City)*

## TUDOR REVIVAL

Examples of the picturesque Tudor Revival style, built of wood, brick, or stone in the early 20th century, are found scattered throughout Vermont in city suburbs, on countryside estates, and college campuses. The style was used for large mansions and small cottages, school buildings, and sometimes even fanciful gas stations or other commercial structures. These buildings project a romantic image with their steeply pitched roofs, flared eaves, exotic Tudor arch door and window openings, half timbering and stuccoed walls, projecting gables with exposed rafter tails, and sometimes heavy masonry chimneys, foundation walls or lower stories.

## CAPE COD



*Cape Cod (Clarendon)*

Cape Cod type houses were among the earliest and most common dwellings built in Vermont. The term for this distinctive New England house was first used by the Rev. Timothy Dwight, president of Yale College, who noted it in his diary while on a trip through Cape Cod in 1800. Cape Cods were built in Vermont in the late 1700s and early 1800s. They are characteristically 1½ stories tall, five bays wide across the eaves side with a central entry, and have eaves with little or no overhang. While most have gable roofs, there are some with gambrel roofs. Inside, the two large front rooms and several smaller rear rooms are grouped around a massive central chimney. Most Cape Cods are stylistically plain, but some are ornamented with such Federal style details as fanlights, sidelights, pilasters framing the doorway, and door or eavesline cornices, which are occasionally enriched with dentils or modillions. Variations include half plans, only three bays wide across the eaves side with the door in the left or right bay, and three-quarter plans, four bays wide with the door in the second or third bay.



*Three-quarter Cape Cod (Shrewsbury)*



*Half Cape Cod (Pittsfield)*

## CLASSIC COTTAGE



Classic Cottages, built during the second and third quarters of the 19th century, were a popular house type in Vermont. They are so-named because they often are ornamented with classical details commonly used in the Greek Revival style. Some also were built with or later altered by the addition of Gothic Revival style features. Five bays wide across the eaves side with a central door, these 1½ or 1¾ story tall houses usually have gable roofs and are characterized by a high kneewall (the wall area between the eaves and tops of the first floor windows) and small stove chimneys, often placed symmetrically along the ridgeline. Inside, two large front rooms generally flank a small central hall with smaller rooms located in the rear. They were often expanded by building attached wings or ells. Variations include half plans, only three bays wide across the eaves side with the door in the left or right bay, and three-quarter plans, four bays wide with the door in the second or third bay.



### I-HOUSE



*I-House (Danby)*

I-houses are 2 or 2½ stories tall and five bays wide across the eaves side with a central doorway, but unlike Georgian plan houses are only one room deep instead of two. They usually have gable roofs, and more rarely hip roofs. Built in many parts of the country, they were first identified and named by scholars studying the type in Louisiana who noticed that many builders of these narrow houses in that state originally came from Iowa, Indiana, and Illinois. I-houses were most commonly built in Vermont from the late 1700s to the mid 1800s, and sometimes were ornamented with Federal and Greek Revival style details. Variations include half plans, only three bays wide across the eaves side with the door in the left or right bay, and three-quarter plans, four bays wide with the door in the second or third bay.



*Three-quarter I-House (Brandon)*



*Half I-House (Pawlet)*

### PAVILION WITH ELLS



*Pavilion with ells (Wells)*

Pavilion with ells plan houses, not often found in Vermont, were built here from the 1830s through the Civil War period. This plan was derived from the symmetrical architecture of the 16th century Italian architect Andrea Palladio, which was revived in the 18th century. It was popularized in America by a design in an influential 1832 handbook published by Minard Lafever, an accomplished New York City architect and builder of Greek Revival style structures. Pavilion with ells plan houses consist of a main block, usually gable front and 1½, 2, or 2½ stories tall, with flanking matching ells. Roofs are either gabled or hipped. Although some are relatively plain, others are ornamented with Federal and, more commonly, Greek Revival style features. A few late examples were built in the Italianate style.

## FOURSQUARE



Foursquares are large 2 story houses, nearly square in size, with hip roofs, full width front porches, and usually a central dormer. They were popular especially in the cities and suburban areas of Vermont from the early 1900s through the 1920s. Although simple in form, many are varied by the use of a mix of clapboard, wood shingle, masonry, stucco, or concrete blocks for wall surfaces, and are ornamented with Colonial Revival style details.

## GEORGIAN PLAN



Georgian plan houses, named after the formally symmetrical architecture of 18th century England during the reign of the three King Georges, were first built in Vermont in the late 1700s. These 2 or 2½ story houses are five bays wide across the eaves side with a central doorway and usually have their chimneys near the gable ends. Most Georgian plan houses have either gable or hip roofs, while some later 19th century examples may have Mansard roofs. Inside, the center hallway is flanked on each side by a front and rear room. The term is also used in this publication to mean houses of the same form but with a central chimney. In the earliest Georgian plan houses, the tops of the second story windows are often located right under the eaves. This popular house type was in continual use from the late 1700s through the mid 1800s, and was revived again in the early 1900s. Although some Georgian plan houses are plain with little or no ornament, many are embellished with Federal, Greek Revival, Italianate, and Colonial Revival style features. Variations include half plans, only three bays wide across the eaves side with the door in the left or right bay, and three-quarter plans, four bays wide with the door in the second or third bay.



## SIDEHALL PLAN



*Sidehall plan (Pawlet)*

Sidehall plan houses, built in Vermont throughout the 19th century, were particularly popular between the 1830s and 1870s. Characterized by their gable front facades, they are 1½, 2, or 2½ stories tall, and are so-named because the main door, located in the left or right bay, opens into a side hallway. While some sidehall plan houses are relatively modest, many others are ornamented with detailing from the Federal, Greek Revival, Gothic Revival, Italianate, and other 19th century styles. The houses were often expanded in size by building an ell to one side or an offset wing on the rear.



## TRI-GABLE ELL



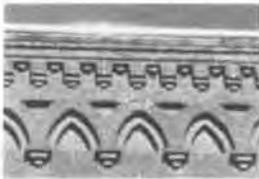
Tri-Gable Ell plan houses consist of a 1½, 2, or 2½ story gable front block with an ell that closely matches it in height. Popular in Vermont in the last quarter of the 19th century and the early 20th century, this plan gets its name today for its three exposed gable ends (two on the main block and one on the ell). Although some are modestly detailed, nearly all have porches and many are enriched with features from the Queen Anne, Shingle, and Stick styles.



GLOSSARY

A

**applied woodwork** Plain, carved, milled, or turned woodwork applied in decorative patterns to wall surfaces.



**arcading** A series of regularly spaced arches or arched openings.

**arch** Structural device, usually curved and built of stone or brick, that spans an open space to support the weight above. Also any decorative element shaped like an arch. See illustrations.

**architrave** Lowest of the three parts that make up an *entablature*. See *entablature* illustration.

**ashlar** Square cut blocks of stone, either smooth or rough-faced, set in horizontal or random courses.

B

**balloon frame** A wooden structural system consisting of regularly spaced vertical studs of milled lumber extending the height of a building frame, with all its parts joined by nails.

**balustrade** A row of vertical balusters or other elements topped by a handrail and used to edge stairways, porches, balconies, and rooflines.



**bank barn** A barn whose basement is built into the side of a hill or earthen bank and whose first floor stable is at grade level.

**bank of windows** A grouping of several adjoining windows.

**bargeboard** Decorative board, often scroll sawn or carved, usually found ornamenting rooflines of buildings.

arch



flat arch



French arch



pointed arch



round arch



segmental arch



Syrian arch



triangular arch



Tudor arch



**battered column** A squared column that is very wide at the bottom and tapers toward the top.



**bay** Regular vertical divisions of the exterior of a building, usually defined by the door and window openings.

**bay window** Multi-sided window that projects from the wall of a building and has its base on the ground. One or more stories in height.

**belfry** That portion of a tower or *cupola* in which a bell or bells are hung.

**bellcast roof** Roof with an outward flare that resembles the shape of a bell at the lower roof edge.

**beltcourse** A horizontal band, often of stone or wood, forming a continuous line across an exterior wall of a building.



**belvedere** Rooftop structure, usually with windows on all sides.

**board and batten** Exterior siding of flush, wide, vertical planks with narrow wooden strips (battens) covering the joints.

**bracket** A decorative or structural brace, generally triangular or L-shaped and found along *cornices* and under rooflines.

**brick bond** In a brick wall, the pattern made by laying bricks lengthwise (stretchers) or with their short ends (headers) exposed. See illustrations.



**buttress** A masonry structure built against or projecting from a wall to support it. Sometimes imitated in wood.

**C**

c. See *circa*.

**camp** A vacation home commonly located on a lake or in a remote or scenic area.

**canted** Cut off at an angle.

**Cape Cod** A 1½ story high house form that is five bays wide across the eaves side, with a central entry, little or no *kneewall*, eaves with little or no overhang, and originally built with a large central chimney. See illustrations in **House Forms** section.

**capital** The top section of a *column*.

**carrara glass** Colored opaque glass most often used as a siding on storefronts.

**carriage bays** Wide openings, sometimes with a rounded or angled profile at the top, in an outbuilding or *wing* and designed to admit carriages or wagons.

**cavetto cornice** An oversized concave eavesline molding.

**chamfer** The surface made by cutting off a square edge, usually at a forty-five degree angle to each plane.

**brick bond**



*common (American) bond*



*running bond*



*Flemish bond*

**Chicago window** Three part window consisting of a large fixed pane flanked by narrower sash windows, and used in commercial blocks.

**circa** Word used before a date to indicate that the date is approximate. Abbreviated "c."

**Classic Cottage** A 1½ or 1¾ story house, 5 bays wide across the eaves side, with a central doorway, characterized by a *kneewall*, and originally built with stove chimneys, usually symmetrically placed, on the ridgeline. See illustrations in **House Forms** section.

**colonnade** A series of *columns* spaced at regular intervals.

**column** A vertical support that consists of a base, shaft, and capital. In classical architecture there are five styles for the ornamentation of columns: Doric, Tuscan, Ionic, Corinthian, and Composite. See illustrations.

**Composite column** See *column* illustration.

**continuous architecture** A farmhouse that is linked to its attached barns and out-buildings.

**corbelling** A stepped series of stone blocks or bricks projecting outward and upward from a wall surface.

**Corinthian column** See *column* illustration.

**cornerblock** A decorative square block located in the upper corner of door and window surrounds.

**cornice** Topmost of the three parts that make up an *entablature*. Also a decorative band found under rooflines. Often ornamented. See *entablature* illustration.

**cresting** Decorative band ornamenting roof ridges. Made of metal or wood and often pierced or filigreed.



**cupola** Small decorative structure crowning the roof ridge, and usually used for ventilation.

**D**

**dentils** A band of small tooth-like blocks ornamenting a *cornice*.

**door hood** A small roofed projection over a doorway, usually supported by brackets.

**Doric column** See *column* illustration.

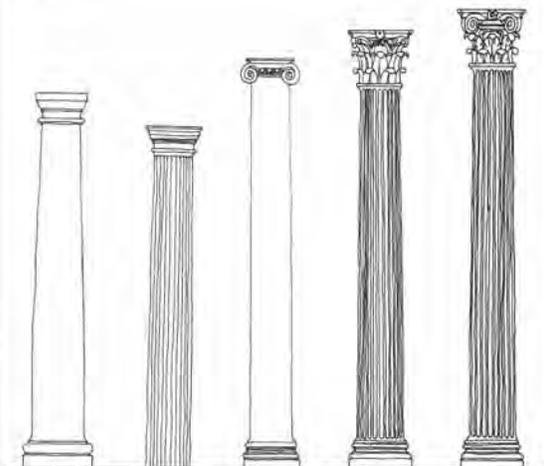
**duplex** A house built for two families, generally with two entrances.

**E**

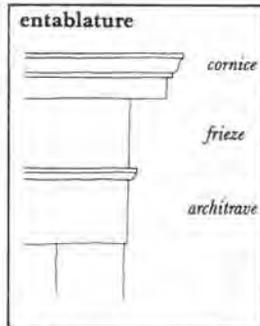
**eave** Where the underside of a sloping roof is met by the wall.

**ell** A secondary block of a building whose roof ridge runs at a right angle to that of the main block.

**column**



*Tuscan Doric Ionic Corinthian Composite*



**entablature** Three-part horizontal trim consisting of an *architrave*, *frieze*, and *cornice*, sometimes ornamented, and found under rooflines (full entablature) and over entryways. See illustration.

**eyebrow dormer** A small curved dormer shaped like an eyebrow.

**F**

**facade** Face or wall of a building, usually referring to the front wall.



**falsefront** Main facade of a building that rises above the roofline, has a flat top, and is built to present a more imposing appearance to the street.



**fan** A semi-circular or elliptical frame above a door or window or in the gable ends of a building that is usually filled with radiating wooden louvers.

**fanlight** A semi-circular or elliptical window, often with radiating dividers or leaded glass patterns, above a door or window or in the gable ends of a building.

**finial** Small ornament crowning the top of roofs or projections on buildings.

**flat arch** See *arch*.

**flushboard siding** Horizontal boards laid flush to create a smooth exterior wall surface.

**Foursquare** A 2 story tall house, nearly square in plan, with a hip roof, full width front porch, and usually a central dormer. Built in the early 20th century. See illustration in **House Forms** section.

**French arch** See *arch*.



**fretwork** Raised geometric patterned ornament, applied to such architectural elements as *friezes* and *pilasters*.

**frieze** Middle of the three parts that make up an *entablature*. Sometimes enriched with decorative elements. See *entablature* illustration.

**G**

**gable roof** Pitched roof with two sloping sides that meet at a ridge (the gable being the triangular wall area formed by the roof slopes).



**gable screen** Decorative wooden ornament, often carved, scroll sawn, or made of turned elements, and found screening gable peaks.

**gambrel roof** Roof with two double-pitched sloping sides meeting at a ridge.

**Georgian plan** A 2 or 2½ story house, five bays wide across the eaves side with a room on each side of a central entryway, and two rooms deep. See illustrations in **House Forms** section.

**glass block** Hollow blocks of glass molded in a variety of surface patterns and usually laid up with thin mortar joints to produce translucent non-structural walls.



**Gothic wall dormer** Steeply pitched roof dormer whose front is a continuation of the main wall of the building.



**ground level stable barn** A barn that has its main floor, usually concrete, at ground level, a hay loft above, and no basement. Often has a *gambrel roof*.

**H**

**half plan house** A *Cape Cod*, *Classic Cottage*, *Georgian plan*, or *I-house* that is only three bays wide across the eaves side, with the door in the left or right bay. See illustrations under specific plans in **House Forms** section.

**half-timbering** Ornamental exterior wall surface treatment of timbers in imitation of wood framing and usually infilled with stucco or bricks.

**headers** See *brick bond*.

**highdrive** A ramp, usually enclosed, leading from the ground up to the main level of a barn. Most commonly found on *bank barns*.

**high style** Having many or all of the characteristics of a particular architectural style.



**hip roof** Roof with four sloping sides meeting at a point or short ridgeline.

**hood molding** Projecting molding over a window or door opening.

**I**

**I-house** A 2 or 2½ story house, five bays wide across the eaves side, with a central entrance, and only one room deep. See illustrations in **House Forms** section.

**Ionic column** See *column* illustration.

**J**



**jerkinhead roof** A gable roof in which the gable peaks are clipped off and inclined backward.

**K**

**keystone** Wedge-shaped center stone, often ornamented, in an *arch*. Sometimes imitated in wood.

**kneewall** The area between the top of the first floor windows and the eaves of a 1, 1½, or 1¾ story building.

**L**

**label lintel** Molded *lintelboard* that extends downward along the sides of an opening and then outward at the ends.

**lintel** A horizontal stone, brick, cast-iron, or wooden beam that spans the top of a door or window opening.

**lintelboard** Wooden board above window or door openings. Sometimes ornamented.

**M**



**Mansard roof** Roof with four double-pitched sloping sides, the lower pitch being steeper than the upper and sometimes curved.

**metal ventilator** A metal crown-shaped fixture, generally found on barn roofs, to vent hot air.



**modillions** Small horizontal scrolled brackets under the overhanging section of a *cornice*. Modillion blocks are plain blocks. See illustration.

**monitor roof** Gable roof with a section along the ridge that is raised up to accommodate a row of windows on each side.

**monumental portico** Large, 2 story high porch supported by massive freestanding *columns*.

**mutules** Flat blocks under the overhanging section of a *cornice* and aligned over *triglyphs*.

## N

**novelty siding** Exterior siding consisting of wide interlocking horizontal boards, each having a beveled curve at the top and a similar notch in the middle to give the appearance of two strips of siding instead of one.

## O

**ogee arch** See *arch*.

**oriel window** Multi-sided window that projects from the wall of a building, and whose base does not reach the ground.

## P



**Palladian window** Three part window consisting of a tall round-headed window flanked by two shorter and narrower windows, each window usually being framed by *pilasters* or *columns*.

**palmette** A small classical ornament with fanlike leaves.



**parapet** Front or side walls of a building that rise up above the roofline.

**pavilion** Section of a building *facade* that projects forward from the main wall plane.

**pavilion with ells plan** House form consisting of a main block, generally with a gable front, and flanking matching *ells*. See illustration in **House Forms** section.

**pediment** The triangular wall area inside a gable and framed by *cornices* along all three sides. Also used to mean cornice-framed elements, either triangular, rounded, segmentally arched, or scrolled like a swan's neck, found over doors (entry pediment) or windows. See illustrations.

**pergola** A garden structure with trellis sides or roof.

**pilaster** Flat representation of a *column*.

**pinnacle** Small pointed ornament with squared or rounded sides usually found crowning rooftop features.

**plank wall construction** A wooden structural system consisting of large heavy vertical planks that are framed side by side into the floor and ceiling beams.

**polychromed** Multi-colored.

**porte cochere** A wide porch that permits the passage of vehicles.

**post and beam** A traditional structural system consisting of large wooden beams connected by mortise and tenon joints.

**pressed stone** Concrete blocks cast to look like blocks of cut stone.

## Q

**Queen Anne window** A window containing a clear pane that is surrounded or topped by a border of small panes of stained glass.



**quoins** Blocks of stone, wood in imitation of stone, cast-iron panels, or brick at the corners of buildings. Usually arranged in an alternating pattern of large and small blocks.

## R

**rafter tails** Rafter ends that are exposed at the eaves.

**raking window** Gable end window set at an angle between the rooflines of the main block of a house and its *wing*.

**reveal** The side of a recessed door or window opening.



**rose window** Large, circular, stained glass church window with a radiating design.

**rustication** Heavily textured rough surface treatment of blocks of cut stone or wood.

## S

**segmental arch** See *arch*.

**shed roof** Roof with a single slope.

**shinglework** Wood shingles applied in decorative patterns to wall surfaces.

**sidehall plan** House form characterized by a gable front *facade* with the main door (leading into a hallway) in the left or right hand bay. See illustration in **House Forms** section.

### pediment



*broken pediment*



*segmental arch pediment*



*swan's neck pediment*



*broken pediment*



*triangular pediment*

**sidelights** Narrow vertical windows, usually consisting of small panes or patterned leaded glass, flanking a door.

**skirt** Lattice or other decorative screening below a porch floor.

**sneaked ashlar** A localized form of *ashlar* construction consisting of thin slabs of stone that are laid upright to form the outsides of the walls, are interfilled with rubblestone, and joined by wide mortar joints reinforced with small flat stones.

**spire** Tall slender structure that tapers to a point atop a tower.

**splayed lintel** A *lintel* whose ends are angled inward such that the top is wider than the bottom.

**stacked wall construction** Wooden building construction in which the walls are built of stacked sawn lumber.

**stickwork** Decorative boards and wood sticks applied to exterior wall surfaces in imitation of structural beams.

**streamlining** Smooth fluid lines and sleek contours, usually accomplished by the use of sheet metal, enameled panels, or glass.

**stretchers** See *brick bond*.

**sunburst** Radiating pattern resembling the rays of a rising sun, generally made of carved or milled woodwork and used to ornament wall surfaces.

**surround** The frame and trim surrounding the sides and top of a door or window.

**Syrian arch** See *arch*.

## T

**terra cotta** Blocks of high-fired clay molded with decorative patterns and used for exterior ornament or siding.

### three-quarter plan house

A *Cape Cod*, *Classic Cottage*, *Georgian plan*, or *I-house* only four bays wide across the eaves side with one window on one side of the doorway and two on the other. See illustrations under specific plans in **House Forms** section.

**tie rod ends** Cast-iron elements exposed on exterior walls at the ends of tie rods (metal rods used to keep walls, arches, or roofs from spreading outward). Often in such ornamental forms as stars, circles, fleurs-de-lis, and starfish.

**tracery** Decorative use of intersecting curved and straight lines or dividers, usually made of stone, wood, or metal and found in windows and decorative panels.



**transom** A row of glass panes located directly above a doorway.

**Tri-Gable Ell** Gable front house with an *ell* almost the same height as the main block. Built in the last quarter of the 19th and the early 20th centuries. See illustration in **House Forms** section.

**triglyphs** Tablets characterized by two vertical grooves that are set at regular intervals in a *Doric frieze*.

**truss** A structural framework of iron, steel, or wooden beams that is used in bridge and roof construction to span wide open spaces and support heavy loads. Deck, pony, and through are types of bridge trusses. Pratt, Town lattice, and Warren are specific truss forms. See illustrations.

**Tudor arch** See *arch*.

**Tuscan column** See *column* illustration.

### truss



deck truss



pony truss



through truss

## V



**valance** Decorative band of open woodwork running under the roofline of a porch.

**vermiculation** Surface treatment of incised wandering grooves resembling worm tracks that ornament blocks of cut stone, wood, or other materials in imitation of stone.

**vernacular** Having few of the architectural elements or ornamental details that characterize a particular architectural style.

## W

**wing** A secondary block of a house in which the roof ridge is parallel to the main structure.

**workers' housing** A group of generally similar *vernacular* houses built for the employees of a particular company.

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