

First Baptist Church

Burlington



STATE OF VERMONT

AGENCY OF COMMERCE AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

January 25, 2001

Carol Shull, Keeper of the National Register
National Park Service
National Register, History & Education
Mail Stop 2280, Suite 400
1849 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Ms. Shull:

Enclosed please find the National Register nomination for the following property:

First Baptist Church, Burlington, Chittenden County

This property is being submitted under the Multiple Property Submission, Religious Buildings, Sites, and Structures in Vermont, and under the Preservation Act of 1966, as amended in 1980, for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places.

Enclosed please find a copy of the Burlington CLG Commission approval for the nomination.

Sincerely,

DIVISION FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION

Elsa Gilbertson

Elsa Gilbertson

Enclosure

DEPARTMENT
OF HOUSING &
COMMUNITY
AFFAIRS

Divisions for:

Community
Development
Historic
Preservation
Housing
Planning

Va. Life
Office Building
Drawer 20
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800-622-4553

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802-828-2928

Historic
Preservation
Fax:
802-828-3206

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name First Baptist Church

other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number 81 St. Paul Street not for publication
city or town Burlington vicinity
state Vermont code VT county Chittenden code 007 zip code 05401

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

	Signature of the Keeper	Date of Action
<input type="checkbox"/> entered in the National Register <input type="checkbox"/> See continuation sheet	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> determined eligible for the National Register <input type="checkbox"/> See continuation sheet	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> determined not eligible for the National Register	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> removed from the National Register	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> other, (explain): _____	_____	_____

First Baptist Church
Name of Property

Chittenden County, Vermont
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>		buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	Total

Name of related multiple property listing
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register
0

Religious Buildings, Sites and Structures of Vermont

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

Religion/Religious Facility

Current Functions

(Enter Categories from instructions)

Religion/Religious Facility

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter Categories from instructions)

Italianate

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Redstone
walls Brick

roof Slate
other Wood

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

See Continuation Sheet.

First Baptist Church
Name of Property

Chittenden County, Vermont
County and State

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria
(Mark " x " in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for the National Register listing.)

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations
(Mark " x " in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property.
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Narrative Statement of Significance
(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Areas of Significance
(Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Social History

Period of Significance

1864-1947

Significant Dates

1864

1871

1911

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Stevens, John

Cook, Thomas

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

UVM Special Collections

First Baptist Church

Chittenden County, Vermont

Name of Property

County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acres of Property less than 1 acre

UTM references

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	<u>18</u>	<u>641280</u>	<u>492690</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing
2	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>

3	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing
4	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>

see continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name / title David Payne

organization University of Vermont, H.P. Program date April 8, 1996

street & number Wheeler House telephone 802 556-4006

city or town Burlington state Vermont zip code 05405

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional Items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name First Baptist Church

street & number 81 St. Paul St. telephone (802) 864-6515

city or town Burlington state Vermont zip code 05401

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

First Baptist Church
Burlington, Chittenden County, Vermont

Section 7 Page 1

The First Baptist Church is located on a roughly square lot downtown in Burlington, Chittenden County, Vermont. The building, built in 1864 in the Italianate style, features a 110' copper-covered spire and a prominent, projecting entry tower. It is constructed of a timber truss system with a redstone foundation and a common bond brick veneer. It is set back approximately 20 feet from St. Paul Street and faces east on its lot, away from Lake Champlain. The building was constructed as the third meeting place of the Baptist Church in Burlington. It was designed by the architect John Stevens of Boston and master builder Thomas Hill of Saco, Maine. Among its distinctive original Italianate elements are brackets under the eaves and segmentally arched windows. There have been several additions to the church, the most significant being in 1871 when two bays were added to the western side. In 1984 a three story brick addition housing an elevator shaft was built on the northern side. The property retains its integrity of design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association.

Site:

The First Baptist Church at 81 St. Paul Street in Burlington, Vermont, occupies a roughly square, relatively small lot. The church building itself faces to the east, away from Lake Champlain. To its south stands an office building and the accompanying parking lot. Behind the church, on the western side, is the church's parking lot and a private house facing the other side of the block. A narrow alley between a row of houses comprises the northern edge of the property. There is very little extra space on the lot. The building itself is set back approximately twenty feet from the street and there is a row of bushes in front of it.

Exterior:

The building was built in 1864 and is constructed of a timber truss system with a redstone foundation, a brick veneer laid in common bond and a

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**First Baptist Church
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Section 7 Page 2

gabled, slate shingled roof. This building description will begin on the eastern facade, which is the primary facade, and continue to the southern, western and northern facades. It has a roughly rectangular massing with a projecting entry tower topped by a 110' steeple on the front facade and a three story addition built in 1984 on the northern side. The main block is six bays long, with the two rearmost added in an 1871 renovation, and two stories tall, with a brick belt course in between. Ten stone steps lead up to the front door from the street level. The wooden double front door has partial sidelights and is topped by an arched window. The entrance itself is recessed underneath a large, rounded arch with a belt course above it.

The front facade consists of a projecting entry tower in the center with a symmetrical main block. (The main block was designed symmetrically, but became asymmetrical after a 1984 addition, which is even with the roof line on the northern facade). On the first floor of the northern and southern sides, the entry tower is one bay wide and has a double segmentally arched window with a rounded lintel over it. All of the lintels on the building above the basement level are stone. Above a belt course, the second floor has a single arched window with a lintel and the third floor has a small arched window with lintel. The roofline beneath the steeple has a small gable and wooden brackets. The copper-sheathed steeple rises 110' in the air and has acquired a rich green patina. It is square, tapers to a point and has three distinct sections on all four sides: the first has a large arch surrounding two smaller ones, the second has a small dormer window with rounded arch corbelling and the third and uppermost level is plain.

The front wall of the main block features two-story, tapered brick buttresses on each corner, Italianate wooden brackets underneath the gable roofline and two simple, single pane, colored glass windows on each side. The windows on the first story are square and feature splayed brick lintels and those on the second story are arched with rounded lintels. The projecting entry tower has

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First Baptist Church
Burlington, Chittenden County, Vermont

Section 7 Page 3

segmental brick buttresses at the corners, a double, rounded arch window with lintel on the second floor and a single, small arched window with lintel on the third.

The south side facade has six bays in the main block with a smaller, lower section, also brick, on the western end. There is a plain door bay with a small, gabled portico on the basement level in the easternmost bay. The other five bays in the basement level feature four-over-four windows. There are a total of six tapered brick buttresses on the main block of this facade. The first story has six segmentally arched stained glass windows, which feature various religious scenes, with rounded lintels. There are wooden Italianate brackets under the eaves. The gabled, slate roof is clearly visible on this side, including three small ridgeline structures that originally served as vents. On the western most edge of this facade is the smaller block that has another entrance, this one with a handicapped accessible railing and an overhang that was added in 1984. It features two six-over-six windows on the first floor and two arched windows with lintels on the second floor.

The rear facade is similar to the front in that there is a main block with a projecting center block, but it is significantly less ornamental. The main wall is symmetrical. The door on the southern side of the projecting block is new, but the one on the northern side features a transom light and appears to be original. Both entrances have a single arched window with a rounded lintel on the second floor. The roof line above both of them is in a "v" shape. The projecting block has tapered brick buttresses at both corners, a gabled roof and a one-over-one window with a splayed lintel on either side of the entrance covered by a small, one-story gabled portico. There is a chimney visible on the northern corner of this block.

The northern side is a mirror image of the southern side except for a large three-story addition, added in 1984, made of brick. The addition covers the

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First Baptist Church
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eastern most bay of the main block and is three stories tall. Each level has a double paned window and it has a gabled roof facing north. There is a handicapped accessible railing on the first floor and an entrance into the addition. It was added in order to house an elevator shaft and make the building more handicapped accessible.

Interior:

Upon entering the church through the main entrance, one faces the recessed apse of the pulpit. The main interior space of the church consists of a large sanctuary with an approximately 20' high ceiling and a recessed apse in the main block. The recessed apse features large windows on the sides and a large cross above the altar. The apse is underneath an arch, which is flush with the western wall, and there are doors on either side of the apse. The apse also contains the original organ, built by the Hook Organ Company of Boston and installed in 1864. The eastern side of the sanctuary is where the choir loft was located before it was partitioned off during the 1961 renovation to form classroom space. The north and south walls are painted white and each feature four arched stained glass windows containing various religious scenes. There is a continuous molding above and between each of the windows, similar to linked square lintels. Each wall features a chair rail and decorative wainscoting. The ceiling is arched and features a large circular metal vent, which was formerly used to cool the church and is now strictly decorative. Six relatively newly added lamps, three on each side, are suspended from the ceiling. There are seventeen rows of original, plain pine pews. To the west of the sanctuary is a general use area and the stairs to the former choir loft. The interior of the church has been altered several times since it was built and is significantly less ornate now than it originally was.

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Downstairs are other areas, added during modern renovations, utilized by the church, including offices, classrooms, a conference room, kitchen, fellowship hall and nursery.

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**First Baptist Church
Burlington, Chittenden County, Vermont**

Section 8 Page 1

The First Baptist Church on St. Paul Street in Burlington, Vermont, is significant as a contributor to local social history, as a good example of the Italianate style, and as a representative of religious architecture in Vermont. It was built in 1864 by architect John Stevens of Boston, who designed several Italianate buildings in the Boston area, and master builder Thomas Hill of Saco, Maine. It is eligible under the multiple property listing of "Religious Buildings, Sites and Structures of Vermont" and meets the registration requirements for the church property type. The building has been in continuous use since its construction and retains many distinctive characteristics of the Italianate style. The Baptist Church itself has been in Vermont continuously since 1768, when the first congregation was formed in Shaftsbury, and in Burlington since the first service was performed in 1823. In addition to the building on St. Paul Street, the Baptist congregation in Burlington has owned, built or been associated with many other properties in Burlington. These include the first meeting place on Colchester Avenue and the building at the corner of Church and Main Streets, which was the first church built by the congregation. Several prominent Burlington citizens have been associated with the church, including Lawrence Barnes, a lumber tycoon, who made a significant contribution toward the construction of the new church in 1861. Although properties owned by religious institutions are not normally eligible for the National Register, the First Baptist Church is eligible under criterion consideration A because it derives its primary significance from architectural distinction.

The First Baptist Church, located at 81 St. Paul Street, has been a landmark in the city of Burlington since it was built in 1864. The architect, John Stevens, designed several Boston area buildings in the Italianate style and the First Baptist Church is one of the earliest examples of the style in Burlington.

The Baptist Church itself has been active in Vermont since 1768, which is relatively early in the city's history, when the first congregation was formed in Shaftsbury. The first Baptist service in Burlington occurred in 1823 and the

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**First Baptist Church
Burlington, Chittenden County, Vermont**

Section 8 Page 2

first Baptist organization appeared on January 5, 1830, when the First Baptist Society was formed. Reverend Norris was appointed as the first minister of the congregation in January 1834. The Baptists have maintained an active presence in Burlington since then and have thus been a major contributor to local social history.

The area was first visited by Europeans when Samuel de Champlain explored Lake Champlain in 1609. It wasn't until 1759, however, that the ownership of the land was decided in favor of the English over the French. The boundaries of the city were drawn on June 7, 1763, and lots were laid out by Ira Allen in 1772. Burlington was abandoned during the Revolutionary War and the economy was crippled by the War of 1812. Following the completion of the Champlain Canal, linking Lake Champlain to the Hudson River in 1823, Burlington's economy and population rebounded and steadily expanded. From a population of 815 in 1800, the city grew to almost 5,000 by the early 1840's.

By 1850, Burlington was the third largest lumber center in the world and this resulted in the building of many impressive structures in the city. The First Baptist Church was a direct beneficiary of this economic boom, as lumber tycoon Lawrence Barnes made a significant contribution toward the construction of the new church in 1861.

Before the current structure was built, the Baptists in Burlington built or utilized several other structures in the city. From the time it was formed until 1845, the congregation used a rented building on Colchester Avenue. At that point, a new building was constructed on the southwest corner of Main and Church Streets to house the congregation. They utilized that building until 1864, when space constrictions necessitated the building of the new church. Master builder Thomas Hill of Saco, Maine, was contracted to build the church, but he immediately noted material defects in the style and

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architecture of the original plans of the Building Committee. They then called in John Stevens, the architect from Boston, to review the plans and make suggestions. He felt that the style of the plans was 25 years behind the current fashion and created new plans to update the style. The completion of the building was delayed several weeks due to the changes in the plans and it was finally dedicated on December 15, 1864, at a cost of \$32,550.

Stevens was an active architect in the Boston area during the 1850's, 60's and 70's. He designed several churches in the Italianate style that bear a striking resemblance to the First Baptist Church. These include the First Congregational Church in Woburn, built in 1860, the South Church in Andover, built in 1861, the Trinitarian Congregational Church in North Andover, built in 1865 and the Lynn First Congregational Church, built in 1871. In addition, he designed several Italianate style residences in the Boston area suburbs, such as Reading and Wakefield, as well as city halls for Melrose and Malden.

The Italianate style of architecture was very popular in the United States at the time of construction, and was just beginning to become popular in Vermont. There are several other good examples of Italianate architecture in Burlington, including Bader Hall on South Willard Street, built in 1872, the Allen Agency Building on Main Street, built in 1877, and the Wells-Richardson Commercial Block on College Street, built in 1883. There were not, however, any other churches built in Burlington in the Italianate style. The First Baptist Church employs many Italianate elements and is eligible for the National Register because it is a good and early example of a church in that style in Vermont. Italianate elements found on the church include brackets under the eaves and segmentally arched windows and lintels. The exterior has been altered somewhat several times over the years, but the building retains all the characteristics that make it a good example of the Italianate style.

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Burlington, Chittenden County, Vermont

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In addition, the church also retains its original Hook Organ, installed in 1864 and restored in 1996. It was built by Elias and George Greenleaf Hook of Boston, who were recognized as the foremost organ builders in the country at the time.

The building has seen some changes and additions to the interior and exterior since it was built. The major alteration, which was dedicated in 1871 and cost \$23,000, expanded the facility by half by adding two bays and was faithful to the Italianate style. Another significant architectural element, the copper covered spire, is one of only a few in Burlington and has been a landmark element of the skyline since it was sheathed in 1910. After the major addition in 1871, the church was renovated in 1903-11, 1951-4, 1961, when it was decided to renovate rather than tear down the building, and 1984. These projects added considerably to the capacity and function of the church, but they did not detract from the architectural or historic significance of the building. The 1984 renovation, which added an elevator shaft to the northern side of the building, had the potential to alter the building's appearance since it was originally slated to go on to the front facade. After review by the Burlington Design Review Board, however, it was built on the northern side where it is less obtrusive and detracts less from the architectural style and integrity of the building.

The Baptist congregation and the building itself has retained a constant presence and influence in the St. Paul Street neighborhood, through all of the changes that have occurred there. A map from 1869 shows only a few other structures on the block where the church is located. Later Sanborn maps and historic photographs show an increase in development and a variety of buildings and businesses, from a carriage shop to private houses, on the block. Although the neighborhood has been in a slight decline since St. Paul Street was blocked by the Burlington Square Mall in the 1970's, the Baptist Church continues to be the most significant contributor.

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**First Baptist Church
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Section 8 Page 5

Both the building and the congregation it houses have made significant contributions to the architectural, religious and social patterns that have shaped Burlington and Vermont. The First Baptist Church is architecturally significant on a local and statewide scale and has been an important component to the social and religious community of Burlington for over 130 years.

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National Park Service

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Section number 9 Page 1 First Baptist Church
Burlington, Chittenden County, Vermont

Carter, Elizabeth. *120th Anniversary of the First Baptist Church, Burlington Vermont.* 1954.

Dopp, Sarah. Personal interview with the author. February 10 and 11, 1997.

First Baptist Church Archives, Burlington, Vermont.

Holt, Reverend John. Personal interview with the author. January 26 and February 11, 1997.

Massachusetts Historical Commission. Historic Inventory Forms, South Church, Andover, 1975, First Congregational Church, Lynn, 1977, Old Malden City Hall, Malden, 1976, Melrose City Hall, Melrose, 1978, Trinitarian Congregational Church, North Andover, 1974, Wakefield Town Hall, Wakefield, 1985, First Congregational Church, Woburn, 1990.

Rann, W.S. *History of Chittenden County, Vermont.* Syracuse, N.Y.: D. Mason and Co., 1886.

Sanborn Insurance Maps, 1926, 1942, 1978. Pelham, N.Y.: Sanborn Map Company.

University of Vermont Historic Preservation Program. *The Burlington Book.* Burlington, Vt.: 1980.

University of Vermont, Bailey-Howe Library Special Collections. Burlington, VT.

Vermont Historic Sites and Structures Survey, First Baptist Church, Burlington. Montpelier, VT: State of Vermont, Division for Historic Preservation, 1977.

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National Park Service

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Section number 10 Page 1

First Baptist Church
Burlington, Chittenden County, Vermont _____

Boundary Description

The church occupies Burlington city lots 212 and 213.

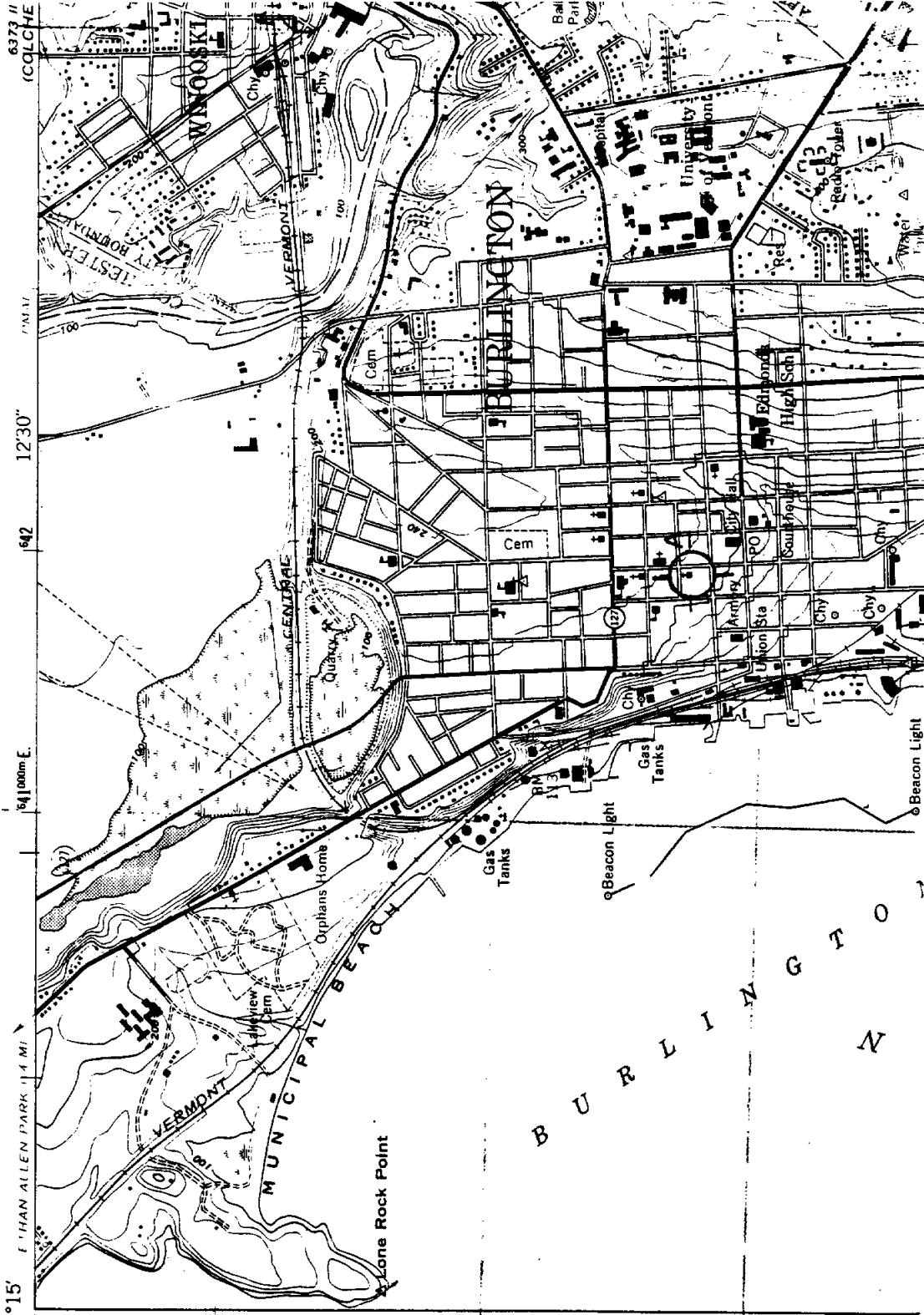
Boundary Justification

This is the lot historically associated with the property and is sufficient to convey its significance.

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

UNITED
DEPARTMENT
CORPS OF I

6373 IIISE
(COLCHESTER
POINT)



A FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH
BURLINGTON, VERMONT
CORPUS VERMONT
UTM REFERENCE:
15 7411280 4926700

B WINDOSKI METHUEN CHURCH
WINDOSKI
CHITTENDEN
VERMONT
UTM REFERENCE:
16 7411280 4926700



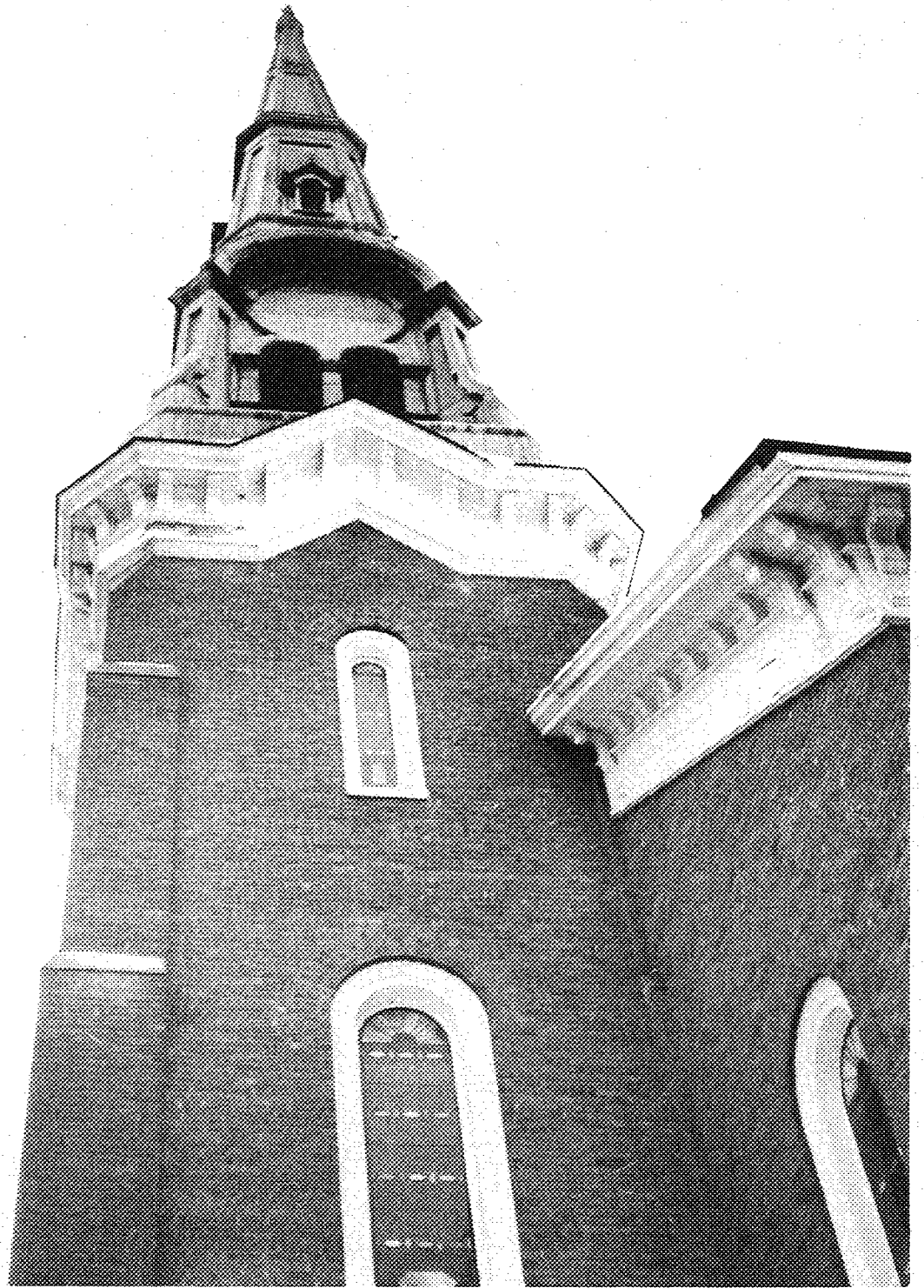
97-5 #14

First Baptist Church
Burlington, Chittenden County, Vermont
Credit: David Payne
Date: April, 1997
Negative Filed at VT DHP
Description: View looking west of the main
facade
Photograph #: 1



97-5 #11

First Baptist Church
Burlington, Chittenden County, Vermont
Credit: David Payne
Date: April, 1997
Negative Filed at VT DHP
Description: View looking southeast of the
western and northern facades
Photograph #: ~~1~~ 2



97-5 # 12

First Baptist Church
Burlington, Chittenden County, Vermont
Credit: David Payne
Date: April, 1997
Negative Filed at VT DHP
Description: View looking south of the steeple
(significant exterior detail)
Photograph #: 873



97-5#7

First Baptist Church
Burlington, Chittenden County, Vermont
Credit: David Payne
Date: April, 1997
Negative Filed at VT DHP
Description: View looking east of the interior
Photograph #: 454