

**Cultural Resources Assessment
For the
Downtown Waterfront Plan Area
Burlington, Vermont**

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**Cultural Resources Survey
Of the
Downtown Waterfront Plan Area
Burlington Vermont**

Prepared for

The City of Burlington
149 Church Street
Burlington, Vermont 05401

By

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Abstract

A cultural resources survey was conducted by Mary O'Neil at the request of the Downtown Waterfront Project team for the plan area in Burlington Vermont. The study area is spans 349 acres (per Geographic Information Systems mapping) in Burlington; roughly bounded by Lake Champlain on the West, Depot, Sherman, Peru and Grant Streets on the north, North/South Union Street on the east, and Maple Street/ Pine Street extension on the South. The natural environment of the study area is characterized by the freshwater lake within a natural "cove" area, attractive to early maritime commercial and industrial ventures. The landscape rises gradually to the east, having been developed in a radial pattern from the waterfront. The investigation included literature, map and historic resource documentation review to identify known or potential archaeological and historical resources as well as a pedestrian reconnaissance of the project area to observe conditions that may have affected the presence and integrity of resources. Despite 200 years of inhabitation, growth and evolution, the study area includes areas which possess a high number and integrity of historic resources and the potential for significant archaeological resources. In addition, a number of historic resources associated with the industrial development and use of the south end of the study area have been determined to be eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. Recommendations address the treatment of National Register eligible resources, potentially eligible resources, and potential National Register eligible resources.

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 Purpose of the Project

Burlington's Municipal Development Plan has identified the desire for more focused planning relative to the Downtown and Waterfront area since 1996.¹ Burlington's Planning Commission and Department of Planning and Zoning were directed in 2009 by the City Council to develop a scope of work, timeline, and budget for a downtown/waterfront project. The current endeavor is the most comprehensive to date, and has engaged many from various disciplines to best understand, compile data, and plan for the future of the project area.

From the Downtown Waterfront Plan website:

In the fall of 2010, the City of Burlington was awarded a Sustainable Communities Challenge Grant by the U.S. Housing and Urban Development (HUD), which provides a unique opportunity to invest in the future, and advance Burlington's place as one of America's most livable and sustainable communities. Burlington struggles to address complex urban challenges in a small, under-resourced New England community with big ideas and even bigger ideals. We struggle with how to really become the community we say we want to be.

The plan will refine broad city-wide goals for sustainable development into focused, actionable, area-specific strategies to ensure the vitality of the central core of our community and enable us to achieve our community vision. The planning process will place an emphasis on ways to promote and improve mixed uses and quality urban design, affordable and workforce housing, transportation and parking management, and the quality and capacity of public infrastructure. Our intent is to identify, understand, and address current barriers to the creation of new infill development. At the same time we need to make the hard decisions necessary to facilitate the continued evolution and maturation of this vital and dynamic mixed use district.

The planning process will help us address many questions regarding the future of Burlington's Downtown and Waterfront including:

- How to encourage and accommodate infill development on under-utilized sites - particularly for workforce housing and office uses?

¹ Specifically and most recently, see *City of Burlington, Vt. 2006 Municipal Development Plan*, Land Use

- How to enhance Burlington's economic vitality and build upon our creative and entrepreneurial spirit?
- How to support additional development without compromising important views and Burlington's character and scale?
- How to balance mitigation of traffic congestion and parking demand with desires for expanded public transit?
- How to leverage future downtown development to facilitate and support expanded public transit service and visa-versa?
- What kinds of waterfront activities and improvements can we encourage without compromising public access to the lakeshore?
- What land-side improvements are necessary to support future harbor activities?
- What public investments can we make that improve lake quality, reduce stormwater overflows, save energy, and improve traffic flow and safety?
- How to encourage and support more "green" building and development?
- How to grow smarter and use our compact mixed-use urban form as a tool to reduce greenhouse gas emissions?

As part of the larger Downtown Waterfront project, Mary O'Neil was engaged in July of 2011 to conduct a cultural resources investigation of the Downtown Waterfront Plan Area to prepare a narrative summary of relevant history of the downtown and waterfront; to summarize buildings and districts having historic designation, and identifying historically sensitive buildings, areas, and resources.

The cultural resources survey was conducted in compliance with legislation and implementing regulations requiring federal agencies (and/or their designees) to identify significant cultural resources (including historic and archaeological sites) and to take into account the possible effects of federally funded, licensed, or approved activities on such resources. These include Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, and the Advisory Council for Historic Preservation's Procedures for the Protection of Historic and Cultural Properties (36 CFR 800.) Mention is made of guidelines included in the EPA's *CERCLA Compliance with Other Laws manual: Part II*, as preliminary cultural and archaeological survey included literature and historical map review to identify known or potential

cultural resources specifically in the barge canal and waste water treatment plant area to determine conditions that may have affected the presence and/or integrity of cultural resources; and preparation of this report documenting the methods, results, conclusions, and recommendations of the background research and field investigations for the overall plan area.

1.2 Location of the Study Area

The Downtown Waterfront Plan area is located on the eastern shore of Lake Champlain, the project boundary commencing within the harbor and including the shoreline of Burlington Bay, northerly to Depot, Sherman, Peru and Grant Streets, easterly to North/South Union Streets, south to Maple and the Pine Street Extension as far south as the barge canal. The study area comprises approximately 349 acres per GIS mapping.



1.3 Organization of the Report

This report includes four sections of text following this introduction. Section 2.0 presents information concerning the history of the study area, as well as a list of previously recorded cultural resources within the study area. Section 3.0 describes the methods and results of the field reconnaissance of the study area, and is followed by Section 4.0, which provides an assessment of cultural resource sensitivity. Section 5.0 presents a summary of the investigation and offers recommendations. Figures and maps follow the list of works cited.

2.0 Background Research

The Downtown Waterfront Plan area, encompassing approximately 349 square acres per GIS mapping, is rich with historic properties, parks and resources. The New England village settlement that grew post revolution (with evidence of pre-contact occupation) at Burlington Bay is the core of the Downtown Waterfront Plan area, and consequently includes some of the oldest building stock in the city. Activity and growth following the War of 1812 help further define Burlington's expanding development, fueled with increasing industrial and commercial growth paralleled with an expanding population base; all within the boundaries of this study.

2.1 Historic Context

(The following information is in part appended and abridged from Sec. 8 of the Church Street Historic District National Register nomination, which is the original work and co-authored by M. O'Neil.)

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

Early business activities were concentrated near the wharves, with ship captains Gideon King Jr., Job Boynton, Dan Davis, Dan Lyon, Jahaziel Sherman, Gideon Lathrop, and others trading goods between Burlington and Canada and New York state. Initial lake transport was by sailing vessels, but it was the advent of steam power, beginning with the construction of the *Vermont*, the second steamboat in the world, by John and James Winans in Burlington Bay in 1809 that enhanced the harbor's commercial development. Storehouses and shops extended from the waterfront to Court House Square (now City Hall Park), forming an early center for trade. Stephen Keyes opened the first mercantile establishment in 1789. The magnet of economic vitality attracted new businesses and

settlers as banks, insurance offices, shops and hotels grew in size and number in the village. Merchants rode water vessels and horseback from Burlington to Albany and Troy to obtain goods, while stage coaches arrived at Court House Square, horns blowing.²

In the first decades of the nineteenth century, Courthouse Square functioned as the heart of Burlington village. Samuel Hickok, Philo Doolittle, and E. T. Englesby were storekeepers nearby the courthouse and customhouse, which were also convenient to Howard's Hotel, King's sail works, banks, and the jail. By 1800, there were 3,000 residents, 400 dwelling houses, and six stores in the emerging town.³ Some businessmen and merchants chose to locate their homes and shops at an intermediate distance between Burlington Bay and the busy mills constructed by James Sawyer for Ira Allen at Winooski Falls, and a second settlement developed along the hill, running up Pearl Street. Here, merchants such as George Moore, E. H. Deming, Stephen Pearl, Harry Bradley, James Sawyer, the Loomis brothers (Luther, Edward and Horace), and the firm of Vilas & Noyes operated their retail trade. Dr. Lazarus Tausley, who built his house at the southeastern corner of Church and Pearl streets, kept an apothecary shop east of the Unitarian Church, mid-way between the business district at Courthouse Square and the Pearl Street merchants.⁴ These Pearl Street businesses thrived during Burlington's early history. The town's topography eventually led to the growth of Church Street as Burlington's primary mercantile and retail district.

A wide natural ravine stretched diagonally across the hillside from lower King Street northeast to Greene Street (now Prospect Street). The ravine acted as a physical barrier preventing residents and visitors from moving easily from west to east across the hill. Only filled in after street and sewer improvements were made in the late 1870s, the ravine played a major role in the developing patterns of settlement, transport, industry and commerce in Burlington. As access to the "hill" was established with infill of the ravine, so followed eastwardly development. The last decades of the 19th century saw the construction of architecturally significant residential structures along South Union Street; many of them elaborate testimony to the success of local merchants, businessmen, and entrepreneurs.

The ebb and flow of physical changes in the heart of the city during the 19th century reflected the fluctuations in Burlington's economic climate. The opening of the Champlain Canal (the first leg opened in 1819, completed to the Hudson River in 1823) would make available retail markets unheard of in Gideon King's day. Burlington continued to ship lumber and other

² Mrs. Eliza[beth] White Root, "Reminiscences of Early Days" *Vermont Antiquarian*, Vol. 3, 1905, 192.

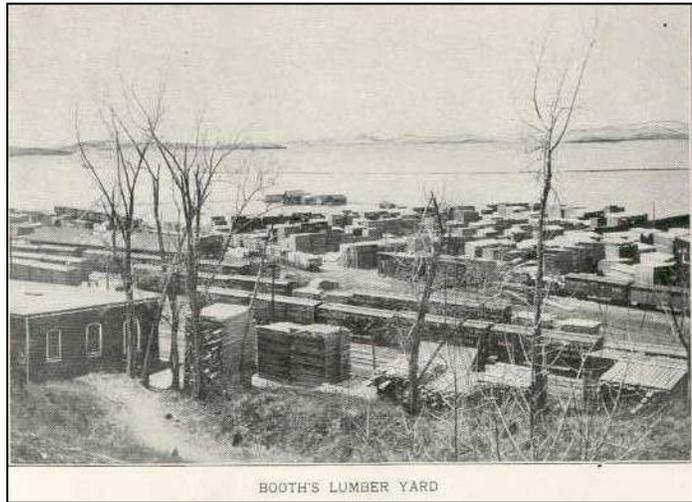
³ Zadock Thompson. *History of Vermont*. (Burlington: Chauncey Goodrich, 1842), 40.

⁴ Captain Dan Lyon, "Burlington's Progress," *Burlington Free Press and Times*, June 16, 1890, 5.

articles from its port, anxiously profiting from its preferred location and good fortune. The addition of two railroad lines in 1848 situated along the waterfront seemed to confirm Burlington's dominance as a commercial and manufacturing location, as this was the only location that both ship and iron horse converged. Unfortunately, Burlington was now at the terminus of the line instead of acting as wholesaler for the region, and Burlington's economy faltered.

The closing of the Champlain Glassworks on Park Street in 1850, however, triggered a financial panic that temporarily stalled commercial growth in Burlington. By 1852, however, farsighted Burlington leaders had redirected their resources as, for

example, in the construction of the Pioneer Mechanics shops along the sandbanks of the waterfront. Long-term effects of the panic were averted when Burlington industry refocused on new manufacturing industries. The lumber trade found a new footing, as raw lumber now was imported from Canada and reworked in saw mills and wood products' manufacturing shops along the lakefront,



producing all manner of building goods and products. Historic photographs confirm the exuberance of the new lumber trade, with over 40 acres of stacked raw materials filling the wharves along the lakefront. This new, broad based endeavor jump-started Burlington's economy and produced a surge in both population and commercial activity. The lumber and wood trade fed off the easy market accessibility afforded by both rail and water.



An immigrant labor force, mostly from Canada and Ireland, began to settle in Burlington, finding work in the new lumber sheds, planing mills and waterfront factories. Besides the increase in residents and commerce, Burlington benefited from the availability of skilled lumber manufacture; many of the buildings constructed at that time displayed fine detailing and elaborate wooden features.

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

Burlington is the only point on the lake from the extreme northern limits of the state, at which the railroad and lake navigation come together. The importance of this fact, connected with the territorial advantages... will at once be seen upon reflection; although its value was not practically appreciated for many years after the railroads were opened, and is even now but partially turned to account. This is the simple and natural explanation of the almost wonderful revival of enterprise here within five years past; this accounts for such a vast accumulation of lumber that not only our wharves will not hold it, but the bay will hardly furnish room enough to build all the wharves that are needed; this justifies the transfer of a large iron works from an inland region traversed only by common roads, to a point where bulky raw materials can be brought by water and from which the manufactured article can be hurried to market by rail. And this, unless we are greatly mistaken, will yet, ere many years, actually make Burlington what she bade fair to be thirty-five years ago, and what she despaired of ever being fifteen years ago, one of the most important business centers in northern New England.⁵

Prosperity, then, followed the years immediately after the Civil War. By that time, Burlington was the third largest lumber port in the country, after Chicago and Albany. In 1856, 20 million board feet of lumber were cut in its saw mills. By 1889, the peak year of production, this number reached 375 million.⁶ Beginning in the 1860s, when most of the state's old growth forests had been clear cut for lumber, the city depended on lumber imported from cutting operations located in the eastern Canadian provinces and floated by river, canal and lake to Burlington's mills. Raw lumber was imported duty-free from Canada, then cut and finished in Burlington and shipped via the railroads to markets and ports in the United States.

The town became a city in 1865, when Burlington voters and the state legislature approved articles of incorporation. Burlington's transition from a township composed of a village core surrounded by farms and pastureland into a city was a response to the changing needs of the commercial and industrial trade interests developing along Church Street and the lake

⁵ Abby Maria Hemenway, *The Vermont Historical Gazetteer: A Magazine Embracing the History of Each Town*. Vol. 1, (Burlington: Miss A.M. Hemenway, 1868), 723. Matthew Buckham would become president of the University of Vermont four years later, serving in that position until from 1871 until 1910.

⁶ Michael Sherman, Gene Sessions, P. Jeffrey Potash, *Freedom and Unity: A History of Vermont* (Barre: Vermont Historical Society, 2004), 291.

shore. An increase in trade and commerce not only enriched merchants and other members of the professional class, but also brought large numbers of workmen and their families to the city, creating a need for housing stock and services. Incorporation, however, only included about one-half of the land area of Burlington.

The national economic prosperity of the post-Civil War era came to an abrupt end in September, 1873 when a severe financial panic, caused in large part by the wildly speculative financing of Jay Cooke for the Northern Pacific Railroad, gripped the entire country. The economic depression that ensued lasted for the next five years.⁷ Very likely, Burlington's businessmen were loath to turn their earnings over to banks or to convert them into stocks or bonds, given the recent financial crash. Instead they invested in real estate. Since much of the local economy during the economic catastrophe was based on credit rather than cash, moreover, merchants and the professional class probably found construction labor easy to come by. Down and out tradesmen and day laborers could be inexpensively employed on construction projects, and credit rather than cash was likely the preferred form of exchange.

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



This view, taken towards the southwest c. 1880, shows lower Main Street at the present-day junction with South Winooski Avenue. Clearly evident is the as-yet unfilled ravine both north and south of the highway. Chittenden County Courthouse (destroyed by fire 1982) and Post Office (deconstructed 1903) are visible in the center.

While these public institutions and buildings have been taking shape and direction, the business facilities and home improvement of our citizens have grown even more rapidly. Whole streets have been built up, and others so re-modeled and improved, that the visitor of ten years ago can scarcely recognize old landmarks. Evidence

⁷ John Murrin, Paul Johnson, James McPherson et al., *Liberty, Equality, Power: A History of the American People*, Vol. 2 (Belmont, CA: Thompson Wadsworth, 2004), 465.

of business thrift, and individual wealth abound all around us, and though the depression of enterprise, so universal throughout the country, has not spared Burlington, still, there are not wanting proofs that our city is destined to recover from it and attract capital, for profitable investment in business and manufacturing enterprises, to a greater extent than she has yet done.⁸

The prospect of filling of the ravine, a topographical impediment to growth and development, gained momentum when the Vermont Central Railroad abandoned their right-of-way in 1861. By 1873, (South) Union Street had been continued to Pearl Street. After the recession subsided, work began in earnest that allowed the easterly expansion of the city. The last large tract of land within the downtown area, the Buell-Bradley Street neighborhood, was entirely developed between 1890 and 1910.

By the turn of the twentieth century, when the city's population reached 18,640, most of the available land within the downtown core area had been developed with substantial commercial blocks and retail buildings. For the most part, construction within the plan area during the remainder of the twentieth century was limited to replacing older buildings and infill after fire losses.

2.2 Study Area Cultural Resources

At present, the Downtown Waterfront Plan area includes at least 9 **National Register Historic Districts**:

- Head of Church Street Historic District
- Pearl Street Historic District
- Church Street Historic District
- South Union Street Historic District
- Main Street College Street Historic District
- Battery-King Street Historic District (and boundary increase)
- City Hall Park Historic District
- Buell-Bradley Street Historic District
- Wells-Richardson Historic District

Within the scope of the Downtown Waterfront Plan area there is also a **draft nomination** to the **National Register of Historic Places**:

- Pine Street Historic District.

The following **individual properties** and/or sites are listed on the **National Register of Historic Places** as well:

⁸ "Burlington," *Tenth Annual Report*, 1875." 131-132.

- First Baptist Church (St. Paul Street)
- First Methodist Church of Burlington (South Winooski Avenue)
- Montgomery Ward Building (Church Street)
- Burlington Bay Horse Ferry (shipwreck)
- Burlington Breakwater
- Carnegie Building of the Fletcher Free Library (College Street)
- Ethan Allen Engine Company No. 4 (Church Street)
- Follett House (corner of Battery, College and South Champlain Streets)
- General Butler (shipwreck)
- Kelsey, Martin L. House (43 Elmwood Avenue)
- Moran Municipal Generating Station
- O.J. Walker (shipwreck)
- Robarge, John b. Duplex (58-60 North Champlain Street)
- Smith-Goldberg U.S. Army Reserve Center / Post office and Custom House (Corner Main and Church Streets)

In almost all instances, National Register District listing followed preliminary resource documentation (historic sites and structures survey) and listing on the Vermont State Register of Historic Places. (See Church Street Historic District, South Union St. Historic District, Battery-King Street Historic District as amended, Main Street-College Street Historic District.) Some areas within the project scope, however, have resources listed only on the **Vermont State Register of Historic Resources**: (numbers indicate how many have been listed within the project area, but can not be assumed to be inclusive of all eligible properties within scope.)

Name of Street	Area within Project Scope	Historic Designation (VSR = Vt. St. Register) Higher order of National Register distinction where applicable.	Comments
Bank Street	Entire length Pine Street east to South Winooski Avenue.	Church Street Historic District	
Battery Street	South of Park Street	King St Battery St. Historic District as amended (Main St. to Maple.) South of Maple included within draft nomination for the Pine Street Historic District.	Urban Renewal area north of Main Street.

Brown's Court	Entire length	2 VSR	
Center Street	Entire length	Church Street Historic District	
Cherry Street	Entire length between Battery Street and South Winooski Avenue	Church Street Historic District	Urban Renewal area west of Church Street.
Church Street	Pearl to Maple	Church St. Historic District, Battery King Street Historic District Amendment	
Clarke Street	Entire length	12 VSR	
College Street	Waterfront east to South Union	Largely within the Main St. College St. Historic District, Church St. Historic District, Wells-Richardson Complex	Missing documentation west of St. Paul Street to waterfront.
Elmwood Avenue	Pearl to Peru St.	29 VSR	Originally known as Locust St.
George St.	Entire length	14 VSR	Champlain Glass Works housing
Grant St.	Entire length	17 VSR	
Johnson Street	Entire length	2 VSR	Tenement/workforce housing
King Street	Entire length	Battery King Street Historic District as amended	Block between Church and South Winooski outside Battery-King Street amendment; includes John Johnson structure(s.)
Lafayette Place	Entire length	10 VSR	

Main Street	South Union west to waterfront	Largely within Main Street College Street Historic District, Church Street Historic District, Wells-Richardson Historic Complex	Area west of Pine undocumented.
Maple Street	Pine to South Union	Included within amendment to Battery-King Street Historic District, National Register of Historic Places	
Monroe Street	Entire length	17 VSR	Some 1830s buildings; also first documented female architect
North Champlain Street	Pearl north to Peru St.	6 VSR	#10-62, up to 51 within plan scope. Potential historic district.
North Union Street	Between Grant and Pearl St., odd #s up to 59.	7 VSR	Originally known as Maiden Lane. Potential historic district.
North Winooski Avenue	Pearl to Grant Street		#6-57 within scope of project.
Orchard Terrace	Entire length	Within Buell Bradley Street Historic District	
Pearl Street	South Union west to Battery St.	Pearl Street Historic District, Head of Church Street Historic District.	Missing properties west of Church Street/Elmwood Avenue intersection.
Peru St.	North Champlain to Elmwood Avenue	10 on VSR	Two phases- street connected to Elmwood c. 1892.
Pine Street	Discontinuous on north end due to Urban Renewal; Bank to Maple both sides, and Maple to Marble, west side only	10 VRS north of Maple; south of Maple included within Draft nomination for the Pine Street Historic District, National Register of Historic Places	North end vulnerable due to disconnect by Urban Renewal and high potential for development related to Catholic Church property, need for downtown bus station.

Sherman	Entire length, including former Smith's Lane	1 VSR	Original northern boundary of Urban Renewal Area; sensitivity due to lack of research and likely association with Champlain Glass Works.
South Champlain Street	College Street to terminus	5 VSR; within draft Pine Street Historic District nomination	
South Union Street	Pearl south to Maple	Within South Union Street Historic District, National Register of Historic Places	
South Winooski Avenue	Pearl St. to Maple Street		#38-203 within scope of project. Formerly known as White Street.
St. Paul Street	Discontinuous on north end due to Urban Renewal	Within Church Street Historic District, Wells-Richardson Historic District, Battery King Street Historic District as amended, City Hall Park Historic District.	Missing Bank-College block, and upper block between Pearl and Cherry.

2.3 Subsections of Downtown Waterfront Plan Area

- **Battery-King Street area**

Research has identified the waterfront area along the Battery Street corridor to be the veritable cradle of Burlington. A handful of eighteenth century structures are extant, representing domestic, industrial and commercial infancy of Burlington from the 1790s to the 1930s with tangible reminders of early maritime history and water-based mercantile economy. Located on a traditional gridded street system, the Battery King Street area has commercial and light industrial structures surrounded by more modest residential buildings. Newer infill development, particularly post-urban

renewal, has provided architectural counterpoint to the Federal, Greek Revival, Italianate and vernacular structures. Additionally, new investment through development (at this writing, construction of a large-scale office building on the corner of King and



Waterfront Diving Center is at the corner of Maple and Battery Streets.

Battery and enhancement of city infrastructure) has confirmed the desirability of relocating business near the waterfront, and increased the likelihood and intensity of further development in the near future.



“Ice Cream Bob’s” is a popular snack hut located adjacent to the bike path, the boathouse, and Echo Aquarium.

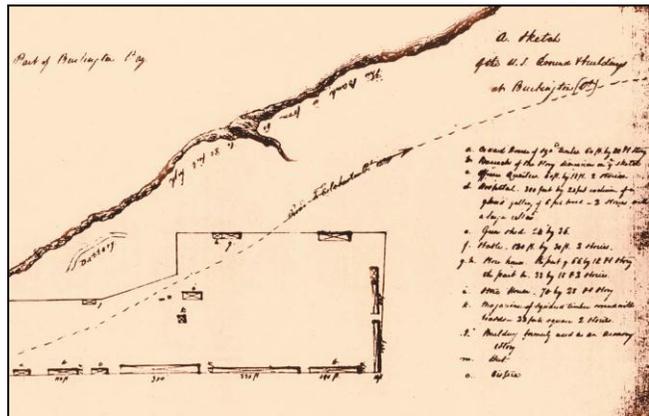
Although the waterfront lumber based industry has not survived, expanding business ventures and other public recreational and educational water-based interests prosper. As a direct response to the losses of urban renewal, the Battery Street King Street Historic District was one of the first National Register Historic Districts listed in Burlington.

Maple Street (historically “South Street”) has had a different pattern of development, but offers significant architectural examples ranging from the early 19th century on the west, to 20th century Colonial Revival residential examples on the westerly boundary.

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○ **Battery Park / Sherman Street**

Emerging research and archaeological data continue to define the Battery Park area as a significant resource for understanding Burlington’s role in the War of 1812, as well as a public park and scenic community overlook. Research material compiled by Kate Kenney of the University of Vermont’s Consulting

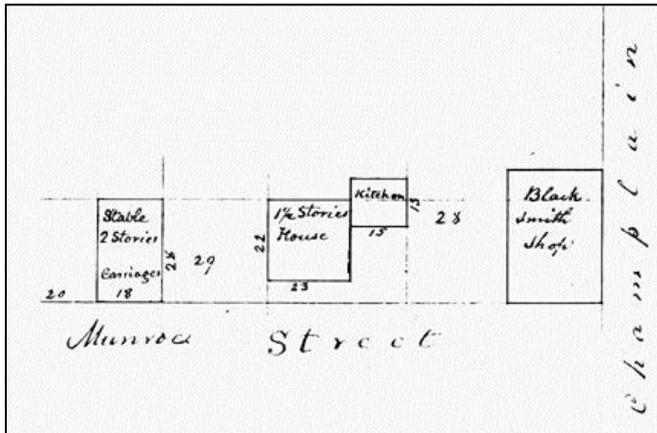


Map of the cantonment at Burlington drawn by Lt. Col. G.T. Totten in 1817 from the files of the National Archives, Washington, D.C.

Archaeology Program defines the park spatial area as a former cantonment for troops between June 1812 and June 1815. Buildings included officers’ quarters, storage buildings, a kitchen, a military hospital, gun sheds, barracks, magazine, and a thirteen gun sand and sod battery. Documents define the death of several dozen if not hundred soldiers, who appear to have been buried in adjoining and now residentially developed land. The discovery of human remains in 1895, 1900, 1903, and again along Front Street and North Street in 2000 continues to confirm the sensitive nature of this general area.

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The residential buildings that line Battery Park have yet to be comprehensively surveyed for age, association, and significance. Some very



John Johnson Survey of Monroe Street residences
1835
University of Vermont, Special Collections

early site plans of residential buildings along Monroe (“Clinton”) Street, made for insurance purposes and dating from the 1830s are archived at the University of Vermont.

It is important to note that Sherman and Peru Streets were the northerly-most boundary identified in original urban renewal project boundaries, which were ultimately scaled back to Pearl Street during the project period. There remain remnant buildings associated

with the Champlain Glass Works (“Burlington’s First Manufacturing Enterprise”⁹ 1827-1857) along Park, Sherman (formerly Smith’s Lane), and George Street, which have yet to be appropriately documented and context established.

o **Urban Renewal area**

No other municipal project has carved a deeper impression or had a greater impact than the “Battery Street General Neighborhood Renewal Area.” Orchestrated in concert with national initiatives and exercised at a time when the interstate highway was under construction, the urban renewal project has its own identity. In hindsight, some have considered Urban Renewal to be a “top down government exercise in social engineering” which had significant implications for residents and built environment of older urban areas.¹⁰ Original parameters included Battery Street east along Sherman/Peru Streets (including Monroe, Johnson, George, Grant, North Champlain the first block of Elmwood Avenue, and Clark Street) to North Winooski Avenue; thence south to Main Street, west to the beginning of Lake Street, and north again to Pearl. While the project ultimately was scaled back, the complete erasure of several neighborhoods, and the “re-imagining” of Burlington forever changed the City. As many of the replacement buildings are approaching 50 years old, and several have been identified as architecturally significant due to association with modernist, Brutalist, and Cold War architectural vocabulary, this concise area offers a complex window into community planning from 1957-1973.

⁹ Carlise, L. Diana, *Vermont History* 68 (summer/fall 2000); 133-161.

¹⁰ Morrison, Hunter; panel discussion, *Thinking About Shrinking*; National Trust for Historic Preservation, Buffalo NY, October 20, 2011.

- **Historic Waterfront Area/Lake Street**

Surprisingly little has been written about Burlington's working waterfront. Although there are no longer piles of lumber in numbered streets and no smokestacks spewing soot, there remains tangible evidence of Burlington's hard-working industrial, maritime, and commercial waterfront. Limestone walls, constructed as railroad siding, form a silent spine along the easterly low boundary of the waterfront. A few remaining masonry buildings relate to early lumber and manufacturing enterprises, and boats (large and small, recreational and commercial) ply the docks, their whistles audible. The continuing significance of transportation, both water and rail, remains manifest, especially with the still-lively rail yard and turnaround adjacent to the bikepath. As ferry service and privately owned commercial vessels continue to launch from these shores, as fishermen cast a line from the wharf, Burlington Bay retains its commercial, recreational, and public vitality.



Documented archaeological remains include structures associated with the railroad, and further discussed in the Pine Street Historic District nomination to the National Register.

Additionally, a comprehensive study of the waterfront area would include the harbor itself, the submerged shipwrecks (Burlington Horse Ferry, the *O.J Walker*, and the *General Butler*) as

well as the Burlington Breakwater. The underlying basis for Burlington's settlement, with a sheltered harbor and favorable regional proximity, underpins the importance of the waterfront.

- **The filled harbor area; Burlington Wastewater treatment plant sub-area**

Today's observable waterline is not the gentle, curving arc reflected in early Burlington maps. "Between the city and the shore was a steep bank that ran directly to the waterline, a distance of about ten rods [165 feet] west of

the west line of Water Street [now Battery Street.]¹¹ There were no wharves in Burlington prior to 1810, with woods reaching from the shore of Red Rocks (in the south) to Rock Point (on the north.) “From Peterson’s brewery [South Champlain Street] to the stone store [Battery Street] were trees, and the water in the cove came up to them so that vessels could enter the cover and tie up to the trees, the beach where the depot stands forming a breakwater for them.”¹² Shoreline modification began with construction of Curtis Holgate’s South Wharf at the foot of Maple Street. The Rutland and Burlington Railroad Company filled additional land c. 1850 to accommodate the laying of tracks. Cribbing and filling, usually with marble or gravel, continued through the 1850s, and can be observed by the changes reflected in the Presdee and Edwards map and two engravings of Burlington Harbor c. 1850 and 1858.

A second dock in 1856 south of Maple Street that facilitated George Beckwith’s coal business eventually erected a pier that extended approximately 100 feet into the Lake.¹³ Additional shoreline cribbing continued after 1872, as documented in the 1877 Bird’s Eye View of Burlington. Further filling continued south of the coal wharf to create a boat slip, with ongoing modifications to accommodate piers, sewer outfall, and fill within the breakwater extension area. Of particular interest is the documented practice of scuttling boats and using the hulls as wooden shells to fill with stone as part of the infill cribbing. The wreck of the “Hildegarde”, a sixty foot sailing yacht sunk in the 1940s, has been identified as within the fill area of the Wastewater Treatment Plant.¹⁴ The remnants of several other vessels have been disturbed during repairs of the breakwater north of Roundhouse Point.

This shoreline area of development included several important industrial activity sites, among them a plaster mill and an early asphalt plant. Remnants of these activities, including evidence of stone crushers, storage sheds, or other structures may continue to exist.

While significant disturbance and fill along the waterfront area would preclude the likelihood of any undisturbed archaeological resources related to pre-contact/ pre-historic period, the very fill is likely to yield significant resources related to the wharfing and filling. Additionally, as the area is inundated with water most of the year, cultural resources such as wooden timbers and planks that remain under water are more likely to be naturally

¹¹ Architectural Conservation & Education Service, *Historic Site Review, Burlington Wastewater Treatment Plant Project*. (Burlington, VT 1990.), 13. Additional reference is made to History of Chittenden County, Vermont, ed. W.S. Rann (Syracuse: D. Mason and Co., 1886), 404.

¹² Abby Maria Hemenway, ed., *The Vermont Historical Gazetteer: A Magazine Embracing a History of Each Town, Civil, Ecclesiastical, Biographical and Military* (Burlington, Vermont: Miss A.M. Hemenway, 1867), vol. 1, 669.

¹³ Architectural Conservation & Education Service, *Historic Site Review* (Burlington: 1990), 14.

¹⁴ *Ibid*, 21. Taken from an interview with Captain Merritt Carpenter, April 1990.

conserved due to lake water temperatures; increasing the likelihood of retained integrity.

Overall, it should be noted that there has been no definition or mapping of the areas and extent of shoreline infill that is acknowledged in the references noted. The demarcation of the entire extent of the fill area is not at present recorded or defined.



The Barge Canal, view west from a rear lot on Pine Street.
Note active use of the railroad tracks and the bridge.

- **The Barge Canal Superfund site**

Substantial documentation conducted by the Lake Champlain Maritime Museum has prepared a context and list of known and anticipated resources both within the canal basin, along the waterfront, and is the land area immediately surrounding the canal. The high sensitivity of the canal area is not limited to

environmental issues, but historic and archaeological significant as well. Plans

completed for the Southern Connector/Champlain Parkway project were revised to avoid disturbance at this site. Future development in and around this area will benefit from the significant research that has been compiled, and would likely support an argument for eligibility for historic designation.

- **Residential Development: South Union, Orchard Terrace, Buell-Bradley**

The South Union Street residential area is significant as a well preserved collection of primarily residential buildings dating from c. 1835 to c. 1938.¹⁵ Individually representative of a wide range of architectural styles, South



¹⁵ South Union Street Historic District Nomination, Statement of Significance.

Union Street collectively illustrates a pattern of development that reflects the growth and prosperity of Burlington. Here was a location for Burlington's most successful businessmen and entrepreneurs to construct their personal residences at a time prior to personal income tax and when national recession put confidence in real estate investment rather than banks. High style, elaborate residences have assigned the "Hill" section as among the most prestigious residential neighborhoods in Burlington. Orchard Terrace, Hungerford Terrace, and the Buell-Bradley Street neighborhoods are all examples of infill development, carved out of former estates and intended to provide housing to (then) middle to upper middle class residents. Each remains among the most desirable of Burlington's residential areas, although more recently social association has changed in some neighborhoods from owner occupancy to typically rental. The high percentage of college-age residents has changed the character, feeling and maintenance of the area.

○ **Pine Street and the Industrial South End**

With the growth of the lucrative lumber trade in the mid nineteenth century, the areas immediately adjacent to the harbor and railroad became logical



The original Department of Public Works building on Pine Street.

choices for industrial activities. Extensive lumber related industries (milling, planing, sash and door fabrication, furniture construction, and building finish millwork) expanded from the immediate waterfront into the south end. Dredging and fill of marshland offered opportunity for expansion south along Pine Street, spurring additional industries that benefited from the close proximity to water and rail:

Marble and granite works were initiated by Lawrence Barnes and family, and ultimately other industries like the Queen City Cotton

Mill, Lumiere, and Vermont Milk Chocolate followed suit. More industry meant more workers, which in turn spurred residential development and "street car suburbs" that pushed Burlington's limits south from the original village settlement. Industrial and residential expansion was a story of transportation growth, with highway, railroad, horse rail, and now plans for the Southern Connector/Champlain Parkway highway project.

The recent nomination to the National Register further defines and elaborates upon the essential identity and characteristics of the industrial south end and is thus referred to for further information.



- **Downtown Urban Core: Church, Main, College, Center, St. Paul Streets.**

The most intense development is Burlington's downtown urban core; the seat of early and continuous mercantile, business and institutional activity. The history of Burlington's business and financial giants began in the area that includes Church, Main, College and St. Paul Streets; providing tangible links to Burlington's storied past from sailmakers to silversmiths; hoteliers to wholesalers. The center of banking, finance and insurance, the downtown core remains the epicenter of Burlington business. Even after 200 years, Church Street remains the gravitational center of local mercantile activity.

3.0 Pedestrian Reconnaissance

A pedestrian reconnaissance of the Downtown Waterfront Project Area was conducted during a site visit on September 29, 2011. This section of the report provides a description of the methods and results of the reconnaissance.

3.1 Methods

The pedestrian reconnaissance included a walking tour of the periphery of the project area with subsequent venture into neighborhoods and sub-areas, examining existing conditions. Significant characteristics observed during the survey were noted and photographed. No excavation or site disturbance was conducted at any site within the project area.

3.2 Results

Despite adverse weather conditions the day of the reconnaissance, observable conditions within the downtown waterfront project area confirms consistent and vibrant urban activity. Vehicular traffic remained characteristically steady throughout the downtown, with evidence of the "living, breathing" nature of city life: Firefighters remained on the scene of a large-scale fire at 247 Pearl Street; boats were being moved from their moorings at the waterfront in anticipation of winter weather, and shipping trucks pulled in and out of businesses along the industrial south end. Historic structures provide the background setting for the animation and vitality that is Burlington; in its neighborhoods, its retail avenues, and its working waterfront. The integrity of resources is strong: Residential structures along Grant Street, North Union Street, Orchard Terrace, Buell Street, Bradley Street, and South Union Street easily reference their origins and for the most part remain visibly intact.

Some alterations can be attributed to the changes in the essential use: A shift toward college student rental housing, for example, in the Buell-Bradley Street neighborhood has influenced the appearance, alteration, and upkeep of both structures and the streetscape. Overflowing recycling bins are scattered along the (required by design) 30' front yard setback; and

unsympathetic 1970s secondary egress construction reflecting code compliance. Similarly, the waterfront is no longer the working outdoor lumber warehouse of the 19th century but a large expanse of publically owned recreational land. Still, in association, location, and feeling, these changes can be seen as an evolution of resources rather than a loss.

The south end clearly continues the industrial/working nature of its nascence, with the still-vibrant rail activity, lumber yard (Curtis), and smaller business interests like stained glass manufactory and bakery. Although the barge canal is no longer in operation and has been declared a super fund site, it remains a visible reminder of important industrial heritage and a water repository for historic canal boats.

4.0 Assessment of Cultural Resource Sensitivity

The very vibrancy and high level of activity inherent in the Downtown area of Burlington may suggest vulnerability attributable to the likelihood of development, alteration, or modification. Current building codes have already sparked structural modification to historic buildings: Observable alterations include construction of exterior stairwells, replacement window sash, and enlarged building openings to meet egress requirements. Loss of historic fabric can also be attributed to materials reaching the end of their serviceable life. Many slate roofs installed in the first decades of the 19th century are being replaced due to functional failure.

Pressures of the housing market fueled by an increasing demand for student housing have resulted in the conversion of many downtown neighborhoods from resident-owned and occupied to student accommodations. Non-owner-occupancy has changed the character, and in many instances, the maintenance cycle and practices for these older structures. Earlier challenges of how to re-use some of these larger residential buildings (some with 10 bedrooms) have evolved into how to manage the change in occupancy, non-resident ownership, associated activity and neighborhood character.

Increased business and commercial vibrancy, which historically fueled Burlington's growth, has had an impact on the Downtown Waterfront Plan area. Heavy commercial traffic, especially in the north-south corridor of Pine Street, has spurred a reoccurring discussion and plan for (transportation) relief. The proposed Champlain Parkway (formerly, the Southern Connector), is intended to alleviate heavy traffic in the neighborhoods south of the downtown. This traffic is proposed to be channeled north into the Central Business District on a re-designed Pine Street north of Lakeside Avenue. Additional efforts by the City are underway to evaluate opportunities to expand the street grid to the west side of Pine between

Maple St. and Marble Ave. which would help to spread the traffic out sooner as it reaches the downtown area.

Interestingly, the Industrial South End of Burlington has become fashionably popular; its very location a trendy arts venue and the focus of a creative celebration every year. The commercial-industrial identity of the quarter has become seductive to modern day creative incubators, the historic character synonymous with business imagination and growth. The Community and Economic Development Office for the City of Burlington has recognized that new business start-ups are seeking that dynamic character and location in which to relocate, operate, and expand against the backdrop of industrial/commercial infrastructure. While encouraging, as greater community understanding fosters appreciation and the likelihood of resource retention, it also spurs demand for alteration, re-interpretation, and re-invention. Documentation of significance and recording of distinctive characteristics are essential.

The waterfront area itself has been of a dynamic nature, with the most recent flooding providing an unparalleled testament to that truth. While some waterfront businesses (King Street Ferry Dock) suffer annual water rise, other locations that had never seen flood waters were inundated for several weeks during the spring of 2011. While Federal Emergency Management Agency has provided exclusions from regulatory compliance for historically sensitive properties (see *FEMA P-467-2, Historic Structure Guidance*) the overall inundation of water over a broad expanse of shoreline causes concern for those structures affected, and stimulates the need for future disaster planning.

5.0 Summary and Recommendations

5.1 Summary

Burlington's Downtown and Waterfront Plan Area remains a dynamic, exciting and vital urban area, ripe with cultural resources within a very active community. The wealth of resources, both identified and those likely to be eligible for historic designation, provokes an increasing need to assess, identify, and document structural, spatial, archaeological, and other cultural resources significant to the community and important to understanding the history of Burlington and her waterfront. Based on data collected, the conclusion is that significant structural resources have been identified and documented, while a great number have not yet been assessed yet are likely eligible for historic designation on either the Vermont State Register of Historic Resources or the National Register of Historic Resources, specifically within themes as noted in the Vermont Historic Preservation Plan. Additionally, portions of the study area possesses high potential for the presence of archaeological resources, while existing waterfront area contains both marked disturbance and moderate archaeological sensitivity. Documentation, based on qualified historic research and assessment, should be sponsored to guide future planning efforts that will assist the community in attaining functional utility while honoring and respecting Burlington's past.

5.2 Recommendations for further study and potential historic districts:

- Comprehensive assessment of waterfront area; including former lumber yard acreage, extant buildings, history of industrial use, economic influences of lumber, industrial, and commercial use of the waterfront area. Including Depot Street, Lake Street, Penny lane and the western-most fringes of Main, College and Cherry Street, a "**Waterfront Historic District**" could be assembled, which could include the impact of multi-transportation systems (water, rail, and vehicular), commerce, industry, recreation, education and tourism to Burlington's economy and growth. Surviving structural resources would be identified and placed within an expanded historic context.





95 College Street

- A comprehensive survey is recommended for the **westerly most section of Main Street** (west of Pine Street) and **College Street**, with consideration of a potential expansion of the Main Street College Street Historic District. At the very least, survey information should be assimilated into a potential state historic district of the lower (westerly) portions of Main and College Streets, which could address impacts and aftermath of Urban Renewal, expanding transportation systems (Union Station), military history (two major armories) and early automotive sales (multiple automotive showrooms.) Such survey could also touch on focused relocation of commercial enterprise with Urban Renewal, and evaluation of lasting results with removal of Battery-Street commercial/industrial buildings like those of Leader Evaporator.
- Consideration to investigate the potential for a historic district centered on **Battery Park**, including the site of the military encampment during the War of 1812, the surrounding residential architecture of upper Battery Street, Monroe Street, Sherman Street, the former Smith's Lane, and lower Park Street. Recent research by the University of Vermont's Consulting Archaeology Program supports a great likelihood that the location of the 400' long military hospital may be identified on the current park site, and would have significant archaeological importance.

The inclusion of buildings along Sherman Street to the north would provide a spatial framework for the district, but also provide an opportunity to assess a neighborhood originally included within the scope of proposed Urban Renewal activities of the 1960s. The small residential structures on Smith's Lane / Sherman Street associated with the Smith family of Champlain Glass works notoriety could be identified, assessed, and appropriately recognized.

Monroe Street, which has structures from the earliest decades of the 19th century to turn of the century, also boasts architecture commissioned by a prominent resident and designed by the only identified female architect/designer of the day known to practice in Burlington.
- Both **Pine Street** and **St. Paul Street** have been made discontinuous due to Urban Renewal, fire and commercial expansion in the 1960s and 1970s. Comprehensive survey is recommended for Pine Street (north of Maple, including the block between Pearl and Cherry Street) as well as St. Paul Street (needs assessment of block between Bank and College Street, as well as between Pearl and Cherry St.)

- **College Street survey** is incomplete west of St. Paul Street. See recommendation for expansion of the Main Street-College Street Historic District, above.
- Several structures representing residential construction to accommodate the influx of labor could be considered as additions to the **Multiple Property Documentation Form (MPDF) for worker housing**. Some good examples, which may profit from Rehabilitative Investment Tax Credits are located on Grant Street and Peru Street.
- Recognition of Modern Architecture within the downtown project area; its nascence, the opportunities at hand for its emergence, and its vulnerability. The CLG 09 grant project, **A Survey of Burlington's Modern Architecture**, should be consulted as a basis for this project.
- Significant documentation as to the canal boats sunken within the **Pine Street Barge Canal**, as well as the known use of boat hulls for construction of waterfront cribbing recommends the resources as a potential historic district.
- Advisement is offered in proposed excavation at any site identified within this report as potentially sensitive for archaeological resources. This may include (but is not limited to) the neighborhood surrounding Battery Park, lower Park Street/ Sherman Street/ Front Street, the shoreline area south of Maple Street, or limited areas in the Industrial South End. Associated studies, identified at the end of this report, are recommended for further information.

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Figures

Figure 1: Study Area: Downtown Waterfront Plan Area



Figure 3: Detail, Map of Burlington (Presdee – Edwards, 1853)

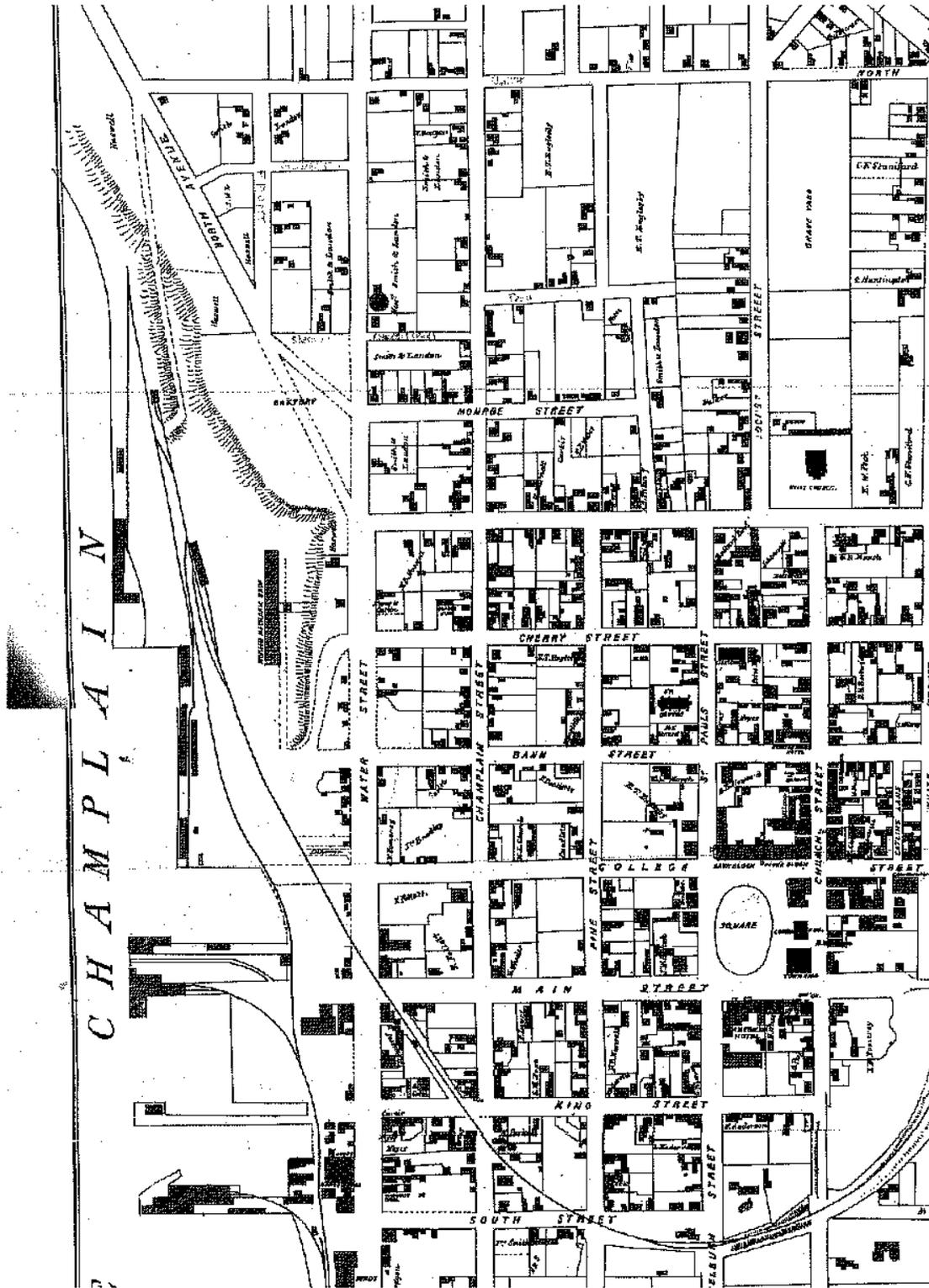


Figure 5: Detail, Birds-Eye View of Burlington (Stoner, 1877)

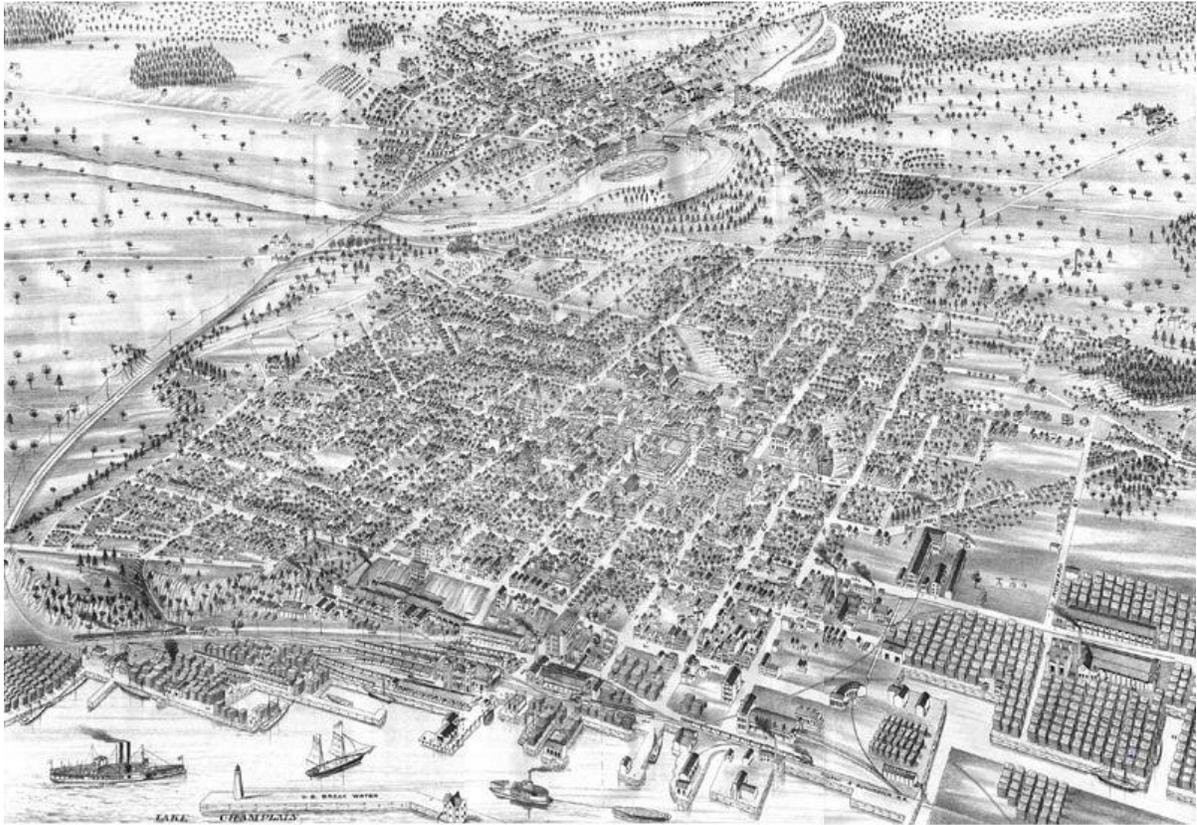


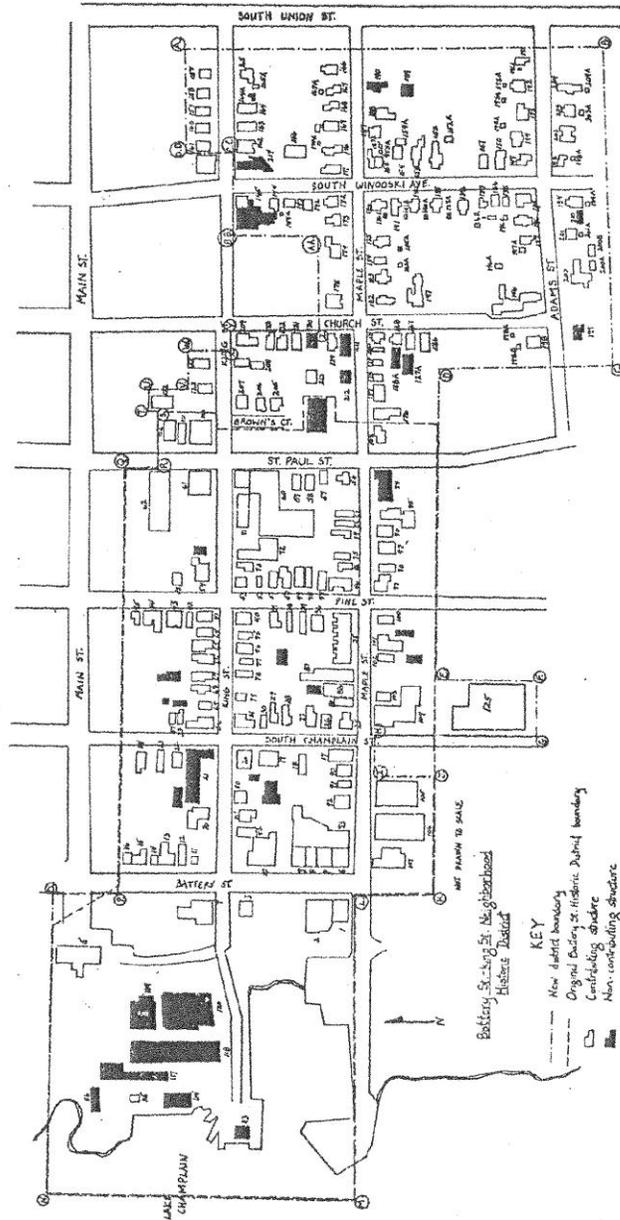
Figure 6: Detail, Map of the City of Burlington, Vt. (Hopkins, 1890)



**Historic District Boundary Maps
And
Historic Resource Locator Maps**

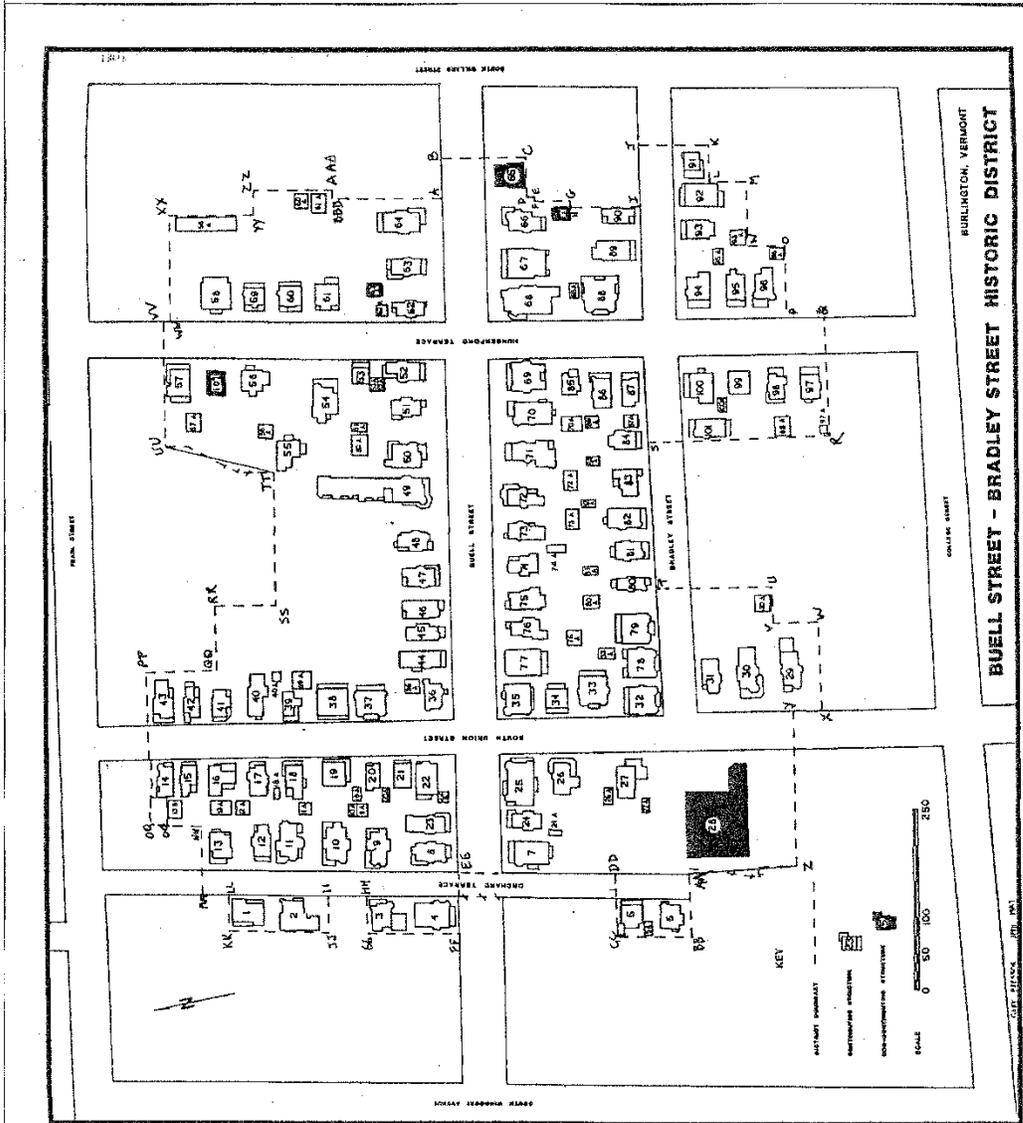
Map 1

Battery Street – King Street Neighborhood Historic District (as amended)

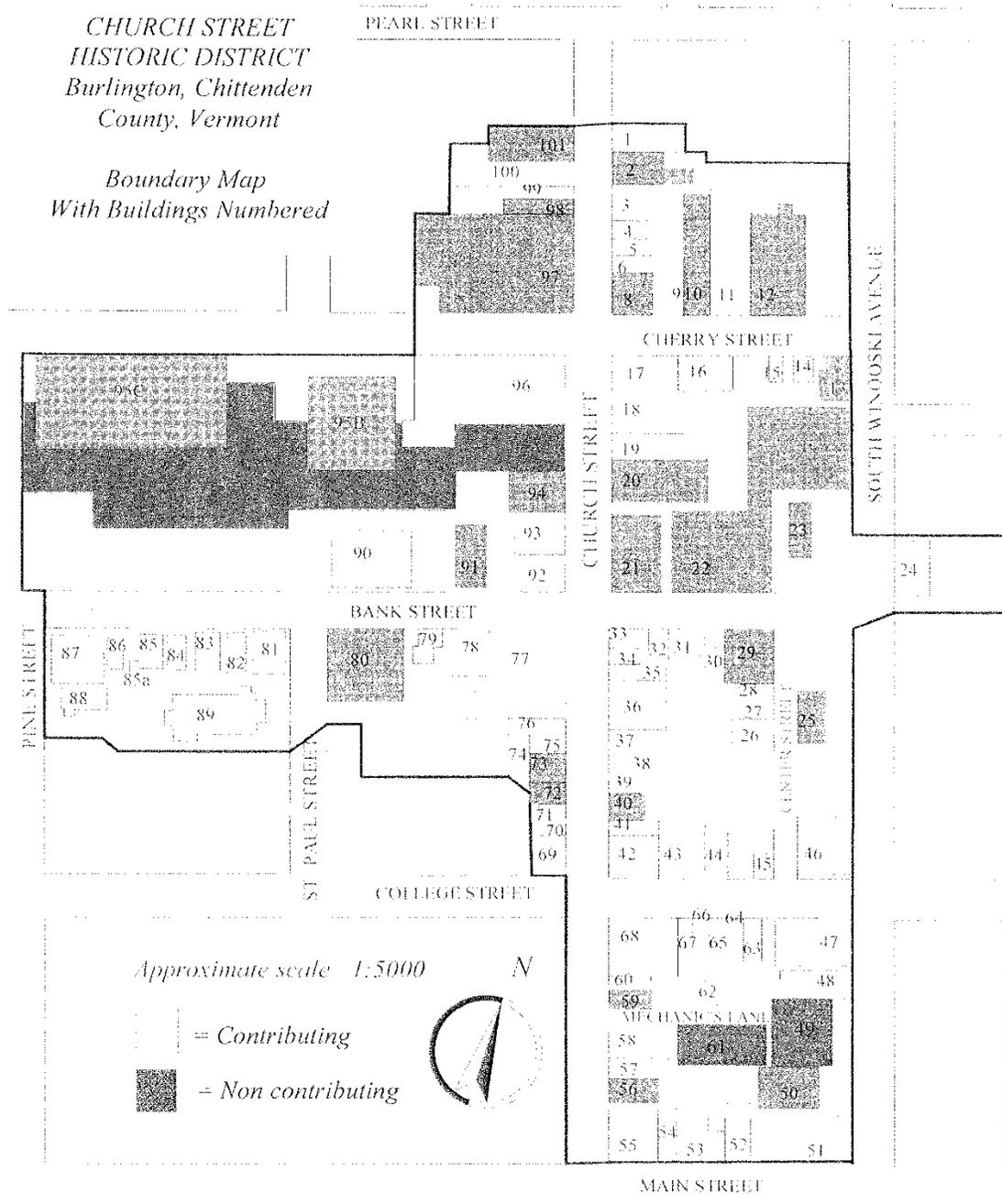


Map 2

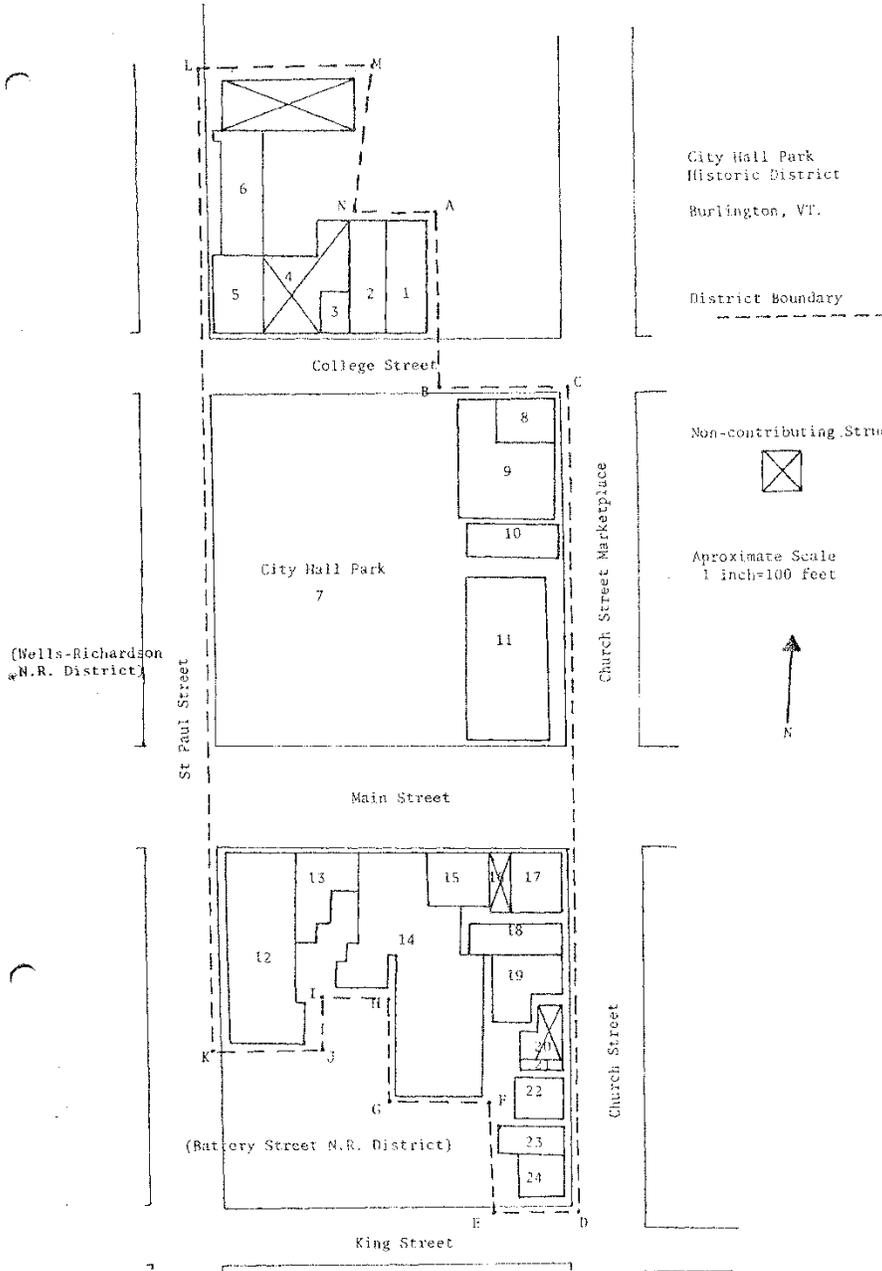
Buell Street – Bradley Street Historic District



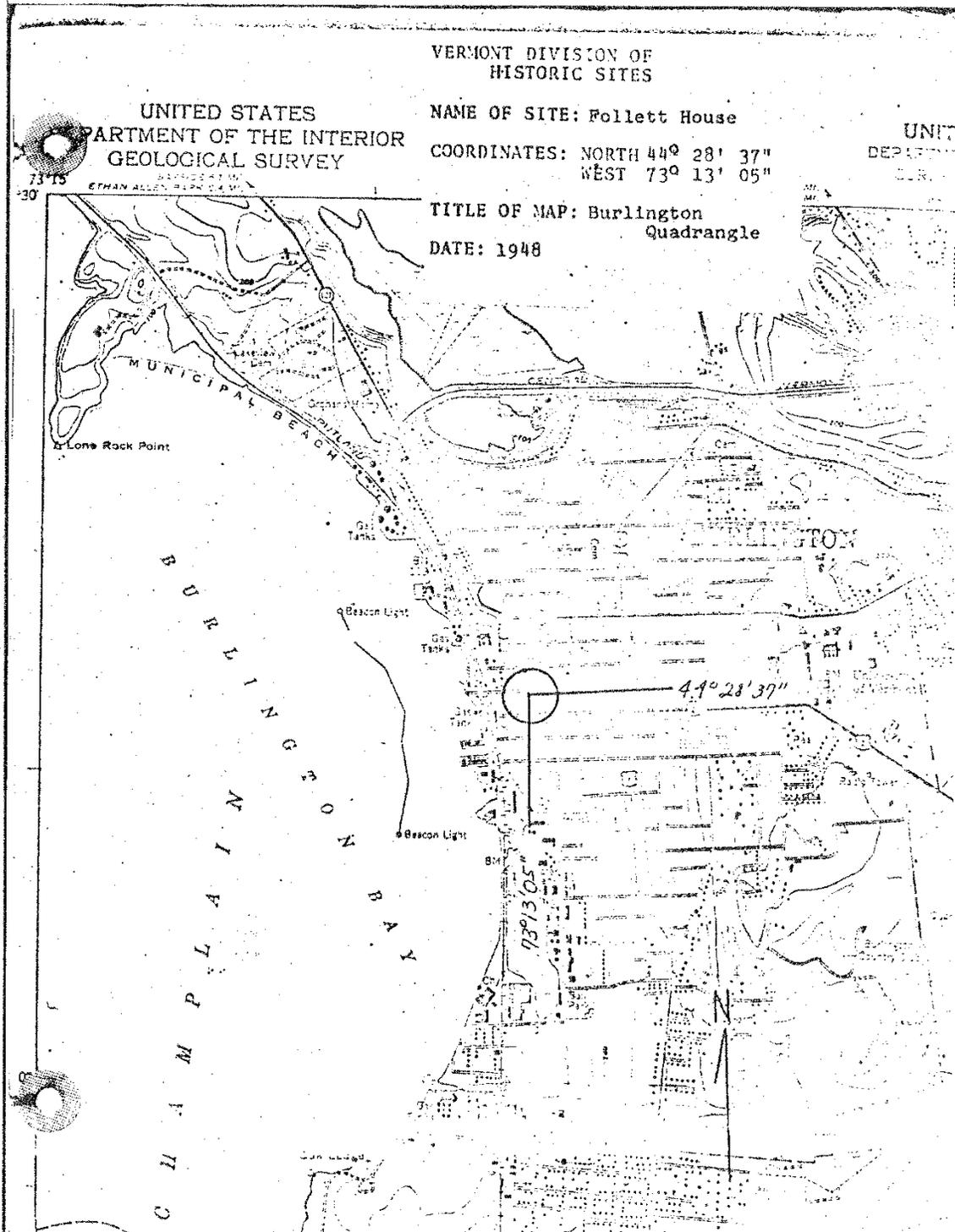
Map 3
Church Street Historic District



Map 4
City Hall Park Historic District



Map 5
Follett House

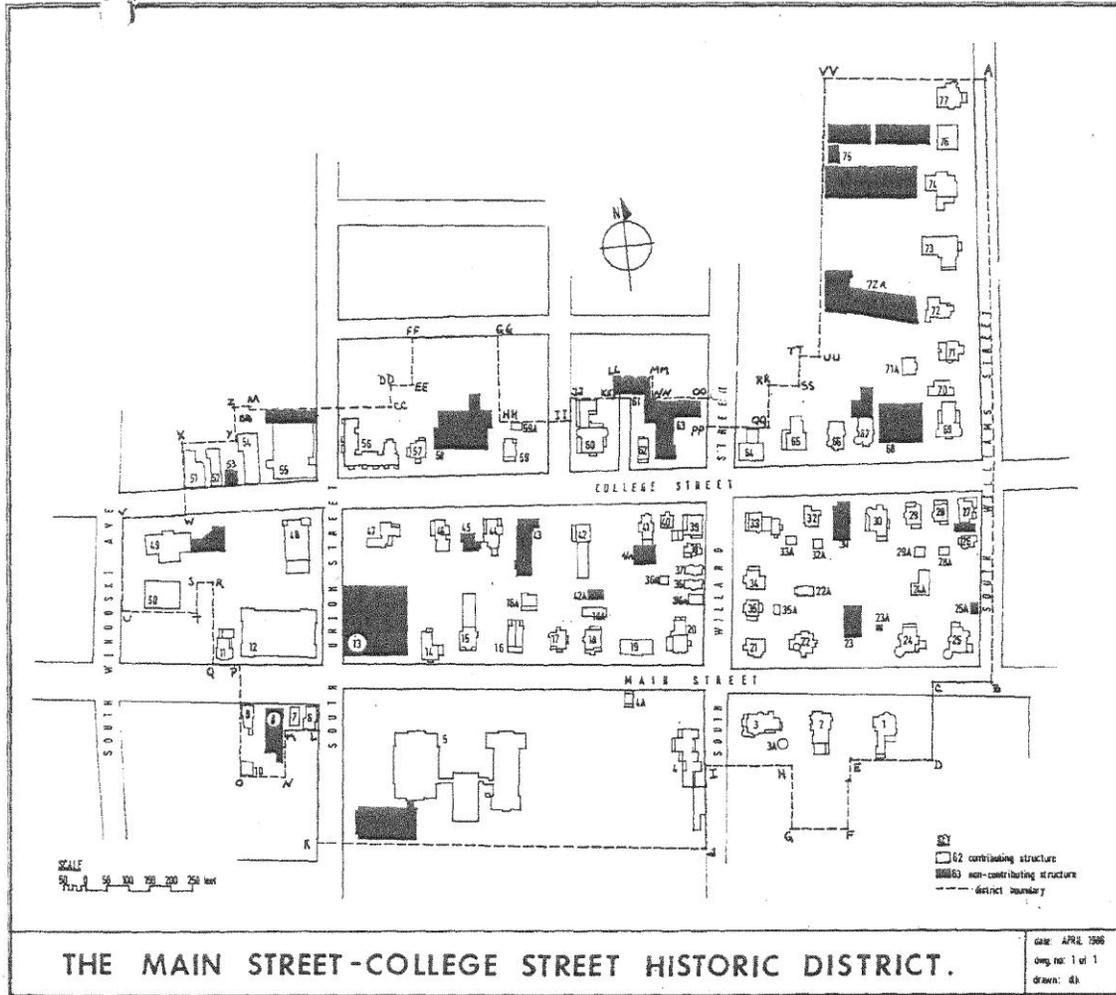


Map 7

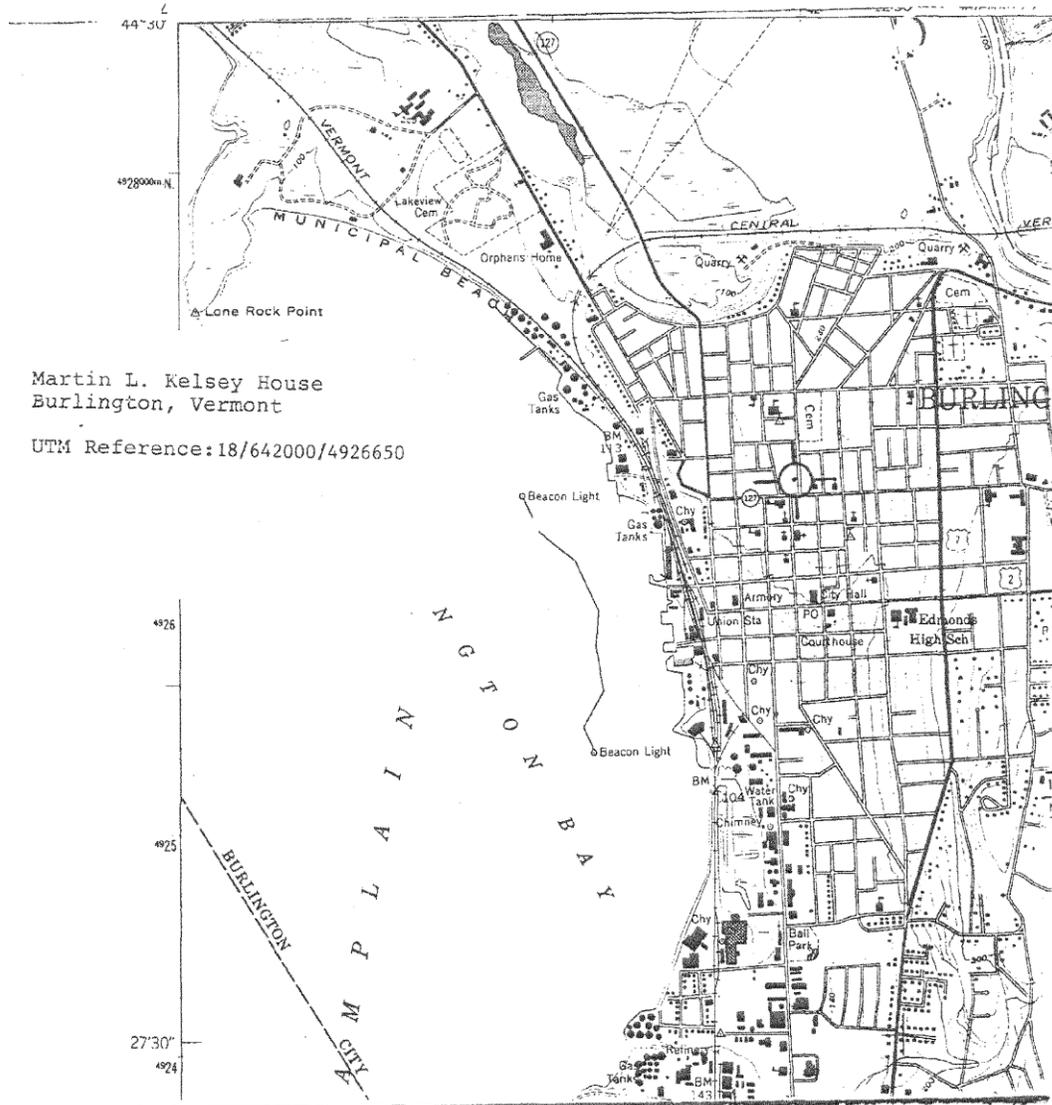
John Robarge Duplex (58-60 North Champlain Street)



Map 8
Main Street College Street Historic District



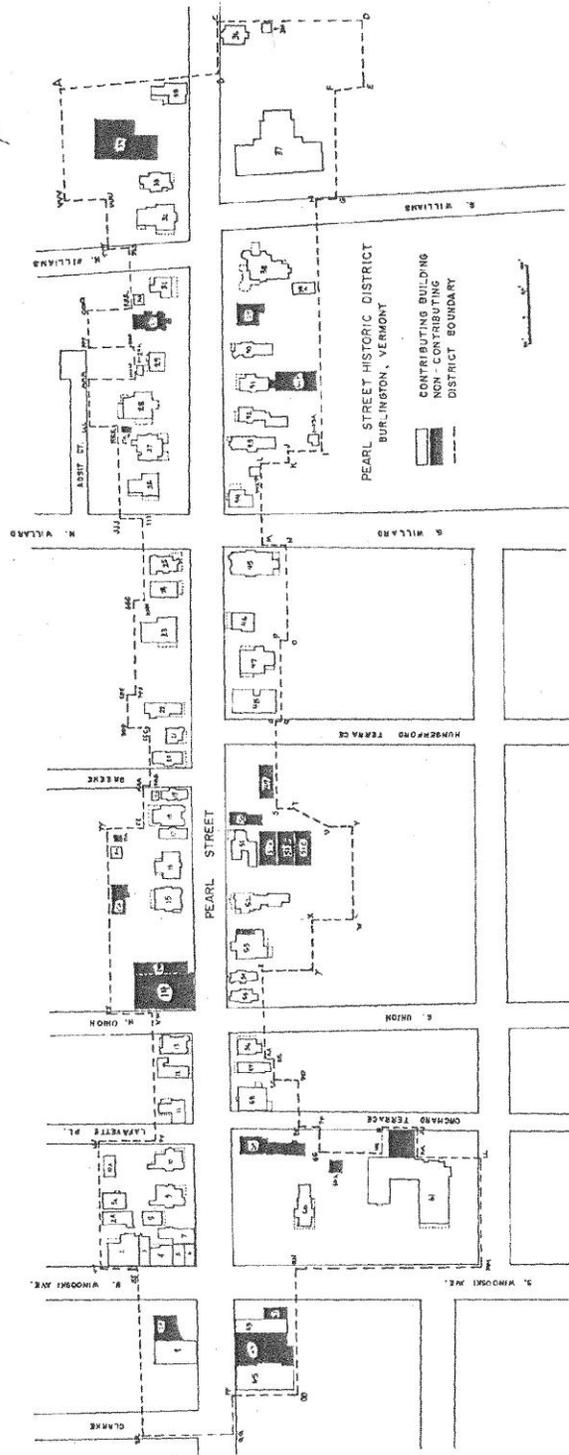
Map 9
Martin L. Kelsey House (43 Elmwood Avenue)



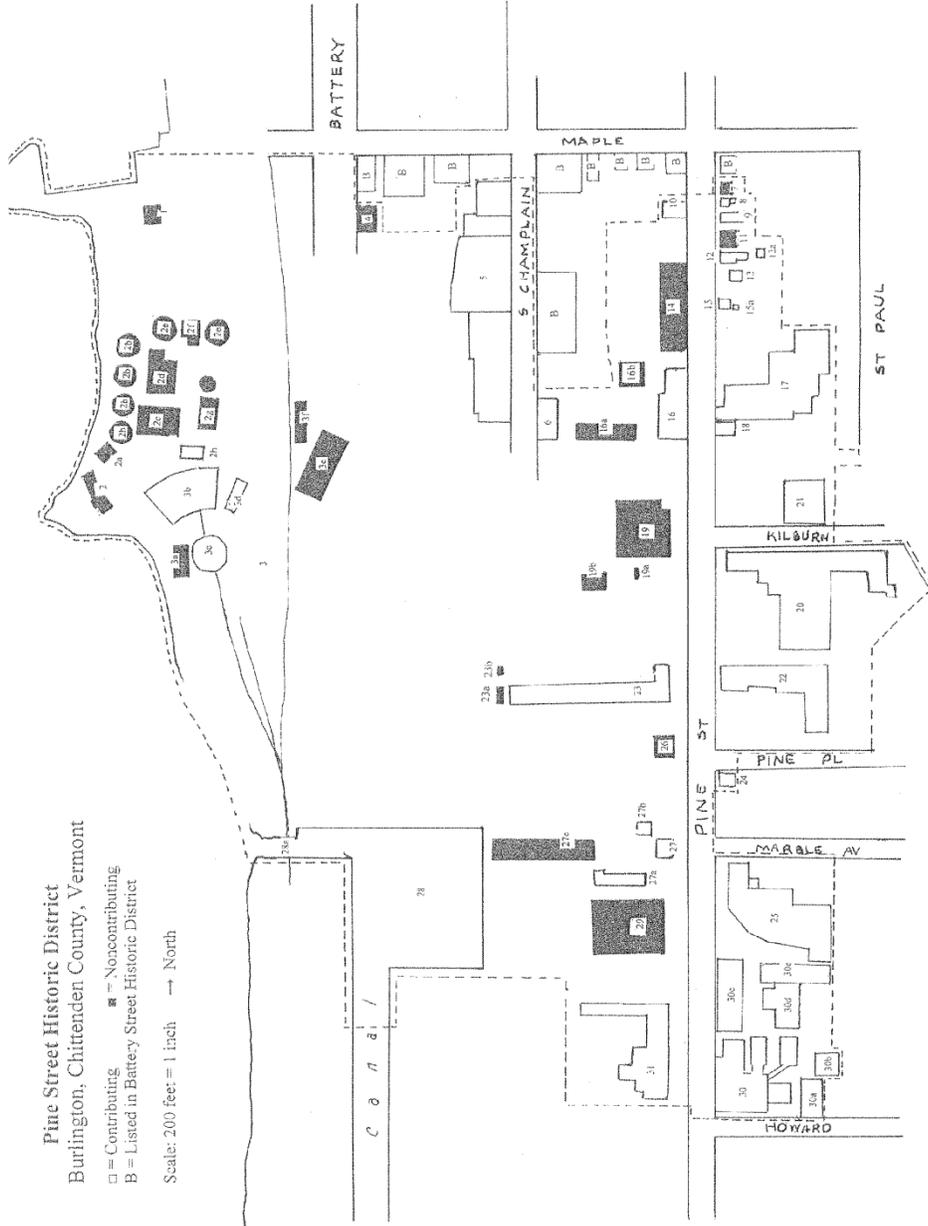
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Burlington, Vermont

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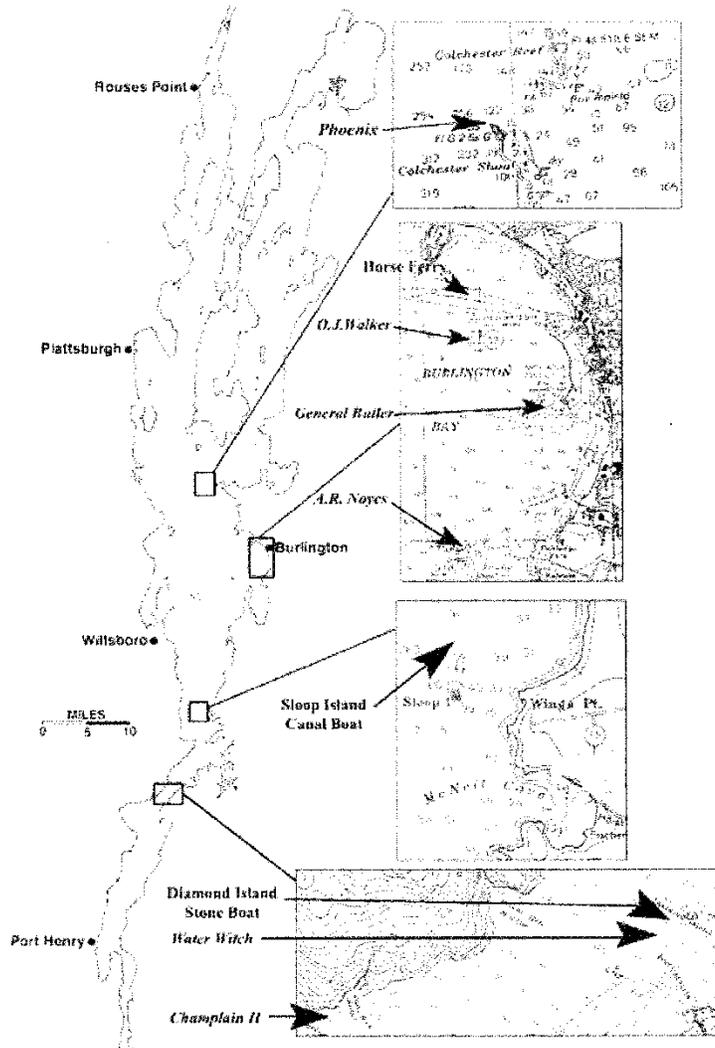
Map 10
Pearl Street Historic District



Map 11
Pine Street Historic District (nomination)



Map 12
Shipwrecks, locator map



Map 13
 Shipwreck, General Butler



Map 14
Burlington Bay Horse Ferry

NPS Form 10-900
(Rev. 10-90)

OMB No. 1024-0018

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 7 Page 2

Burlington Bay Horse Ferry
Chittenden County, VT

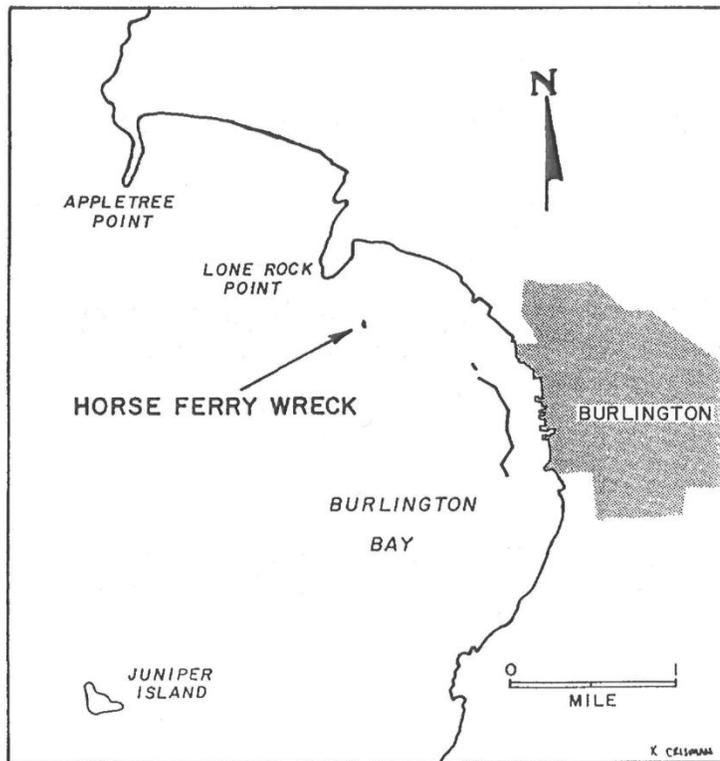
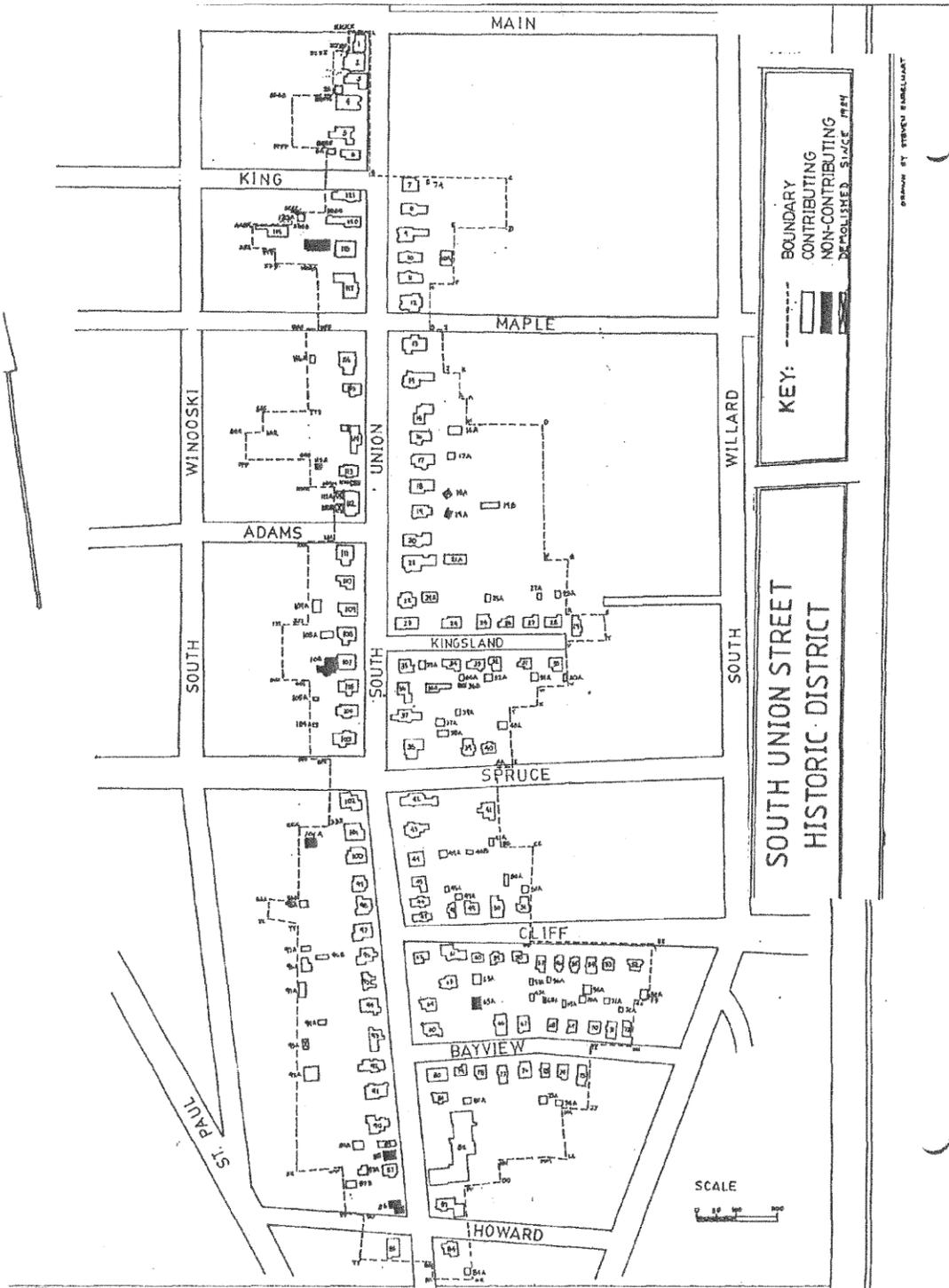
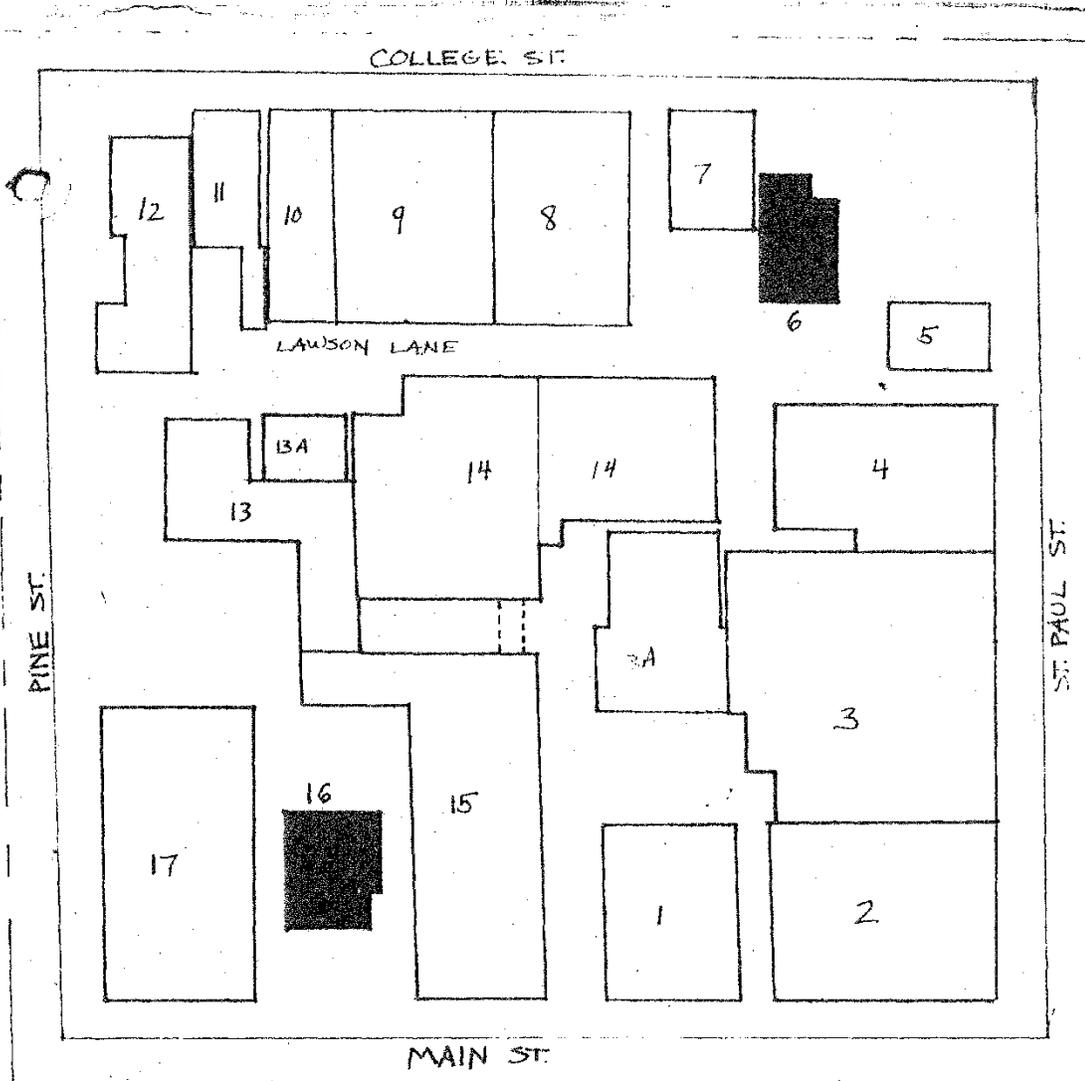


Figure 1
Burlington Bay, Vermont
(Map by Kevin J. Crisman)

Map 16
 South Union Street Historic District



Map 17
Wells Richardson Complex



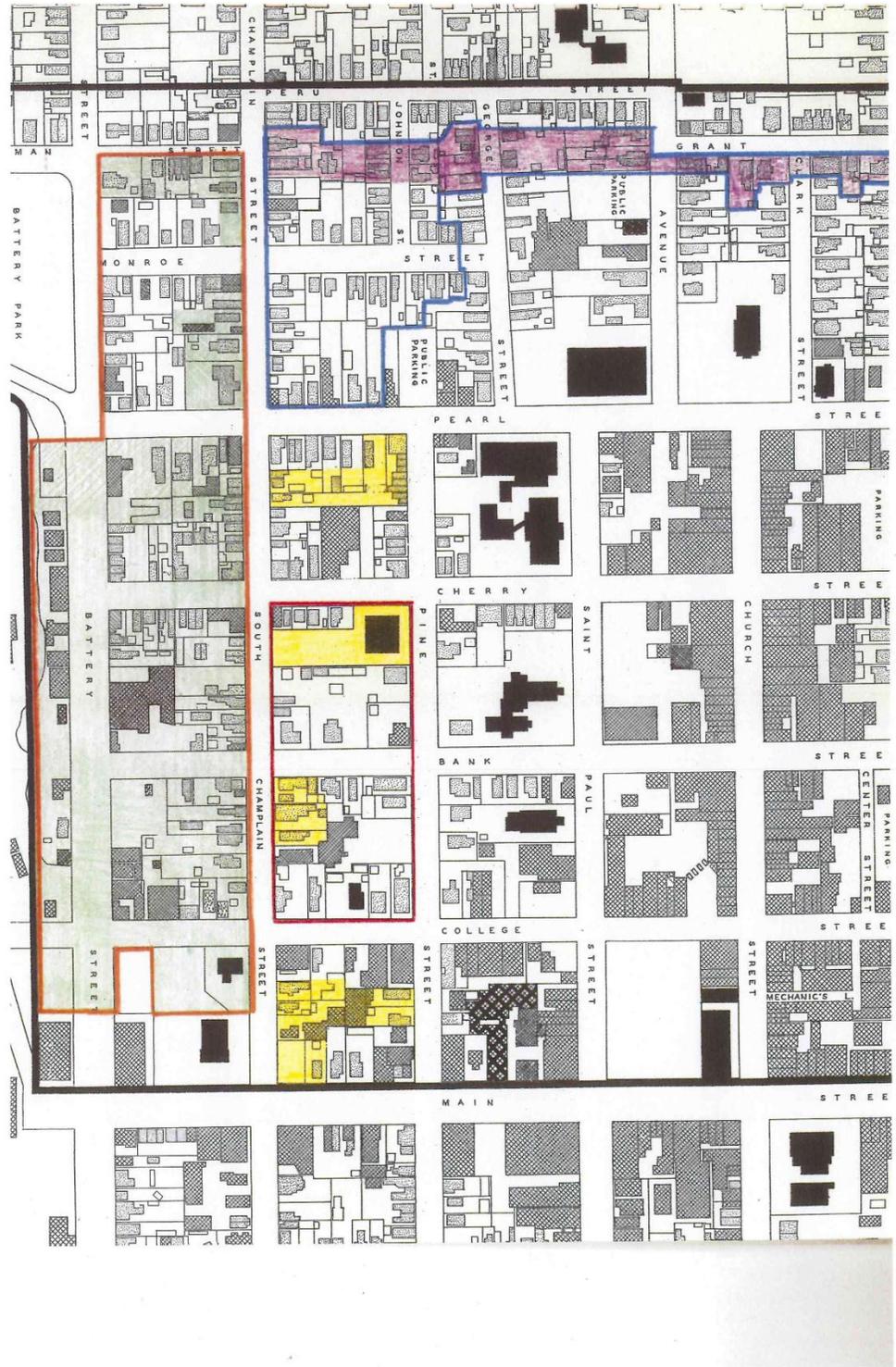
WELLS - RICHARDSON COMPLEX
BURLINGTON, VT
NOT TO SCALE

————— COMPLEX BOUNDARY
■ NON-CONTRIBUTORY BUILDING

Map 18

Battery Street General Neighborhood Renewal Areas (Urban renewal report to the Planning Commission, 1959-1960)

See color key on next page.



Battery Street General Neighborhood Renewal Areas, Color Key

TENATIVE CLEARANCE PROJECT LIMITS

1	
1A	
2A	
2B	
3	
3A	

BATTERY STREET GENERAL NEIGHBORHOOD
RENEWAL AREAS

1959-1960
Report to the Planning Commission