

IV. HISTORIC PRESERVATION

Vision Statement

This Plan envisions Burlington as a city where...

...Burlington's rich and varied historic and architectural legacy, the result of more than two centuries of development, remains a vital link to the city's history, and plays an active part in its future. The City has preserved its historic legacy through careful planning and quality design by encouraging adaptive re-use and respectful infill development. This architectural legacy is an important part of the city's character. Burlington's historic buildings are readily adaptable to changes in the building market and demand for continued growth.

CITY POLICIES

THE CITY OF BURLINGTON WILL....

- **Identify and protect its historic structures and resources.**
- **Conserve the existing elements and design of its established neighborhoods.**
- **Protect its archaeological resources.**
- **Educate its residents and visitors on the City's many architectural, archeological, and historic sites and resources.**
- **Use historic preservation as an economic development tool by offering technical and financial incentives that promote the rehabilitation of historic buildings**



INTRODUCTION

Burlington's rich heritage is illustrated in the many archeological, historic and architecturally significant places found throughout the city. Included are structures, districts, corridors, landscapes, sites and many other unique cultural environments, which add greatly to the city's character, and its sense of place and time. Burlington has a tradition of protecting and celebrating historic and architecturally significant places illustrated through a commitment to conserve and protect elements of this rich heritage through reinvestment, planning, and design review. The following section of this Plan outlines the City's policies and priorities for protecting historic resources and advancing historic preservation as an economic development tool.

Identifying Historic Resources

The identification and characterization of historic resources is based on a long record of academic research, professional practice, and legal precedent. The uniform standards used across the country for the identification of historic resources are those used to identify properties eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places¹. While not all properties are indeed eligible for listing on the National Register, the criteria provide a consistent and tested guide to evaluating historic significance.



Billings Library, UVM

Historic resources typically fall into one of two categories (with archeological, or pre-historic, resources being separate and distinct from "historic" resources) – historic *buildings* and historic *districts*. Historic buildings possess important architectural, engineering or historic merit in their own right, while districts represent a collection of buildings whose design qualities, relationships, and history illustrate an important cultural pattern, historic event, architectural characteristics or scenic quality as a whole. Districts (including landscapes), sites, buildings, structures, and objects can all be considered for listing on the National Register, however, individually listed buildings are considered to be of greater significance than a building listed solely as part of a district.

¹ The *National Register of Historic Places* is a national listing, administered by the US Dept. of the Interior, National Park Service, of cultural resources found to be worthy of preservation. It includes places of local and statewide significance as well as those of importance to the nation as a whole.

In order to be considered "historic," a property must meet three tests: **Age** - it must be at least 50 years old (with certain exceptions); **Integrity** - of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association; and **Merit** - it must:

- be associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history; or
- be associated with the lives of significant persons in our past; or
- embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or
- have yielded or may be likely to yield, information important in history or prehistory.

The actual evaluation must be carried out by a historic preservation professional trained and qualified to evaluate historic resources. The criteria for meeting these qualifications also come from the National Register. Once identified and evaluated, a historic resource can be listed on a local, state, or a national register depending on its level of significance. Actual listing is a nomination process to an advisory body that review, evaluate, and determine those properties that meet the criteria and will be placed on the official register.

<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Hierarchy of Historic Significance</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ National Historic Landmarks ▪ National Register Buildings ▪ National Register Districts
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BURLINGTON REGISTER OF HISTORIC RESOURCES (BRHR)

In 1992, the City began the *Burlington Register of Historic Resources* (BRHR), which is an ongoing list of identified and listed historic structures, sites, features, and districts. The BRHR currently includes some 2,800 sites throughout the city, with more added each year through the work of city departments, university students, state and federal agencies, and individual property owners. The BRHR serves three basic purposes.

1. Provides an important information base for educating the public about Burlington's heritage;
2. Allows property owners a reference point for making decisions about how to make appropriate improvements to their properties, without removing or obscuring important building details; and
3. Provides a factual basis for public officials to make informed decisions during the review of renovation, rehabilitation, or demolition proposals.

The BRHR includes:

- the **Burlington Historic Survey**: An ongoing inventory of identified historic resources found in Burlington. These sites have been evaluated for their

historic integrity and significance, but have not yet been nominated for listing on the State or National Register.

- **Burlington Historic Sites and Districts:** A listing of historic resources (66 buildings and 6 historic districts) which are specifically identified under Article 8 of the *Burlington Zoning Ordinance*. Some are also listed on the State or National Register.
- the **State Register of Historic Places:** A listing of historic resources deemed to possess statewide significance (180 buildings in Burlington), and maintained by the VT Division for Historic Preservation.
- the **National Register of Historic Places:** A listing of historic resources deemed to possess national significance (see the table following this chapter), and maintained by the National Park Service.

It is important to note that not all historically significant sites have been identified and evaluated, and each year new sites become age-eligible (50-years or older). It is estimated that less than 25% percent of the City's buildings have been surveyed. While the City's preference would be to quickly complete a comprehensive survey, it is not practical given available resources, and the significant number of structures that still need to be surveyed.

With this in mind, it should be clear that actual listing of a historic resource by a state or federal authority is not the definitive answer to the question "what is historic?" The City must rely more on a sites eligibility for listing as a determination for what warrants special protection.

To this end however, the City is committed to an ongoing survey effort over the next several years with the help of grant funds from the VT Div. of Historic Preservation. In May 2000, the City completed a *Historic Sites and Structures Survey Plan* that will be used to guide the work of future survey efforts conducted by the Dept. of Planning and Zoning. In addition, the City must ensure that the BRHR, and the Survey in particular, is updated regularly and that the information is made accessible to the public.

IMPLICATIONS OF HISTORIC DESIGNATION

Understanding the implications of historic designation is increasingly confusing. The term "historic" can refer to a property that is found on a Survey, listed on the State or National Register, or identified in the City's zoning ordinance. All are correct, but the implications and ramifications of each are vastly different. Additionally, there is not a clearly articulated relationship between the BRHR and the City's development review process. This leads to a mis-perception that identifying a property as "historic" implies regulatory restrictions. This is not necessarily the case however. When a property is listed on the State or National Register, review and regulatory restrictions are triggered only when state or federal funds



Follett House

or programs are involved. For example, changes to a property listed, or eligible for listing, on the National Register must meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards only when using a federal grant, loan, or tax credit program. Properties listed on the State Register are protected when the project triggers Act 250 or state grants or programs are involved. City zoning only applies to those historic sites and districts actually listed in the ordinance.

The City will continue to protect historic sites and structures from unnecessary demolition or changes incompatible with their historic significance. The City's design review criteria include a general heritage standard that applies to eligible buildings; and a set of more specific guidelines for structures within the Zoning Ordinance's Article 8 regarding Historic Buildings. Regardless of location, all historic buildings should be protected through reasonable regulation, incentives that encourage rehabilitation, and an aggressive public education program. Where regulation is the chosen option, clear guidelines should be used to make the review process more understandable and easier to navigate.

In May of 1999, the Dept. of Planning & Zoning completed a report² intended to evaluate and propose changes to how current city land use regulations (specifically zoning) consider and address the renovation and preservation of historic resources. The City will continue to implement the recommendations contained in this report in the coming years. A priority will be given to revising the *Burlington Zoning Ordinance* with respect to its applicability, consideration, and protections for historic resources under Article 6 – Design Review and Article 8 – Historic Buildings and Districts. In addition to clarifying what historic resources are protected under local regulation, two other issues that must be considered are the review of proposals for the demolition of historic buildings, and cases of demolition by neglect³.

Preservation and Neighborhoods

Protecting historic structures is really part of a larger endeavor to conserve existing elements and design characteristics of the City's neighborhoods. These neighborhoods provide the context within which the importance of individual structures is defined. As previously noted, Burlington has had extensive design review authority in place for over 20 years. The purpose behind design review is to monitor and evaluate changes to a community's buildings and landscapes. It is a process where changes to existing buildings or new development are evaluated according to a set of pre-determined standards. It used to ensure that these modifications respect the character of existing buildings and settings. It is a planning and development review tool that is often applied to historic areas or a community, but also may be used in new areas that are developing in order to achieve consistent design themes and considerations.

² Burlington Dept. of Planning Zoning, *Burlington Preservation Planning Project: Preservation Planning Phase II Report - Part I – Historic Buildings*. May 1999.

³ Demolition by Neglect is the case where a building has not been adequately maintained by the owner and it has deteriorated to a point where it's historic character and integrity has been lost and can no longer be restored, or the building has become a public hazard and must be removed.

While the extent of design review in Burlington, and the criteria by which individual applications are reviewed has evolved over time, no comprehensive rethinking of how this valuable tool is applied across the city has been given in many years. Burlington's Design Review District encompasses all of the commercial, industrial, conservation, institutional and higher density residential portions of the city, yet applies only two differing sets of review criteria.

An assessment of neighborhood characteristics and features prepared as part of the City's ongoing Historic Survey could form the basis for dividing Burlington's extensive Design Control District into smaller, more cohesive areas, and possibly developing new or additional Design Review criteria or standards. This is likely to entail clarifying the distinctions between the 3-4 types of Design Control Districts already in-place, and providing more personalized design criteria that are more sensitive to the specific design issues and character of each district. The objective of will be to make Burlington's extensive Design Control District more sensitive and responsive to the diverse design and neighborhood character issues found across the City.

Finally, neighborhood conservation plan could be used to identify important physical elements and design features, in addition to those noted as historic, and define the physical characteristics worth protecting in each neighborhood. These include traditional building types, setbacks, street layout, lot size and coverage, landscaping and street details. These plans would form the basis for developing neighborhood-level design standards to assist property owners and developers in the development review process.

Preservation as an Economic Development Strategy

As Burlington works to protect and maintain the integrity of its historic buildings and landscapes through restoration, adaptive reuse and renovation, it becomes increasingly clear how preservation is a very effective economic development strategy. The Ice House, Ethan Allen Fire House, the Rose Street Artists Co-op, Jim's Corner Store, Hotel Burlington/Hunting Hotel, the Maltex building, and Bennington Potters North are all successful adaptive reuses of existing buildings. Even the Community Boathouse was built on a recycled oil barge. Opportunities for the restoration and renovation of buildings can be found throughout the Central Business District, the Downtown Waterfront and the Old North End.



Lang House

Perhaps the most striking example of using historic resources as part of an economic development strategy is the Church Street Marketplace. Here, design review and historic preservation strategies have been combined with pedestrian amenities to make this downtown shopping area one of the finest of its kind in the nation.

In addition, as the travel and tourism industry becomes a larger segment of the regional economy - currently one-fifth of the state's total economy - opportunities to promote heritage tourism should be explored. Examples include education and interpretation of the City's past through historic walking tours, brochures, events and signs.

To reinforce this economic development strategy, all policies of and projects undertaken by the City should enhance the City's historic resources and neighborhood characteristics. City policy should continue to support the innovative use of historic structures.

FINANCIAL INCENTIVES

While there is much the City can do through research, regulation, and education to protect the City's heritage, none are as effective as those which combine economic incentives and technical assistance. This is what makes the difference between a process that is strictly regulatory and adversarial, to one that is cooperative and collaborative. The City must work with the private sector to promote preservation. For example, the City should assist developers with preservation techniques and design strategies, and by providing assistance in locating financing for eligible historic preservation projects. The City must continue to evaluate opportunities for creating a Historic Preservation Trust Fund for such things as providing no-interest or low-interest loans to help renovators achieve historically appropriate solutions.

Listing on the National Register of Historic Places offers certain federal tax benefits for income producing properties that can serve to enhance the viability of commercial districts in the city. Many of the city's most complex and noteworthy preservation projects were made possible by using the Reinvestment Tax Credit Program administered by the state for the National Park Service. The City will continue to encourage and support National Register designation for commercial areas of the city as a means of encouraging reinvestment and adaptive reuse of historic buildings. Two examples include the re-nominating Church Street Marketplace and other portions of the City Center to the National Register of Historic Places, as well as portions of Pine Street.

Finally, the Vermont Downtown Program offers financial incentives such as tax credits and loans for development in historic downtowns that have been designated "Downtown Development Districts." Recently, the city's Downtown Improvement District received this designation from the state. The North Street Commercial District and portions of No. Winooski Ave. may also be a candidate for such a designation.

Preservation and the Enterprise Community

There are more than 2,300 buildings in the Old North End, many of which were built between the early 1800's through the mid-twentieth century. Approximately 800 structures - a little more than one third of the total - have been identified in the Burlington Inventory of Historic Resources as having national, state or local significance. It is estimated that at least half of the remaining buildings may be eligible for listing.

Some of the development strategies identified in the City's Enterprise Community application focuses directly on historic preservation. The future vision statement about the built environment from that application says it succinctly:

"This is a community that values its setting and traditions. The residents and institutions of the Old North End Enterprise Community preserve their historic sites and structures. They conserve unique design elements, neighborhood characteristics, and streetscapes in each neighborhood, while ensuring that new construction meets these criteria."

Strategies designed to attain this vision range from surveying historic properties, National Historic District designation for portions of the Old North End - including the North Street Commercial District - and rehabilitation of neighborhood businesses and residences.

Of particular interest however, is the ability to restore and maintain historic structures while maintaining their affordability. The City must continue to pursue the creation of technical assistance programs and revenue sources that enable the city to merge its historic preservation and housing affordability objectives.

The Importance of Archaeology

In Vermont, prehistoric remains consist mostly of Native American stone tools, flake debris from tool making, pottery pieces, burial ornaments, human bones, fire hearths and objects related to hearths. Archeological sites represent activities of early American inhabitants from the period of contact to about 75 years ago. Development and redevelopment throughout many portions of the City have disturbed many of the potential sites for finding archaeological remains. Once disturbed from their original context, much of the archaeological value of an artifact is lost.

Despite more than a century of historic development, many areas in Burlington remain archaeologically sensitive. These include shorelines, floodplains and ancient beaches along the lake and river, as well as more recent finds including a former War of 1812 cemetery and encampment in the Old North End. Proposed development in these areas should be evaluated for their possible impact on these resources.

Burlington should protect its remaining archaeological resources. The presence of archaeological remains does not need to prevent development of a site however. Steps can be taken to insure that important remains are not disturbed. Often mitigation can be achieved simply through documentation rather than complete preservation. The Major Impact Development Ordinance requires that larger developments do not have an undue adverse effect on archaeological sites. This ordinance should include smaller

developments or site work at large projects that could disturb an archaeological site in sensitive portions of the city. Working in close partnership with the State, the City should work to minimize the burden on individual property owners in these sensitive areas while at the same time ensure the resources are properly documented and protected.

Historic Preservation Action Plan

Action Item	Lead Agency	Secondary Agencies
Establish a relationship with the National Main Street Center and Vermont Downtown Program to assist with the revitalization of North Street as a neighborhood commercial center.	CEDO	Planning & Zoning
Work with the VT Division of Historic Preservation, CEDO and the Burlington Certified Local Government Program to facilitate compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act ⁴ .	Planning & Zoning CEDO	
Submit a nomination including the Church Street Marketplace as a National Register Historic District.	Marketplace	Planning & Zoning
Continue efforts to complete the Historic Sites and Structures Survey, and annually re-publish and improve public access to the <i>Burlington Register of Historic Resources</i> .	Planning & Zoning	
Provide technical assistance to property owners and developers on historic preservation techniques as well as identification of financing opportunities for eligible historic preservation projects.	Planning & Zoning CEDO	
Develop a range of incentives to support historic preservation efforts in the City including a Historic Preservation Trust Fund and a Historic Preservation Tax Stabilization Program.	Planning & Zoning CEDO	Treasurer
Develop a comprehensive public education program focusing on the short-term and long-term benefits of historic preservation.	Planning & Zoning	
Expand the Major Impact Development Ordinance to address significant archaeological resources.	Planning & Zoning	

⁴ Compliance under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act is triggered when a proposed project involves federal programs, properties, agencies, grants and loans.

National Register of Historic Places, Burlington, VT (April 2004)		
<u>RESOURCE NAME</u>	<u>ADDRESS</u>	<u>LISTED DATE</u>
Allen, Ethan, Homestead	Off Van Patten Pkwy.	7/24/1986
Battery Street Historic District	Roughly bounded by Lake Champlain, Main, Maple, and St. Pauls Sts. (both sides)	11/2/1977
Battery Street Historic District (Boundary Increase)	Roughly bounded by Brown's Court, King, Adams, and Union Sts.	6/28/1984
Buell Street--Bradley Street Historic District	2-71 Bradley St., 24-125 Buell St., 16-75 Orchard Terr., 9-96 S. Union St., 11-87 Hungerford Terr.	11/13/1995
Burlington Bay Horse Ferry (shipwreck)	Burlington Harbor	12/15/1993
Burlington Breakwater	Burlington Harbor	6/6/2003
Burlington Montgomery Ward Building	52--54 Church St.	5/30/1991
Burlington Traction Company	662 Riverside Ave., includes 321-343 N. Winooski Ave.	10/7/2004
Carnegie Building of the Fletcher Free Library	College St. and S. Winooski Ave.	8/18/1976
Champlain School	809 Pine St.	12/10/1982
Chittenden County Courthouse	180 Church St.	4/11/1973
City Hall Park Historic District	Church, College, Main and St. Paul Sts.	6/9/1983
Ethan Allen Engine company No. 4	Church St.	4/16/1971
First Baptist Church	81 St. Paul St.	3/2/2001
First Methodist Church of Burlington	S. Winooski Ave.	10/5/1978
Follett House	63 College St.	10/30/1972
General Butler (shipwreck)	Burlington Bay	10/22/1998
Grassemount	411 Main St.	4/11/1973
Head of Church Street Historic District	Pearl and Church Sts.	7/15/1974
Howard Mortuary Chapel	455 North Ave.	10/21/1999
Kelsey, Martin L., House	43 Elmwood Ave	2/24/1983
Lakeside Development	Lakeside, Central, Conger, Wright, and Harrison Aves.	4/12/1982
Main Street-College Street Historic District	Roughly bounded by College, S. Williams and Main Sts., and S. Winooski Ave.	10/13/1988

National Register of Historic Places, Burlington, VT (April 2004)		
<u>RESOURCE NAME</u>	<u>ADDRESS</u>	<u>LISTED DATE</u>
Moquin's Bakery	78 Rose St.	6/27/1997
North Street Historic District	Roughly Along North St., from North Ave. to N. Winooski Ave.	12/21/2001
O.J. Walker (shipwreck)	Burlington Bay	10/22/1998
Old Ohavi Zedex Synagogue	Archibald and Hyde Sts.	1/31/1978
Palmer, Charles R., House	201 and 203 N. Willard St.	8/30/2005
Pearl Street Historic District	Roughly 184 to 415 Pearl St., Orchard Terr., and Winooski Ave.	11/1/1984
Redstone Historic District	S. Prospect St.	11/14/1991
Robarge, John B. Duplex	58-60 N. Champlain St.	8/6/2005
Robinson, Daniel Webster, House	384 and 388 Main St.	4/22/1982
Ruggles, Lucy, House	262 S. Prospect St.	12/16/2005
Saltus Grocery Store	299--301 N. Winooski Ave.	11/19/2001
South Union Street Historic District	S. Union St. between Howard and Main	10/31/1988
South Willard Street Historic District	S. Willard St.	11/3/1988
U.S. Post Office and Customhouse	SE corner of Main and Church Sts.	11/21/1972
University Green Historic District	University of Vermont campus	4/14/1975
Wells, Edward, House	61 Summit St.	10/3/1979
Wells-Jackson Carriage House Complex	192-194 Jackson Court and 370 Maple St.	12/10/1982
Wells-Richardson District	Main, Pine, College, and St. Paul Sts.	3/5/1979
Winooski Falls Mill Historic District (Boundary Increase)	485--497 Colchester Ave., 5--21 Mill St., 8--32 Barrett St.	9/30/1993
Winterbotham Estate	163 S. Willard St.	5/12/1975



