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Integrity Assessment: 36 Convent Square, Burlington Vermont June 6, 2018

The vernacular building at 36 Convent Square in Burlington was constructed circa 1885 as a single-family dwelling and remains as such. At the time of the 1869 Beers map the area was a fairground. Sanborn maps from 1885, 1889 and 1900 do not include the buildings on Convent Square although the 1889 map indicates the street had been laid out. The 1886/87 city directory includes residents on Convent Square so the buildings appear to have been extant at that time. The 1890 G. M. Hopkins Map of Burlington and Winooski indicates Convent Square had been fully developed.

Convent Square is a short “L” shaped street that is just two blocks long. It is located on the east side of North Avenue just south of the former St. Joseph’s Orphanage. It is an area of working and middle-class homes built in the late 19th century and turn of the 20th century. The neighborhood represents the expansion of residential housing on the northern edge of the city after the construction of streetcar lines on North Avenue made this area of the city accessible to workers in city industries. The Period of Significance for the Convent Square neighborhood is 1885 to 1920, which are the years in which the neighborhood was constructed, and common changes were made to the buildings by their early owners. Sanborn maps show that these changes included adding front and side porches. Beyond this period there was little overall change to the neighborhood.

This house, as well as the rest of Convent Square, first appears on Sanborn Fire Insurance maps in 1906 and had a rectangular main block facing the street and a single-story rear wing that was slightly wider than the main block. By 1919 a wraparound porch spanned the front and south side of the main block. The house retained this form through the 1950 Sanborn map. Sometime after that, the wing gained a second floor and another single-story addition with a shallow gable roof was added across the back of the original wing. The front portion of the wrap around porch was removed and the south side portion enclosed and two three-part Chicago style windows added on its south side. Pre-formed concrete steps with a wrought iron railing were placed to access a modern storm door entering into the enclosed porch. The primary entry into the building is within the porch. A three-part Chicago style window was added on the first floor front elevation of the main block.

Each of the seven elements of integrity identified by the National Register of Historic Places has been applied to the building at 36 Convent Square. The elements of integrity that are critical to understanding this dwelling, its significance, and place within the development of Convent Square are design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. The following evaluation of integrity, reveals the building lacks sufficient integrity and no longer retains the character-defining physical features necessary to represent its significance. The cumulative effect of

alterations, additions, and loss of stylistic features and materials has compromised the integrity of the building.

Location: integrity of location evaluates the place where the historic property was constructed or the place where the historic event occurred. The dwelling at 36 Convent Square remains in its original location and has not been moved since its construction circa 1885. The dwelling was intentionally constructed within this developing neighborhood which contained other single-family dwellings of similar form, style, and plan. The building retains its integrity of location.

Setting: integrity of setting is the physical environment of a historic property, referring to the character of the place in which the property plays its historic role. This involves how a property is situated and its relationship to the surrounding features and open space, and reflects the plan and preferences of those who laid out and constructed Convent Square and its dwellings in the late 19th century. Buildings on this residential side street are closely spaced with narrow side yards and all have a regular shallow setback from the street. Main blocks face the street and most have front or side porches and rear ells, wings and/or single-story rear shed roof additions. The close and regular placement of the buildings with their main blocks facing each other on the small side street creates a sense of place and community. The main block of this house fronts on Convent Square with two rear additions that span the back of the building, similar to its neighbors. The dwelling has narrow side and front yards that conform to others on the street. Because of its placement on its lot and the consistent placement of the neighboring buildings, the building retains integrity of setting.

Design: integrity of design is the combination of elements that create the form, plan, space, structure and style of a property. The circa 1885 main block is a 1 ½ story, 3x2 bay, rectangular plan, gable front house with rear gable roofed wing that is slightly wider than the main block on the south side and is flush with the main block on the north side. A modern shallow, gable roofed, single story, 2x3 bay rear addition spans the back of the wing and has a rear entry on the right side of the back elevation. The addition has a wide roof overhang and heavy solid triangular brackets on the rear elevation. An enclosed 1x2 bay shed roof entry porch spans the south side of the main block and the west side of the rear wing's projecting south end. Three-part Chicago style windows have been added on the south wall of the porch and on the first floor front elevation in the living room that is now enclosed. A vinyl storm door enters the porch on the west side. Windows throughout the building are replacement 1/1 wood double hung sash and those on the rearmost addition are short 1/1 wood double hung. Application of vinyl siding has obscured all original trim save the molded cornice on the front elevation. The main block retains a mortared stone foundation that has had concrete block or concrete walls cast against them for reinforcement in some locations and in some locations the original walls were completely rebuilt. The rear portion of the building has a concrete foundation. Because of these changes it is difficult to determine the age of the various additions to the main block.

The proportions, scale and organization of the main block and rear wing of the building at 36 Convent Square are similar to others on the street. It seems likely that the building originally had a form and style similar to that of the dwelling at 9 Convent Square, which appears to be the most intact example of this house type on the street. The house at 9 Convent Square is a simple sidehall plan, two bay wide dwelling with a single story shed roof addition across the back that

projects beyond the plane of the main block on one side. This type of single story shed roof rear addition is seen throughout the neighborhood and is likely the type of rear addition that originally existed on 36 Convent Square. The wrap around front porch, with wood shingle half-wall, at 9 Convent Square was added in the early 20th century, like others in the neighborhood, including a wrap around front and south side porch at #36. The house at 9 Convent Square retains peaked lintels over windows and the front door and has flat corner boards and frieze.

Changes made to the house at 36 Convent Square largely occurred after the 1950 Sanborn map. These changes included removal of the front portion of the wrap around porch, enclosing of the south portion of the porch, raising the height of the rear single story shed roof addition, giving it a gable roof and perhaps expanding its width incorporating part of the main block which appears shortened as compared to others on the street. The rear roofline of this addition now has a much longer slope on the south side than on the north. Other additions include appending a new single-story gable roof addition at the back of the building, adding a sliding window in the rear gable of the second floor of the expanded second floor, installing three-part Chicago style windows on the first floor of the main block and in the south side wall of the enclosed porch.

The loss of history stylistic features and materials and addition of late 20th century windows, doors, and vinyl siding, as well as the loss of the front porch, and expansion of the rear additions have completely changed the character of the building and erased all physical evidence of its original late 19th century style or footprint. The building no longer conveys its period of construction and does not retain integrity of design.

Materials: integrity of materials is the physical elements that were combined or deposited during a particular period and in a particular pattern or configuration to form a historic property. It is expected that the building would retain a combination of materials and architectural features that reflect styles popular in the late 19th century as well as commonly used building materials found in Vermont buildings of the period. Taken together, these help convey the neighborhood's sense of time and place in the late 19th century. Commonly found materials in the neighborhood that remain include clapboard siding with a narrow reveal, flat wood trim such as corner boards and door surrounds. It is possible many of the dwellings originally had peaked lintels over windows as is found on the intact dwelling at 9 Convent Square but these have been lost on all but that building. Other common historic materials include stone foundations and slate roofs, some with bands of scalloped shingles. Most windows have 1/1 wood double hung sash. 2/2 windows remain at 8 Convent Square and may represent the original window treatment in the neighborhood.

Key exterior materials must be retained to reflect the dwelling's period of significance (1885-1920). The subject building has vinyl siding and trim, originally it would have had wood clapboards and trim. The remaining historic material is limited to the molded wood cornice on the front gable and the stone foundation. Portions of the mortared stone foundation remain; other areas have been replaced or reinforced with poured concrete or concrete block. The original roof likely was slate similar to others in the neighborhood. The present roof is asphalt shingle and retains a brick chimney. Windows were originally either 1/1 or 2/2 wood double hung sash. The current windows are modern replacement 1/1 double hung wood sash, a sliding window on the rear gable end, and three-part Chicago style windows that date from a time much later than the

building's construction period. Historic wood porch steps and railings have been replaced with cast pre-formed concrete steps with wrought iron railings. The side porch retains no evidence of historic porch materials in either its vinyl half-wall beneath the windows, or its skirt area which is now poured concrete. The interior of the porch is finished with sheetrock on the walls and ceiling where traditionally one would expect narrow ceiling boards. Replacement entry doors include a vinyl storm door on the front elevation that enters into the south side porch, and an interior primary door that opens from the porch into the main block that is a modern insulated half-glass door with a multi-pane arched window over two vertical raised panels.

The cumulative loss of historic materials and replacement with modern ones has resulted in the building no longer conveying its period of construction or significance or any stylistic elements to tie it to a particular time. There are not enough historic materials remaining to reflect the period during which it was constructed, its original architectural style, and the materials and technologies of the late 19th century. The house no longer retains sufficient integrity of materials.

Workmanship: integrity of workmanship is the physical evidence of the crafts of a particular culture or people during any given period in history. It is the evidence of artisans' labor and skill in constructing a building and can apply to the property or to its individual components. Expressed in vernacular methods, like the dwelling at 36 Convent Square, workmanship illustrated the aesthetic principles of the late 19th century when the house was erected. The loss of materials indicative of the 1880s (and late 19th century) contributes to the loss of workmanship. The original clapboard siding and wood trim is now covered (or replaced) with vinyl siding, except for a molded cornice on the front elevation. Some double hung windows have been replaced with three-part Chicago style windows. Modern 1/1 sash have replaced historic windows of either 1/1 or 2/2 configuration. Any historic window or door trim is gone. Historic doors have been replaced with modern materials. Portions of the mortared stone foundation remain, others have been reinforced with concrete. The front portion of the wrap around porch, added in the early 20th century, has been lost and the remaining side portion of the porch has been rebuilt as an enclosed porch with three-part Chicago style windows of a later date. The porch's front entry steps and railings have been replaced with pre-formed concrete steps and wrought iron railings. The original single-story shed roof wing that spanned the back of the building has been expanded in height and perhaps length and given a gable roof with differing length slopes, and a late 20th century single-story gable roofed addition appended to the back of the building. Due to all the replacement materials and changes to the rear portion of the building, the structure no longer conveys the workmanship of the original late 19th century builders. The building has lost integrity of workmanship.

Feeling: integrity of feeling is a property's expression of the aesthetic or historic sense of a particular period of time. This results from the presence of physical features, that together, convey the property's historic character. The dwelling at 36 Convent Square no longer expresses the aesthetic of the late 19th century when it was constructed. Only its size, scale and placement on the street continue to convey its role as a modest late 19th century dwelling that was developed contemporaneously with others in the neighborhood, all of which are uniformly set on narrow rectangular lots with shallow street setback. Loss of all historic materials, save portions of the stone foundation and the front molded cornice, and loss of stylistic features, as well as changes to its porches, fenestration and rear additions no longer represent a house built as part of

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a late 19th century residential neighborhood. The addition of three three-part Chicago style windows, replacement 1/1 sash, and the porch changes to this small scale dwelling all result in a building that feels as though it relates to the mid-20th century rather than the late 19th century. Due to the loss of materials and features that tie the building to its period of significance, the building has lost integrity of feeling.

Association: integrity of association is the direct link between an important historic event or person and a historic property. For the dwelling at 36 Convent Square, association requires the presence of physical features to convey its historic character, that being a circa 1885 modest vernacular single family dwelling in a late-19th-century residential neighborhood. The building is still located within a closely built residential neighborhood with few modern intrusions. The dwelling's size, scale and placement on the street, and its general plan of a street-facing gable front main block with side porch and rear addition, a form commonly found in the neighborhood, tie it to the late 19th century development of this residential neighborhood. However, the loss of all historic materials and changes to its fenestration, doors, porches and rear additions have significantly altered its appearance and historic character severely limiting its ability to convey its style and period of construction. The house no longer retains integrity of association due to the loss of design, materials and workmanship.