

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR NPS USE ONLY	
RECEIVED	JUL 6 1982
DATE ENTERED	

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC Bellows Falls Downtown Historic District
AND/OR COMMON
Bellows Falls Downtown Historic District

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER Irregular pattern along Depot, Canal, Rockingham,
Bridge, Mill and Westminster Streets N/A NOT FOR PUBLICATION
CITY, TOWN Bellows Falls N/A VICINITY OF Vermont
STATE Vermont CODE 50 COUNTY Windham CODE 025

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE <input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL <input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT <input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	N/A <input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME Multiple Ownership; See list on Continuation Sheet 4-1
STREET & NUMBER N/A
CITY, TOWN N/A VICINITY OF STATE

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Office of the Town Clerk
STREET & NUMBER Rockingham Town Hall
CITY, TOWN Bellows Falls STATE Vermont 05101

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE Vermont Historic Sites and Structures Survey
DATE 1980 FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS Vermont Division for Historic Preservation
CITY, TOWN Montpelier STATE Vermont 05602

7 DESCRIPTION

<u>X</u> EXCELLENT	CONDITION	__ DETERIORATED	CHECK ONE	<u>X</u> UNALTERED	CHECK ONE
<u>X</u> GOOD		__ RUINS		<u>X</u> ALTERED	<u>X</u> ORIGINAL SITE
<u>X</u> FAIR		__ UNEXPOSED			__ MOVED DATE _____

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Bellows Falls Downtown Historic District encompasses the central business district of Bellows Falls village together with surrounding railroad and industrial areas significant to its historical development; the historic district lies along Depot, Canal, Rockingham, Bridge, Mill, and Westminster Streets. Among the 48 principal buildings and structures, a large majority consists of commercial blocks standing on or near the L-shaped "Square" that forms the core both of the business and historic districts. Small groups of residential, industrial, and railroad buildings surround the commercial core along with a series of bridges over the former canal that bypasses the Great Falls of the Connecticut River immediately east of the village.

The historic district experienced its most intensive development during the last third of the nineteenth century when the paper-making industry expanded rapidly to become the predominant economic force in Bellows Falls. Many buildings were constructed during the period and display characteristics of the Italianate, Second Empire, Romanesque, and Queen Anne styles then in architectural fashion. Interspersed among those buildings are scattered examples of earlier nineteenth century vernacular Federal and Greek Revival styles and of early twentieth century eclectic (especially the Georgian Revival) and Modernistic.

The geographical setting of the Bellows Falls Downtown Historic District is dominated by the abrupt eastward bow of the Connecticut River where it cascades 52 feet (the namesake falls) down a narrow rocky gorge. The eastward bulge of land within the bow is cut across by the canal following more nearly the general north-south alignment of the river; since the construction of the canal, the area between it and the river has been called the "Island." The historic district lies principally along the west side of the canal at the base of a prominent riverine terrace; it also includes most of the canal and the north end of the Island. To the east (in New Hampshire), the 1130-foot Fall Mountain thrusts its rocky and precipitous west face directly above the Connecticut River to form the topographical landmark of the vicinity.

The Island portion of the historic district contains the railroad junction and related buildings that represent a principal force in the latter nineteenth century development of Bellows Falls village. The canal played a similar role in that development, earlier in the nineteenth century having served for transport and subsequently for industrial power and hydroelectrical generation; some of the surviving industries stand at the south end of the historic district. The commercial development that accompanied the emergence of transport and industry at Bellows Falls occupies a rather narrow strip slightly above the canal and centered on the Square.

An irregular pattern of streets ranges through the historic district. The main artery extends north-south through the Square, named (after the neighboring villages) Westminster Street south of the Square and Rockingham Street to the north. A major perpendicular axis appropriately named Bridge Street leads from the south end of the Square eastward across the canal to a bridge over the Connecticut River. Three other bridges - one road and two railroad - cross the canal within the historic district connecting the Island to the mainland. The south (Boston and Maine) railroad bridge leads directly to a short tunnel that passes diagonally beneath the south end of the Square.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW				
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)	
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION			

SPECIFIC DATES N/A BUILDER/ARCHITECT N/A

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Bellows Falls Downtown Historic District derives its significance largely from its historical relationship to the Great Falls of the Connecticut River, the locus of various human activities through hundreds of years. Native Americans used the river for a main artery of travel and congregated at the falls to catch migrating salmon and shad. Early white settlers followed suit and then developed overland transport routes that focused on the first bridge across the Connecticut River built here in 1785. To expedite the early river traffic, one of the first canals in the United States was opened in 1802 to bypass the falls; that canal also provided water to power Bellows Falls' emerging industry.

When railroads passed through the area circa 1850, they also focused on the river crossing, and Bellows Falls became one of the most important railroad junctions in northern New England. In the 1870's, the available water power attracted the establishment of paper mills that were among the first in the United States to use wood pulp (as opposed to rags) for raw material. By the turn of the present century, Bellows Falls had expanded into an important manufacturing center with a business district whose architectural character reflected its vigor and prosperity. Subsequently the industrial activities have declined but Bellows Falls retains to an unusual extent the historic fabric of its earlier ascendancy, and recently has undertaken substantial efforts toward its preservation.

For an unknown span of time, Native Americans came to the narrow rocky gorge of the Quon-eh-to-kot, or "Long River," to catch the shad and Atlantic salmon whose ascents to upstream spawning grounds were impeded by the Great Falls. The river then ranked among the most important in New England for its salmon population, and the exceptional fishing site at the Great Falls must have been widely known among the tribes that lived or traveled through the region, commonly by canoe on the river itself.

The first white settlement in the vicinity occurred in 1749 although other activities, including log drives, had begun earlier in the century. The place was named for Benjamin Bellows, who obtained in 1753 the charter for the surrounding Vermont township of Rockingham. The settlers also traveled on the river and soon a substantial commercial traffic developed; flat boats ran along the stretches both above and below Bellows Falls, where their cargoes were transhipped around the obstacle to navigation and reloaded on connecting boats.

Although disruptive of boat traffic, the river's constriction at Bellows Falls proved somewhat advantageous to overland transport. In 1785, the narrowest part of the gorge provided the site for Colonel Enoch Hale to build the first bridge ever to span the Connecticut River and the only bridge to do so for the following decade. By the turn of the century, regular stagecoach service existed along the Connecticut Valley through Bellows Falls and across Hale's bridge to Boston. That bridge established the importance of Bellows Falls as the junction of regional transport routes - an importance that increased immensely during the nineteenth century.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

See Continuation Sheet 9-1.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY approx. 18

QUADRANGLE NAME Bellows Falls, N.H.-Vt.

QUADRANGLE SCALE 1:62500

UTM REFERENCES

A	18	708000	4778900	B	18	707925	4778300
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C	18	707475	4778925	D			
E				F			
G				H			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

See Continuation Sheet 10-1

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
N/A			

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Hugh H. Henry

ORGANIZATION

Vermont Division for Historic Preservation

DATE

March 25, 1981

STREET & NUMBER

Pavilion Building

TELEPHONE

802-828-3226

CITY OR TOWN

Montpelier

STATE

Vermont 05602

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

William B. Pinney

TITLE

Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE

June 29, 1982

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I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

William H. Brothman
KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

8-16-82

ATTEST:

Patrick W. Anclius
CHIEF OF REGISTRATION

DATE

8/12/82

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Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

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Property Owners in the Bellows Falls Downtown Historic District:

1. Vermont Agency of Transportation ^S
 133 State Street
 Montpelier, Vermont 05602
2. Green Mountain Railroad Corporation
 Depot Street
 Bellows Falls, Vermont 05101
3. Boston and Maine Corporation ^P
 150 Causeway Street
 Boston, Massachusetts 02114
4. Ernest J. Frenette Jr.
 86 Canal Street
 Bellows Falls, Vermont 05101
5. Teofil A. Kabara
 22 Laurel Avenue
 Bellows Falls, Vermont 05101
6. Stanley Smith
 68 Canal Street
 Bellows Falls, Vermont 05101
7. Wayne T. Clark and Richard Stratton
 64 Canal Street
 Bellows Falls, Vermont 05101
8. Nicola P. Fiorey
 Pearce Circle
 Bellows Falls, Vermont 05101
- 9., 9A. Floyd LaFoe
 50 Canal Street
 Bellows Falls, Vermont 05101
10. Mary Exner
 Canal Street
 Bellows Falls, Vermont 05101
11. Gordon N. Toussaint
 Five Canal Street
 Bellows Falls, Vermont 05101
- 12., 13., 14. Elks Club of Bellows Falls, Inc.
 The Square
 Bellows Falls, Vermont 05101

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15. Sundial Associates
 The Square
 Bellows Falls, Vermont 05101
16. Evangeline G. Wright
 58 Square
 Bellows Falls, Vermont 05101
17. Green Mountain Power Corporation
 One Main Street
 Burlington, Vermont 05401
18. United States Postal Service (F)
 Seven Bridge Street
 Bellows Falls, Vermont 05101
19. Rollstone Realty Trust
 95 Aubuchon Drive
 Westminister, Massachusetts 01473
20. Bellows Falls Chamber of Commerce
 The Square
 Bellows Falls, Vermont 05101 ✓
21. Boston and Maine Corporation
 150 Causeway Street
 Boston, Massachusetts 02114
- 22A, Bellows Falls Area Development Corporation
 B. P.O. Box 399
 Bellows Falls, Vermont 05101
- 22C, New England Power Corporation
23. Turnpike Road
 Westboro, Massachusetts 01581
- 24., 25., 26. E. P. Cray Estate
 c/o Paul Cray
 North Walpole, New Hampshire
27. D and B, Inc.
 Westminister Street
 Bellows Falls, Vermont 05101
28. Roland and Mary Scott - S and S Realty
 Five Williams Terrace
 Bellows Falls, Vermont 05101 ✓
29. James O'Brien
 21 Westminister Street
 Bellows Falls, Vermont 05101

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-
30. Dorothy Yoder
Brockway Mills Road
Springfield, Vermont 05156
31. N. Lincoln Divoll
The Square
Bellows Falls, Vermont 05101
32. S and N Associates
39 Square
Bellows Falls, Vermont 05101
33. Bellows Falls Trust Company
The Square
Bellows Falls, Vermont 05101
34. Town of Rockingham
Town Hall
Bellows Falls, Vermont 05101
35. S and I Army and Navy of Vermont, Inc.
Main Street
Brattleboro, Vermont 05301
36. I. O. O. F.
Rockingham Street
Bellows Falls, Vermont 05101
37. Rockingham Canal House Associates, 50 Church Street
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02138
38. Polish-American Club
37 Rockingham Street
Bellows Falls, Vermont 05101
- 39., 40. Michael N. Lacroix
22 Highland Street
Brattleboro, Vermont 05301
41. Village of Bellows Falls
Town Hall
Bellows Falls, Vermont 05101
42. Island Corporation
P.O. Box 142
Bellows Falls, Vermont 05101

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43. L. Raymond Massucco et al
51 Green Street.
Bellows Falls, Vermont 05101
44. Village of Bellows Falls
Town Hall
Bellows Falls, Vermont 05101
45. Boston and Maine Corporation
150 Causeway Street
Boston, Massachusetts 02114
46. Village of Bellows Falls
Town Hall
Bellows Falls, Vermont 05101
47. Boston and Maine Corporation
150 Causeway Street
Boston, Massachusetts 02114
48. New England Power Corporation
Turnpike Road
Westboro, Massachusetts 01581
49. New England Power Corp.
Turnpike Rd.
Westboro, Massachusetts 01581

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Historic American Engineering Record Inventory - #'s 1, 2, 3, 21, 23, 48

Date: 1974 Federal

Depository: Historic American Engineering Record

Location: Washington, D.C.

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The Island portion of the historic district (reached by the Depot Street bridge) encloses a remnant of the railroad yard surrounding the junction of the Connecticut River valley line with lines southeastward to Boston and northeastward to Rutland, Vermont. Three brick railroad buildings (#'s 1-3) remain standing in this open level area and continue to serve railroad uses. The passenger depot (#3) marks the actual junction of the lines and now serves the Amtrak trains along the Connecticut Valley line. Two other major railroad buildings - a woodframe freight house and a multi-stall woodframe roundhouse - also stood in the yard until being demolished in recent decades.

Directly across the canal from the railroad yard, Canal Street follows the west bank of the waterway. A row of detached houses faces the canal north of the Depot Street bridge, the only residential buildings in the historic district. The row includes two excellent examples of early nineteenth century brick houses (#6, #7) similar to those along the Erie Canal in New York.

South of the Depot Street bridge, the character of the historic district changes to the densely developed commercial center of Bellows Falls village. Closely spaced or attached commercial blocks stand in uniform facade lines along the streets, the majority being relatively plain, three-story brick blocks with storefronts on the street level and offices or apartments on the upper stories. A few woodframe commercial blocks are interspersed, the most notable being the two late nineteenth century examples on Canal Street (#10, #11) sheathed with stamped metal.

Below the south end of the Square, a small group of mostly brick industrial buildings stands on a lower slope near the river. Both the paper mill (#22) and the Adams Grist Mill (#23) were originally powered by water from the canal. The paper mill continues in that use while the grist mill has been converted to a local historical museum.

The Square constitutes the physical and architectural focus of the Bellows Falls Downtown Historic District. An unusually uniform array of three-story brick commercial blocks encloses and defines the Square, giving it a distinctly urban character that distinguishes it from the remainder of the village. One building clearly dominates the grouping: the Rockingham Town Hall (#34) whose crenelated square tower soars nearly twice the height of the surrounding blocks. Its vertical thrust compensates architecturally for its subordinate location on the long side of the Square; most principal public buildings in Vermont village centers are sited in a more dominant terminal location.

During the latter 1970's, the appearance of the Square has been markedly improved by the introduction of various street furniture, plantings, and pedestrian spaces. These features have begun to transform the Square from a barren paved expanse occupied overwhelmingly by motor vehicles to a visually attractive space suitable for pedestrian activities. However, one major impediment remains to the success of this effort: heavy truck traffic continues to flow through the Square (bound to and from New Hampshire) causing serious disruption of its activity and environmental character.

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Concurrently with the physical improvements made in the Square, several of its buildings have received substantial rehabilitation. The largest project involves the ongoing interior reconstruction of the prominent Centennial Block (#32) whose elaborate High Victorian Italianate facade survived a 1978 fire that partly destroyed the interior. The buildings that define the north and south ends of the Square, the commercial block (#43) and the Gast Block (#24); respectively, have been sympathetically refurbished to enhance their positions at the visual termini of the Square. These and other preservation activities within the historic district will receive more detailed discussion in Section 8.

The other buildings in the historic district are generally in fair to good condition. Only two principal buildings (#17, #33) have been altered to the extent of losing their original facades. Another (#20) has been substantially reduced in size by fire. In several cases, storefronts have been sheathed with inappropriate contemporary materials, detracting somewhat from the original character of the buildings.

Descriptions of individual buildings in the Historic District follow. (Numbers refer to enclosed sketch map.)

1. Former Freight House (off Depot Street): photo # 6

The only surviving representative of the first generation of railroad buildings in Bellows Falls, this one-and-one-half story, gable-roofed, brick structure was probably erected by the Cheshire Railroad circa 1860. The building stands parallel to the tracks a short distance southeast of the passenger depot (#3). Originally a side track passed through the northeast side of the building, entering and leaving through tall rectangular doorways in the gable-end elevations. The Beers Atlas of 1869 indicates that the building was a freight house at that time; however, the interior track suggests that it may also have been used for repair of rolling stock. Currently (1980) it is used only for storage.

Although now somewhat deteriorated, a deeply corbelled cornice and frieze constitutes the outstanding decorative feature of the building, following both the horizontal and raking eaves of the slate-shingled roof with partial returns on the gable ends. An oculus (now infilled) provides additional distinction to each gable end. The other fenestration has been successively altered; several openings - including the former track doorways - have been infilled with brick or wood although the original stone lintels and sills remain generally in place.

2. Former Railway Express Agency Building (Depot Street): photo #7

The most elaborately detailed (while also the smallest) of the remaining railroad buildings in Bellows Falls, this one-story, hip-roofed brick building stands next to the tracks directly southeast of the passenger depot (#3). Constructed between 1878 and 1885, the

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four-bay square main block has segmental-arched openings occupied by paneled doors and mostly six-over-six sash with rock-faced sills. Crowning the main roof, a hip-roofed cupola displays small round-arched louvered openings beneath a modillion cornice; an original finial and weathervane atop the cupola has been replaced by a metal communications antenna.

The northwest elevation of the building with its three doorways is sheltered by a deeply overhanging extension of the roof supported by oversized wood braces. On the opposite side of the main block, a longer extension of the roof caps a smaller-scale wing with loading bays. Along the trackside (northeast) elevation, a two-panel platform canopy supported by square wood posts is attached to the eaves; this is the only surviving segment of the platform canopies that formerly surrounded the depot.

Following the demise of the Railway Express Agency circa 1970, the Green Mountain Railroad (lessee of the adjacent tracks) installed its freight office in the building. Now maintained in excellent condition, the building conveys to an unusual extent its original appearance.

3. Boston and Maine Railroad Depot (Depot Street): photo #8

Standing at the junction point of the railroad lines through Bellows Falls, this one-story brick building was constructed in 1922 to replace a larger brick predecessor destroyed by fire. The depot occupies a triangular site bounded by the intersecting tracks; on its north, east, and west elevations, polygonal pavilions extend toward the tracks to adapt the rectangular main block more closely to the site. The east and west elevations have similar facades, with both having double-leaf main entrances opening onto the encircling platform.

A shallow-pitched roof caps the main block; along its ridge, a two-stage monitor rises to provide a higher ceiling above the central waiting room. The largest pavilion - formerly occupied by the lunchroom and newsstand - projects from the north elevation, the coupled sash of its seven sides providing a panoramic view of the nearby Connecticut River valley. A smaller half-octagonal pavilion on the west elevation formerly contained the agent's office, enabling visibility along the north-south main line of the Boston and Maine; a similar pavilion balances the east elevation. The south end of the main block formerly contained the baggage facilities, with large service doors opening toward both tracks. Platform canopies originally extended around the building and along both tracks; the canopies were demolished in the 1960's.

Currently (1980) the depot serves only Amtrak passenger trains that travel the Connecticut Valley (north-south) line between New York and Montreal. Normal station services were terminated at Bellows Falls in 1966 when the Boston and Maine discontinued its last passenger trains along the route; those services have not been restored since Amtrak resumed passenger operations in 1972. The Boston and Maine maintains the building in adequate condition and continues to use the former baggage room for maintenance-of-way equipment; the waiting room is opened for Amtrak passengers.

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4. House (86 Canal Street): *photo #9*

Greek Revival (vernacular); pre-1869; 1-1/2 stories; woodframed; clapboarded; gable roof with slate shingles, dormer on north slope; paneled pilasters support full entablature; altered enclosed porch on east facade; bay window on north elevation; smaller-scale wing on west.

5. House (82 Canal Street): *photo #9*

Similar to House #4; 3 bays; composition siding; cross-gable pavilion on south elevation; porch on east facade with bracketed turned posts; sidelighted main doorway; smaller-scale wing on west.

6. House (68 Canal Street): *photo #9*

This house and the adjacent House #7 constitute the only examples of Federal style domestic architecture in the Bellows Falls Downtown Historic District. The two houses appear essentially identical, built of brick on simple rectangular plans, one-and-one-half stories in height, and having their gable roofs oriented perpendicular to the street and canal. Their four-bay east gable facades display the same arrangement, distinguished by off-center transomed doorways, splayed lintels, and quadrant fans above the partial cornice returns. The five-bay south elevations are arranged symmetrically about center entrances. Originally both houses carried quadruple interior end chimneys; on this house, only two rear (west) chimneys remain in place.

An added entrance porch on the south elevation of this house incorporates turned posts with brackets. A smaller-scale, woodframed rear (west) wing retains slate shingles on its gable roof (unlike the main block); a large bay window projects from its south elevation.

7. House (Canal Street): *photo #9*

This house differs from its counterpart #6 (see description above) only in the manner of minor alterations. It retains the original slate shingles on its main roof along with the front (east) pair of chimneys (the rear pair having been removed). A gabled, pilastered surround has been added to its front (east) entrance partly concealing the original transom.

8. Apartment House (58 Canal Street):

Circa 1920; 3 stories; woodframed; composition siding; flat roof; three-story entrance porch inset into northeast corner; clapboarded, shed-roofed wing on south. Non-contributing.

9. House (50 Canal Street):

Circa 1850; 2-1/2 stories; 4 bays; woodframed; composition shingle siding (originally clapboarded); steep-pitch gable roof; full pediment on front (east) facade; peaked window surrounds on first, third stories of facade.

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9A. LaFoe's Garage (Canal Street):

Circa 1930; 1 story; brick; flat roof; red-tile coping on parapet of front (east) facade; 5 segmental-arched, keystoneed stall openings on east facade. Non-contributory.

10. Exner Block (5-25 Canal Street): Photo #10

This large woodframed block was constructed probably circa 1850 to contain tenements; it rose two-and-one-half stories to a gable roof oriented parallel to the street. In 1905-1907, the block was enlarged and transformed to its current appearance: three full stories plus an exposed basement on the canal (east) elevation, a flat roof, storefronts along Canal Street, and - its most extraordinary characteristic - complete exterior sheathing in stamped tin. Owing partly to decreased occupancy in recent decades, the appearance of the block has remained unaltered since its reconstruction.

The west facade presents to Canal Street a first-story array of projecting storefronts with deeply embayed display windows beneath a continuous canopy. The second story is marked by three pairs of symmetrically arranged oriel windows that align vertically with storefront bay windows. Lighting the third story are eighteen bays of standard sash, above which six attic windows are spaced between the major brackets of the deeply overhanging cornice. On the rear (east) elevation, a continuous porch is attached to the second story overlooking the canal.

Stamped tin in various patterns sheaths the entire exterior of the block, including the stylistic details. On the wall surfaces, the pattern suggests rock-faced cut stone with stringcourses delineating the upper stories. A different pattern surrounds the attic windows beneath a frieze embellished with rosettes and a floral-patterned cornice. Period photographs indicate that the exterior tin was originally polychromatic, a characteristic that has subsequently disappeared. The storefront interiors display a similar variety of tin sheathing that also remains intact.

11. Brown Block (1-5 Canal Street): Photo #11

Standing at the head of Canal Street (and the northeast corner of the Square), the three-story, flat-roofed Brown Block constitutes the most elaborately detailed woodframed commercial block in the Bellows Falls Downtown Historic District. The Queen Anne style block was constructed in 1890; a fire in 1906 caused extensive damage and the block was repaired the following year. Since then, the only substantial change in its appearance has been the removal of some exterior details in favor of the current composition siding.

An upper-story polygonal tower at its south corner dominates the Canal Street (west) facade of the Brown Block, interrupting the symmetry of the other components. The tower begins above the paneled storefronts whose large transomed display windows flank the recessed central entrance; a bellcast pent skirt shelters the storefronts and outlines the base of the tower. On the second and third stories of the facade, triplet windows occupy the central bays with that on the third story crowned by a round-arched panel displaying a fan motif; the tower is lighted by slender coupled sash. A rosetted cornice surmounts the facade, interrupted by a raised central parapet capped by a shallow pediment. The main cornice encircles the tower beneath its pyramidal-peaked roof.

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The Brown Block shares with the adjacent Exner Block (#10) the characteristic of having its stylistic details and trim sheathed with stamped tin in a variety of patterns, e.g., the pent skirt is covered with tin embossed with a shingle pattern. Originally the wall surfaces of the building were embellished with other ornamental devices, including clapboards hung both vertically and horizontally and stickwork on the spandrels; these features have been obscured by the composition shingle siding. The original slate shingles on the tower roof have been replaced by standing-seam metal.

12. Elks Block (2 Square): *Photo #12*

Constructed between 1885 and 1899, this three-story, flat-roofed commercial block stands at the north end of the brick row (#'s 12-15) that bounds the east side of the Square - a group of buildings that has been repeatedly ravaged by fire. Only the shell of the Elks Block survived the conflagration of 1912; lost with the roof was its elaborately detailed bracketed cornice bearing a central segmental pediment. Aside from much more recently altered storefronts, the rest of the building retains its original somewhat Romanesque appearance.

On its second and third stories, the front (west) facade is articulated by brick piers into three recessed panels: a four-bay central panel flanked by single-bay side panels. The central panel is distinguished by arcaded round-headed sash that share continuous rock-faced granite sills; the square-topped sash of the side panels occupy stilted segmental-arched openings. Rectangular recessed panels mark the spandrels between these two stories while corbelled checkerboard courses head the panels on the third story. A heavy rock-faced granite beltcourse crosses the facade below a simplified brick cornice. On the first story, the deeply recessed central entrance alcove remains (sheltering stairways to the first and raised basement levels), but the flanking storefronts have been completely sheathed with synthetic paneling.

13. Commercial Block (14 Square): *Photo #12*

This three-story, five-bay, flat-roofed brick commercial block originally possessed a more characteristically Italianate Revival appearance. Possibly constructed circa 1870, its shell has survived at least two major fires in the row along the east side of the Square. The 1912 fire completely gutted the block, destroying along with the roof its original cornice supported by paired scrolled brackets. In recent decades, the storefronts have been rebuilt with contemporary materials.

Like the adjacent Elks Block (#12), the front (west) facade of this block retains its original appearance on the second and third stories. The uniformly spaced window openings have rock-faced granite sills and shouldered, keystone, segmental-arched heads. After the 1912 fire, the cornice was rebuilt in simple corbelled courses that rise to a metal coping.

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14. Commercial Block (20 Square): Photo #12

A replacement for an earlier brick block destroyed in the fire of 1912, this three-story, gable-roofed, brick commercial block survived the next great fire in 1932 when the adjoining Hotel Windham burned. Its west facade displays an eclectic design incorporating elements of diverse stylistic origin.

The first two stories are divided vertically into three panels of display windows (first story) and coupled sash flanked by narrow fixed lights suggesting Chicago windows (second story) beneath a heavy stone cornice. On the third story, paired sash with stone lintels flank a central triptych window surmounted by a stylized semicircular arch that rises into the gable end beneath a date plaque (1912). The shallow-gabled roofline rises from horizontal lower ends to a slightly elevated horizontal segment at the ridge.

15. Former Hotel Windham (Square): Photo #13

The dominant building on the east side of the Square, this three-story, flat-roofed brick hotel was constructed in 1932-1933 to replace a larger predecessor destroyed by the fire of 1932. The architectural firm of Harper and West designed the Georgian Revival style building, the fourth hotel to have stood on the site. The large rectangular block defines the interior corner of the L-shaped Square; its west facade extends twelve bays along the north-south axis and its south elevation seven bays along the east-west axis.

The entrance facade of the hotel consists of the southernmost three-bay section of the west elevation distinguished by a concentration of stylistic elements. Sheltered by a suspended metal canopy, the recessed paneled doorway is flanked by transomed sash crowned by keystoned semicircular blind arches (repeated on the first three bays of the south elevation). Above a wide stone beltcourse, brick pilasters separate the upper story bays, rising to Ionic capitals that support a full stone entablature surmounted in turn by a brick parapet inset with groups of stone balusters. The stone entablature continues in diminished simpler form across both west and south elevations; the parapet continues only across the south.

Second and third story fenestration on the hotel consists of regularly spaced openings (grouped in three's on the west elevation) framed with keystoned flat-arched lintels and stone sills. Storefronts occupy the first story north of the hotel entrance. An enclosed 'sunporch' projects from the east half of the south elevation; between the large multi-pane windows, paired and triplet pilasters rise to support an overscaled entablature.

16. Gray Block or Star Hotel (54-58 Square); COMPLETELY DESTROYED BY FIRE 12/29/81

Photo #14

~~This three-story, four-by-four bay, flat-roofed brick block was constructed in 1860 following a great fire that destroyed much of the village center. The block encloses the east end of the Square, standing parallel to the north side of Bridge Street. Except for the two storefronts now sheathed with synthetic paneling, the Gray Block retains intact its original appearance; the building now contains a small hotel on its upper stories.~~

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~~On the main (west) facade, the four window bays are arranged in pairs within recessed panels framed by brick piers. Springing from the piers are segmental blind arches that surmount and repeat the line of the third-story segmental-arched window openings; similar windows on the second story are distinguished by shouldered surrounds. Rock-faced granite sills provide contrast of material and color. A brick cornice with prominent patterned corbel tables encircles the top of the building.~~

17. Green Mountain Power Block (6 Bridge Street):

This one-story brick building possesses a shallow-pitched gable roof concealed behind the stepped parapet that surmounts its main (south) facade. Built circa 1910, the side (east and west) elevations retain their original appearance: brick piers separate recessed window bays whose openings are framed by stone lintels and sills. In contrast, the front facade has been completely rebuilt circa 1950 and sheathed with synthetic paneling. Non-contributing owing to removal of historic facade.

18. United States Post Office (7 Bridge Street): Photo #15

Perhaps the most architecturally distinctive building in the Bellows Falls Downtown Historic District, the Post Office displays a unique blend predominantly of Spanish Colonial Revival Style elements together with Georgian Revival Style details applied to a two-story, stone-trimmed brick block. James A. Wetmore held the position of Acting Supervising Architect when the building was erected in 1930-1931. A local story - undoubtedly apocryphal - alleges that the plans of this building were actually intended for a post office in Santa Fe, New Mexico but somehow were misdirected to Bellows Falls.

The main block of the post office rises from a stone water table through a shallow second story to a flat roof concealed behind a low red-tiled parapet. A brick beltcourse inset with light stone diamonds separates the stories on the side (east and west) elevations, whose alternately coupled sash have keystone flat-arched lintels and stone sills. A one-story service wing is attached to the rear (south) elevation.

The symmetrically arranged front (north) facade presents to Bridge Street a one-story, five-bay, flat-roofed central section flanked by identical two-story, one-bay, red-tiled hip-roofed entrance pavilions. A range of five large pilastered, keystone, semicircular-arched windows extends across the one-story central section, suggesting the arcaded portales common to Spanish Colonial Revival buildings; at the roofline of this section, a denticulated cornice is surmounted by an ornamental iron railing. Set back deeply behind the facade line of the central section, the main block rises an additional story lighted by a range of five casement windows.

The identical flanking pavilions dominate the front facade, attracting attention to the twin main entrances recessed into their first stories. Reached by a flight of stone steps, each entrance consists of a double-leaf doorway surmounted by a semicircular iron-screened transome. A massive quoined stone surround expands from the paneled reveals of the doorway to support a denticulated stone cornice above a central cartouche. The cornice carries in turn a second-story balcony with a curved iron railing that protects a large double-leaf casement window recessed within a diminished stone surround.

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19. Howard Block (59 Square): *Photo #16*

This relatively unembellished brick commercial building consists of two attached blocks whose 14 bays form a continuous facade that largely defines the south end of the Square. The larger six-bay west block rises four stories to a flat roof encircled by a prominent denticulated cornice, incorporating at its front (north) corners the capitals of former pilasters. The eight-bay east block rises only three stories to a more modest cornice; the third story of its east elevation displays the unusual application of slate shingles as wall sheathing. The recessed central entrance storefronts on both blocks have been sheathed with modern materials.

Originally the component blocks of this building stood detached, and their appearances reflected the period of their construction circa 1850. The west block - known as the Mammoth - rose three-and-one-half stories to a gabled roof; a two-story columned porch sheltered the storefronts on its north gable facade. Other stylistic details included quadrant fans on the same gable end and a semi-elliptical fan at the gable peak. The separate east block rose two-and-one-half stories to a gable roof; on its north gable facade, a second-story porch overhung the storefronts.

In 1887, L. G. and C. E. Howard purchased the Mammoth block for their existing hardware business and enlarged it to its present form. Five years later (in 1892), the partners bought the adjacent building and enlarged it also to its present form, attaching it to the Mammoth block in the process. At the turn of the century, the Mammoth block carried a prominent modillion cornice atop the third story, above which paneled corner pilasters rose to the existing main cornice; its storefronts were lighted by large display windows with transoms. The east block's storefronts possessed extraordinarily tall display windows owing to the downward slope of the ground. In 1911, the Howards added a two-story, gable-roofed south wing to an existing three-story, gable-roofed wing attached to the rear of the Mammoth block. Subsequently, both blocks have been stripped of most of their stylistic details, and their storefronts have been completely altered.

20. Former Bellows Falls Times Block (55-57 Square): *Photo #16, 20*

Standing on a partly exposed course stone foundation atop the Boston and Maine Railroad tunnel under the Square, this woodframed, clapboarded, flat-roofed block has been substantially reduced from its original size by fire and alteration. The building was constructed circa 1860 to a height of three stories with four bays across its front (north) facade; a storefront had large display windows with semicircular transoms while the second-story windows were segmental-arched. After 1885, the building received additional decoration: a central gabled parapet and paired brackets were added to the cornice and shouldered molded surrounds were applied to the second-story windows. Subsequently, the building was extensively damaged by fire in 1919 and again in 1931, and then renovated in 1951.

The building now consists of a rebuilt two-story, shed-roofed north block that fronts a one-story remnant of the original depth. A vehicle portal passes through the left side of the front block, leading to the rear yard of the adjoining Howard Block (#19). A doorway to the left of the rectangular tunnel portal retains its semicircular transom, the only surviving stylistic evidence of the original facade. A modern "pediment" has been added to shelter the first-story office front.

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21. Boston and Maine Railroad Tunnel (off Mill Street): Photo #17

In 1851, the Vermont Valley Railroad constructed this 400-foot tunnel to carry its Brattleboro line (now the Boston and Maine Railroad) beneath the emerging commercial center of Bellows Falls. The single-track tunnel is lined with coursed cut-stone blocks; on the portals, radiating voussoirs outline its round-arched ceiling. In the 1970's, the floor of the tunnel was excavated and the track lowered to allow passage of extra-height contemporary rolling stock, e.g., auto rack cars and "piggyback" equipment, on this important main line.

22. White Mountain Paper Company Mill (Mill Street): Photo #18

Occupying a sloping area below the south end of the Square, this paper mill complex comprises three major brick blocks (#22A-C) plus numerous attached wings and sheds. (Non-contributing sheds and wings are indicated on the enclosed sketch map.) Most of the buildings were constructed in the last quarter of the nineteenth century and belonged to different small paper companies. Power was originally obtained from water delivered by a pentrough that tapped the canal. The present company has become the last paper manufacturer in the historic paper mill district surrounding the south end of the canal.

The four-by-seven bay principal block (#22A) of the mill complex stands near the railroad track just south of the tunnel, rising two-and-one-half stories to a slate-shingled gable roof. A heavy corbelled, crenelated cornice encircles the block, with partial returns on the gable ends. Fenestration consists generally of twelve-over-twelve and eight-over-eight sash with rock-faced stone sills and segmental-arched openings. Attached to the east elevation, an outside elevator tower rises three stories to a gabled roof.

The three-bay by six-bay south block (#22B) stands slightly apart from the principal block, rising two stories to a shallow-pitched gable roof. A corbelled sawtoothed cornice encircles this block, whose fenestration consists of uniformly spaced segmental-arched openings with stone sills (some now infilled). A hipped-roof square elevator tower engages the east elevation; also attached (on a lower level) is a two-story brick block built circa 1873 that originally functioned as an independent paper mill. Steel gangways lead from the second stories both of the principal and south blocks to a loading dock alongside the railroad tracks.

Lower on the slope to the east of the principal block and its accretion of sheds stands another two-story brick block (#22C) with a shallow-pitched gable roof and segmental-arched window openings. Constructed circa 1873, this block and its similar one-story south wing constituted originally another independent paper mill; a branch of the canal passed under the building to provide water power.

23. Adams Grist Mill (Mill Street): Photo #19

John Cary built this grist mill in 1831 but it entered the possession of the Adams family in 1875 and remained in that ownership until it ceased operation in the early 1960's. The entire water privilege at the south end of the canal belonged originally to this mill, and it retained the "first right of water" and an exclusive right for grist milling after other water-powered industries were established in the vicinity. Much of the mill's machinery - including both hydraulic turbine and electrically powered systems - survives intact and

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operational. Complementing its technological importance, the mill has been adapted to contain a museum of local history.

The Adams mill stands against a steep bank immediately south of the paper mill complex (#22). The front (west) facade rises two-and-one-half stories above the bank while the body of the mill follows the slope downward two additional stories. The gable front consists of a stone first story sheltered by a continuous canopy that demarcates the wood-framed, clapboarded upper stories. Atop the slate-shingled gable roof, a gabled monitor extends nearly the length of the ridge. Attached to the mill's south elevation is a two-story (descending to three on the east), shed-roofed brick wing with segmental-arched door and window openings, stone sills, and a corbelled cornice.

24. Gast Block (Square): photo #20, a1

Bounded by Mill and Westminster Streets at the southwest corner of the Square, this three-story, flat-roofed brick commercial block conforms in plan to the tetrahedral shape of its site. The block was erected in 1875 and retains to an exceptional extent its historic appearance. In the 1970's, the block was sympathetically refurbished and now presents to the Square the best preserved commercial exterior in the historic district.

The three-bay Square (north) facade and the seven-bay Westminster Street (west) facade are lighted on their upper stories by flat-topped window openings with rock-faced granite lintels and sills; a prominent corbelled, bracketed (in brick) cornice encircles the block with recessed panels inset between the brackets. On the main (north) storefront, full-height display windows flank the truncated corner entrance with cast-iron pilasters. A secondary storefront - whose similar pilasters support a massive stone lintel - occupies the south end of the west facade; its former display windows have been infilled with wood panels.

25. Commercial Block (6-16 Westminster Street): photo #21

Three stories; woodframed; brick veneer on west facade; flat roof; three storefronts with recessed central entrances; coupled sash alternate with glass block panels in upper story bands of windows; diamond-patterned beltcourse beneath cornice; probably enlarged and remodelled circa 1925 from a nineteenth century woodframed, gable-roofed building on site.

26. Cray Block (18-30 Westminster Street): photo #21

Three stories; woodframed; brick veneer on west facade, clapboarded on south and east elevation; four storefronts with recessed central entrances; five bays of coupled sash on upper stories; diamond-patterned polychromed beltcourse atop second story; third story added 1936; probably enlarged and remodelled circa 1925 from nineteenth century woodframed buildings on site.

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27. Former Gates Garage (46 Westminster Street):

Circa 1900; two stories on west facade, three on east elevation; 11 bays, woodframed; clapboarded; composition siding; flat roof; first story altered with permastone cladding (original display windows and service doors removed); lower-level two-story east wing; probably first specially built automobile service garage in historic district.

28. Edward Arms Block (29-35 Westminster Street): Photo #22

Standing on a sloping site between the converging Westminster and Church Streets, the Edward Arms Block marks the southwest limits both of the business and historic districts. This large brick commercial-residential block rises four stories on its seven-bay Westminster Street (east) facade with a rank of three storefronts at street level. The opposite Church Street (west) facade rises three stories from the upward sloping ground to the deeply overhanging modillion cornice that encircles the block's flat roof (excepting the blank north elevation). When constructed circa 1890, the block stood one story lower; the top story was added circa 1910 and the joint remains marked by a secondary cornice that encircles the building.

The Westminster Street storefronts are framed by cast-iron Ionic pilasters that support a full entablature; their sidelighted, transomed doorways are recessed to the left of the somewhat altered display windows. On the upper stories, the mostly coupled windows have rock-faced stone sills and carry cornices similar to that above the storefronts. An exterior three-story stair tower engages the south elevation; a corner entrance porch provides access to its middle level from Church Street. The main entrance to the latter (west) facade is reached by a freestanding stair bridge to a second-story porch with turned posts and a denticulated cornice.

29. Commercial Block (17 Westminster Street): Photo #22

Probably the oldest commercial building in the Bellows Falls Downtown Historic District, this woodframed, gable-roofed block was built circa 1840. The building rises three-and-one-half stories on its eight-bay front (east) facade; the opposite (west) elevation has one less story owing to the rising ground. The two-bay north gable elevation is distinguished by a full pediment, below which an oriel window projects from the left bay of the second story. Originally sheathed with clapboards, the building has been recovered with composition siding and its Westminster Street storefronts have been substantially altered.

30. Crayco Block (Westminster Street): 1932 Photo #24

Three stories; 13 bays on east facade; set-back top story added 1938; brick (veneer?); flat roof with perimeter parapet, tile coping; diamond-patterned polychromed beltcourse atop third story; hinged brick corners; three recessed-entrance storefronts on east facade; two storefronts on south facade (second story) next to hillside steps between Westminster and Church Streets.

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31. Aldrich Block (49 Square): Photo #24

This small two-story, four-bay, flat-roofed brick commercial block has been subjected to substantial alteration since its construction circa 1875; only the marble-trimmed second story preserves its original appearance. The main (east) facade was originally surmounted by an elaborate bracketed cornice carrying a balustrade interrupted by a central gabled decorative panel; this assembly has been removed, leaving only a patterned beltcourse on the expansive surface formerly covered by the cornice. The original storefront consisted of a recessed central entrance flanked by large display windows; recently it has been completely rebuilt on a deeply recessed plane and trimmed with pseudo-colonial details.

32. Centennial Block (37 Square): Photo #25

Constructed by the National Bank of Bellows Falls during the centennial anniversary of the Revolutionary War, the Centennial Block constitutes the singular example of the High Victorian Italianate style in the Bellows Falls Downtown Historic District. The three-story, flat-roofed, stone-trimmed brick building actually comprises two blocks: the seven-bay north block (built 1875) displays the more elaborately detailed main (east) facade while the six-bay south block (built c. 1877) follows a similar scale and facade arrangement but with simpler decoration. The storefronts on both blocks have been completely altered from their original appearances, most recently during an ongoing renovation of the building following a 1978 fire that caused extensive interior damage.

On its symmetrically arranged upper stories, the Centennial Block retains nearly intact its original appearance. The north block is distinguished by the shouldered stone surrounds of its slender two-over-two sash that are linked by corbelled beltcourses at the impost level and interspersed with rectangular recessed panels; the central bays are marked by paired sash. A massive cornice surmounts the facade, its patterned corbel tables interrupted by an imposing central gabled parapet that bears the inscription, "Centennial," above a hooded circular niche. Both the parapet and the corbelled-brick terminal cornice brackets were originally crowned by pinnacles; the north bracket's pinnacle has been removed along with the delicate metal cresting that originally embellished the cornice. Prominent stone pilasters flank the south storefront and the recessed central main entrance with its segmental-arched doorways; an identical pilaster has been removed from the north storefront.

The less decorative south block possesses smooth stone lintels set above the beltcourses that link its window openings. A massive corbelled cornice similar to that on the north block rises from distinctive saw-toothed corbel tables. During the present renovation of this block, its south storefront has been completely infilled while the north storefront has been deeply recessed to accommodate an atrium-style main entrance to the entire building; only the original stone-trimmed brick storefront pilasters survive.

33. Bellows Falls Trust Block (23 Square): Photo #25

The three public elevations (east, south, and north) of this repeatedly altered two-story, flat-roofed brick commercial building represent three different stages of its appearance. Originally two distinct late nineteenth century blocks stood on the site; only the south (side) elevation of the south block survives, with rock-faced stone sills and lintels on

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its window openings (some now infilled) and a corbelled denticulated cornice. The plainer north elevation of the present building derives from a twentieth century renovation of the north block - the former three-story, six-bay, highly detailed Wilson Block. In 1979, the east fronts of both blocks were removed and rebuilt into the present continuous symmetrical facade articulated by brick piers into six panels. Non-contributing owing to removal of historic facade.

34. Rockingham Town Hall (7-15 Square): *Photo #26*

The present Rockingham Town Hall was erected in 1926 to replace a Romanesque style predecessor destroyed the previous year by fire. The three-story, flat-roofed brick building possesses a scale somewhat larger than the surrounding three-story commercial blocks and its monumental two-stage tower soars twice that height to give the Town Hall a clearly dominant position on the Square. The architects of the building - Larson and Wells of Hanover, New Hampshire - created an unusual eclectic design that incorporates elements especially of the Gothic, Romanesque, and Georgian Revival styles.

The main (east) facade of the five-bay office block contains on the first story a pair of storefronts enframed by pilasters bearing an overscaled entablature. The second story is distinguished by large multi-pane, round-headed sash. Above the flat-topped sash of the third story, arcaded corbel tables rise to the corbelled cornice.

Recessed into the southeast corner of the building, the square clock and bell tower contains on its first story the classically detailed main entrance to the Town Hall: a pilastered, round-arched, recessed doorway surmounted by a broken pediment that carries a second-story, segmental-pedimented plaque bearing the inscription, 'Rockingham Town Hall 1752-1926.' Above the roofline of the main block, slender round-headed louvers mark the tower's bell chamber, rising nearly to the arcaded parapet that terminates the main stage. The smaller-scaled upper stage displays the circular faces of the town clock and is surmounted by a crenellated parapet; a large arrow weathervane stands atop the tower on a curvilinear iron base. To the left of the tower, a three-story stair tower projects from the main block's south elevation.

Behind the main block, there extends a large west block that contains a theater originally known as the "Opera House" but now used principally as a commercial cinema. Brick piers subdivide the north and south (side) elevations of the theater block into six panels, opened on the second story by large round-headed multi-pane sash. The theater lobby shares the tower entrance to the main block; the stage occupies the west end of the auditorium.

35. Commercial Block (Rockingham Street): *Photo #27*

Modernistic style details; one story; brick; flat roof; fluted corner/intermediate pylons; foliar relief band on parapet of east facade; storefronts altered; damaged by 1944 fire.

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36. I. O. O. F. Block (20-26 Rockingham Street): Photo #27

1938; two stories; five bays; brick veneer, stucco; flat roof; glass storefronts with recessed central entrances; keystone flat arches on second-story windows; denticulated cornice below top of east facade; entrance vestibule on north elevation.

37. Hotel Rockingham (Rockingham Street): Photo #28

Leverett T. Lovell, II, owned this imposing Second Empire style brick railroad hotel at the time of its construction in 1883; his name and that date are emblazoned in the polychromatic scalloped slate shingles on the west and south slopes, respectively, of the building's mansard. The Rockingham Street (west) facade rises three stories to the mansard while the rear of the building descends the slope to the level of Canal Street, gaining two additional lower stories. The latter gave the hotel the advantage of being directly accessible - across the Depot Street canal bridge - from the railroad station, the principal source of the hotel's clientele during its early decades. In 1937, an undecorated, nearly windowless, rectangular brick block (#37A) containing a theater was constructed next to the hotel on the Canal Street level, its entrance opening through the south end of the hotel's front facade; this block is considered non-contributing to the historic district.

The main (west) facade of the hotel presents to Rockingham Street an extraordinary arcaded first story containing storefronts and the main entrance. Prior to the construction of the theater entrance that displaced the southernmost three bays, a rank of fifteen similar scaled, round-arched, keystone windows and doorways comprised a continuous arcade across the facade. The ten-bay upper stories provide the contrast of segmental-arched window openings with shouldered surrounds while the mansard dormers display peaked cornices. Heavy brick corner piers rise to the main cornice supported by paired brackets that encircle the building below the mansard. An original square cupola with round-headed sash has been removed from the center of the roof.

After a period of decline (and conversion to a rooming house), the hotel was closed in the 1960's and allowed to deteriorate. Currently plans exist to rehabilitate the original block, demolish the unused theater block and build a new six-story east block; the planned complex will contain both commercial space and housing for senior citizens.

38. Former Chimes Cafe (37 Rockingham Street): Photo #29

The main (west) facade of this two-story, woodframed, flat-roofed building contributes to the Bellows Falls Downtown Historic District a modest example of the Streamlined Style dating from 1937. The entire front of the building is sheathed with polychromatic enameled metal panels; above a maroon foundation, the salmon wall surface is articulated by paired horizontal red stripes outlining the stores. From the recessed central entrance sheltered by a curved marquee, convex reveals with curved sidelights lead outward to display windows that terminate in semicircles near the corners of the facade. Above the blind second story rises a parapet with an elevated central panel.

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In contrast to the main facade, the nearly hidden side (north and south) elevations are sheathed with composition siding. The rear of the building descends an additional story to the Canal Street level.

39. Commercial Block (35 Rockingham Street): photo #29

Circa 1870; 2-1/2 stories (3-1/2 on east elevation); woodframed; clapboarded; gable roof with slate shingles; altered storefront on front (west) facade; coupled sash on second story; one-story south addition with extended storefront connects to adjacent building #40; ex-livery operated by Lewis C. Lovell for Hotel Rockingham (#37).

40. Lovell Block (27 Rockingham Street): photo #29

Circa 1870; 2-1/2 stories (3-1/2 on east elevation); woodframed; clapboarded; gable roof with slate shingles, gabled dormers on south slope; second-story rectangular oriel on west facade; storefronts extended with modern materials to match facade line of building #39.

41. Bellows Falls No. 1 Fire Station (Rockingham Street): photo #30

Although erected after the turn of the present century (in 1904), the stone-trimmed brick No. 1 Fire Station displays simplified elements of the Romanesque Style both on its three-story Rockingham Street front facade and the four-story Canal Street east facade. The west front is dominated by a pair of two-story, round-arched bays: capiteled corner and central piers flank the two first-story engine stalls and support on the second story (above a continuous rock-faced stone sill) massive keystone round arches inset with multi-section windows. On the third story, a central segmental-arched Chicago-style window is flanked by single sash. The corner piers rise to corbel tables below the overhanging eaves of the hipped roof.

Atop the northeast corner of the roof stands a square hose-drying tower also capped by a hipped roof with prominent eaves projections supported by scrolled brackets. On the five-bay Canal Street facade, the main entrance occupies the round-arched, keystone central bay; the upper stories are partly shrouded by a steel fire escape. The fire station retains essentially its original appearance with the exception of the engine stall doors: segmented overhead doors have replaced the original triple paneled doors, each of which was surmounted by a semicircular transom with radiating muntins.

42. Commercial Block (7-13 Rockingham Street): photo #30

The Rockingham Street (west) facade of this building consists of a two-story, nine-bay brick (vener?) extension added to the original west front circa 1910. The extended facade contains two storefronts with recessed central entrances flanked by large display windows; the second story is lighted by uniformly spaced segmental-arched window openings.

The original block consists of a two-and-one-half story, woodframed, clapboarded building whose slate-shingled gable roof is oriented parallel to the street. The raking eaves of its south gable end are decorated with curved brackets and pendant finials. Similar details were applied also to the original west facade along with corner pilasters and a full-length second-story balcony.

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43. Commercial Block: (Square): *Photo #31*

Facing the Square between the converging Rockingham and Canal Streets, this relatively unadorned three-story, woodframed, clapboarded block resulted from the circa 1890 reconstruction of a much older (circa 1820) two-story building on the site. On its upper stories, the south facade is composed of two two-bay wall planes joined at slight angle; the left (west) wall plane may represent the original building and the right plane the enlargement. A parapeted storefront with transomed display windows protrudes from the front facade and extends the width of the building with the main entrance on its truncated southwest corner; the storefront extension replaced an original open porch that sheltered two storefront entrances. A deeply overhanging cornice encircles the building's flat roof on the three street elevations.

44. Bridge Street Bridge: 1929

One span; concrete arch; concrete wingwalls; paneled concrete railings; fluted metal lamp post at each corner. Non-contributing.

45. Boston and Maine Railroad Bridge: 1929

One span; plate girder; one track; north abutment - cut stone blocks; south abutment - concrete. Non-contributing.

46. Depot Street Bridge: 1909

One span; concrete arch; stone wingwall on southeast; steel pipe railings. Non-contributing.

47. Green Mountain Railroad Bridge:

One span; Warren through truss (offset trusses); one track; concrete abutments with cut stone wingwall on northwest; recent wood walkways flank track. Non-contributing.

48. Bellows Falls Canal:

The original canal past Bellows Falls was dug during the decade 1791-1802; it had an average width of 22 feet and a depth of four feet. North of the present Bridge Street bridge (#44), the canal followed the alignment of the present waterway. The main guard gates stood at the bridge site, from which the canal veered southwestward through a series of eight locks - each 75 feet in length by 20 feet in width - that lifted boats over the 48.3-foot difference recorded on an 1824 plan of the works between the river levels above and below the Great Falls. The canal also served to power a variety of mills located near it, with the water coming from a mill pond that separated the upper two "Stone Hole" locks from the lower six locks.

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The opening of railroads along the Connecticut River valley at the mid-point of the nineteenth century caused an abrupt and soon complete diversion of traffic from the river boats. Use of the Bellows Falls canal for navigation ceased about 1858 and the locks were removed in succeeding years. Beginning in 1870, the woodpulp paper industry was established in Bellows Falls, based on the large available resource of water power. The canal became a conduit for the water needed to power the rapidly expanding mills built around its south end. In 1874, it was greatly enlarged - to 75 feet in width and 17 feet in depth - with steam-powered granite head gates to regulate the increased flow. By 1908, when the first concrete diversion dam was constructed in the river at the head of the canal, it provided a total of about 15,000 horsepower to the various mills.

The next great shift in the use of the canal followed the conversion of the mills to electrical power during the early years of the present century. In 1927-1928, the canal was enlarged to its present 100-foot width, and redirected to carry water to the turbines of the large hydroelectric generating station constructed at the same time directly south of the Bridge Street bridge, approximately 1700 feet from the north end of the canal and 300 feet from the river to the south. The bottom of the canal was lined then with concrete, and its banks were overlaid with rip-rap set in concrete-framed bays.

During about nine months of the year, nearly the entire flow of the Connecticut River is diverted through the canal to the generating station, leaving the falls almost dry. In the near future, however, the planned construction of a fishway leading around the generating station into the canal will enable anadromous species - particularly the Atlantic salmon - to resume their migration past Bellows Falls to traditional spawning grounds on northern tributaries of the river. The completion of this project will mark the beginning of yet another era in the history of the canal's usage.

The inclusion of the canal as a contributing component of the District is based upon its strong historical associations with the development of the District. Although the physical structure of the canal has been significantly altered over the years to accommodate changes in use, the canal retains its non-architectural qualities of location, setting, feeling and association.

49. Garage (off Mill Street):

Gable-roofed garage of recent construction with metal sheathing. This building does not contribute to the historic character of the District.

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Soon after the construction of the bridge, a way appeared to overcome the barrier presented by Bellows Falls to river traffic: the construction of a canal to bypass the falls. Financed by English capital organized into the "Company for Rendering Connecticut River Navigable by Bellows Falls," the digging began in 1792 along a half-mile route connecting the upper and lower boat landings on the Vermont side of the river. The work proved more difficult and expensive than anticipated, and a full decade passed before the first boat transited the eight locks. Opened to traffic in October, 1802, the Bellows Falls canal ranks among the oldest canals in the United States. Earlier in the decade of construction at Bellows Falls, other canals had been completed along the Connecticut River in Massachusetts, making it the first major river in the country to receive that kind of improvement for navigation.

The initial industrial development at Bellows Falls followed soon the completion of the canal, which provided water to drive the mills. In 1802, Bill Blake came to Bellows Falls and erected a paper mill directly behind the present Adams Grist Mill (#23); Blake's was the first paper mill in Vermont and the precursor of Bellows Falls' largest nineteenth century industry. Ten years later, disaster struck the nascent industry when fire destroyed the paper and other mills; however, Blake rebuilt at once a much larger paper mill and the other mills were also soon replaced.

A detailed "Plan of Bellows Falls" surveyed by L. Baldwin for the canal company in 1824 shows nearly 50 buildings in the emerging village. Grouped around the south end of the canal where the slope provided sufficient head for water power were two sawmills, a carding shop, an oil mill, and the paper mill (sold the same year and then burned in 1846). The business district was taking its distinctive shape around the L-shaped Square (an open traveled area unlike the usual village green) although several openings remained. Bellows Falls' first inn, Robertson's Tavern - built in 1817 - defined the interior corner of the Square on the site of the later Hotel Windham (#15). Only seven years after the map was drawn, John Cary built the grist mill (#23) later owned by the Adams family. The growing village received its corporate charter in 1834, distinguishing it from the surrounding township of Rockingham.

Meanwhile traffic on the river (and through the canal) also continued to expand. By 1810 the completion of other canals opened about 250 miles of the Connecticut River to continuous navigation. At the same time, steam propulsion was being developed; perhaps the earliest successful experiment occurred on the Connecticut itself, 65 miles north of Bellows Falls at Fairlee, Vermont where Samuel Morey launched his first primitive steam-powered craft in 1793. In the 1820's, various efforts were made to introduce regular steam navigation on the Connecticut, and service reached its erratic peak in 1831 when small steamers plied different stages of the river between Wells River, Vermont (80 miles north of Bellows Falls) and Hartford, Connecticut. However, the principal operators, the Connecticut River Valley Steam-boat Company, went bankrupt that year and service dwindled thereafter. The usual river craft remained the flat-bottomed boat propelled by long poles, square sails, the river's current, and occasionally a steam tug.

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Along with the boat traffic, great formations of logs floated down the Connecticut from the forests of northern Vermont and New Hampshire to the mills of Massachusetts. The logs were pinned together into 12-by-60-foot "boxes;" six boxes formed a "raft" and several rafts were taken down the river together. A rough shanty was mounted aboard one box to provide living quarters for the crew. At Bellows Falls, the rafts were broken apart for passage through the canal and then reassembled to continue the trip, a laborious and lengthy task that usually attracted many spectators to the canal banks.

The decade of the 1840's brought to Bellows Falls the railroad fever then sweeping the country, prompted largely by the editorial enthusiasm of the Bellows Falls Gazette. During the middle of the decade, charters were granted in New Hampshire and Vermont for several lines that would soon reach Bellows Falls; the railroad era was about to begin and bring the canal era to an abrupt end.

The first line actually constructed to the Great Falls, the Cheshire Railroad, came from Keene in its namesake county of southern New Hampshire, connecting there with a line to Boston. Its inaugural train arrived at the New Hampshire side of the falls the first day of 1849 to a great celebration; the first railroad bridge - a timber truss bridge of two 140-foot spans - was constructed later the same year to enable trains to reach the Bellows Falls depot. Concurrently a connecting line, known as the Sullivan Railroad after the county of its location, was built northward along the New Hampshire side of the river to Windsor, Vermont and a connection there with a line to northern Vermont. At the end of 1849, a third main line was opened by the Rutland and Burlington Railroad from Bellows Falls northwestward across the Green Mountains to its namesake towns in western Vermont.

The last main line in the railroad network radiating from Bellows Falls was added in 1851 when the Vermont Valley Railroad completed its line southward to Brattleboro (and a connection to Springfield, Massachusetts and beyond) along the Vermont side of the Connecticut River. The gradient of the Vermont Valley line required the construction of a 400-foot stone masonry tunnel beneath the east leg of the Square - one of only two railroad tunnels in Vermont. The same year, the Sullivan Railroad built its first bridge across the Connecticut near the north end of the canal, giving its trains access to the Bellows Falls depot; this bridge provided the final link to interchange among the four main lines. Subsequently the railroad significance of Bellows Falls would grow to the extent that it ranked among the most important junctions in northern New England.

The railroads brought a new kind of economic activity to Bellows Falls: in 1851, a lavishly appointed, four-story brick hostelry called the Island House was erected on the knoll south of the depot, catering to summer tourists. Wealthy residents of Southern cities became its principal clientele, either stopping en route to the White Mountains of northern New Hampshire or staying the entire summer. Within a decade, however, the Civil War interrupted this traffic and the hotel gradually declined while various industries encroached on its elaborately landscaped grounds above the falls.

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The rapid development of railroads throughout the Connecticut Valley caused an abrupt shift of traffic away from the much slower river boats. Navigation through the Bellows Falls canal ceased about 1858, and in 1866 the English owners sold their entire holdings of canal, dam, land, and buildings at a substantial loss. The canal became exclusively a source of water to drive the several mills along its banks, and its deteriorated locks were gradually removed.

The developing village received a setback in 1860 when one of the worst fires in its history swept the mostly woodframed buildings along the east side of the Square. Reconstruction after that fire introduced what became Bellows Falls' standard commercial building of the latter nineteenth century (and the principal building type of the historic district): the three-story, flat-roofed brick block containing storefronts and upper-story office or residential space. The Gray Block (#16) remains the least altered example of the first generation of that building type.

The Beers Atlas of 1869 provides a detailed map of Bellows Falls on the verge of its most rapid expansion in history. The village then possessed some 225 buildings and about 1200 inhabitants. Within the historic district, various mills and manufactories occupied the industrial area "under the hill," as the area around the south end of the canal was known; the latter included the scythe snath factory of Frost, Derby and Company that would become the largest snath producer in the world by the century's end. The railroads' switching yards covered the north end of the island around their junction; the first brick depot stood on the site of its successor (#3) and a semicircular locomotive roundhouse occupied the tip of the island next to the canal's north end. The residential development of Canal Street had reached its peak while the Square had not yet been fully rebuilt from the devastating 1860 fire.

The decade of the 1870's brought to Bellows Falls a phenomenal expansion of industrial activity and accompanying commercial development. This derived largely from the efforts of William A. Russell, who in 1869 acquired the rights to the canal's water power and proceeded immediately to build a paper mill using wood pulp for raw material. The mill's original cylinder machine - known as the "Mayflower" - was one of the first in the United States to convert wood pulp to paper, a process invented in Maine in 1863 (the earlier paper mills in Bellows Falls had used rags for material). This machine and mill precipitated the development of Bellows Falls into an important manufacturing center.

In 1871, Russell bought controlling interest in the canal company and undertook a massive expansion both of the paper industry and the canal's power capacity. To achieve the latter, the canal was substantially deepened and widened, a larger diversion dam was constructed, and granite head gates were installed to regulate the increased flow. In 1872, after starting another mill to make heavy cardboard, Russell consolidated his various enterprises into the Fall Mountain Paper Company, which dominated the Bellows Falls paper industry for the rest of the century. The company began producing newsprint the following year, and secured long-term contracts with the Boston Herald and Baltimore American.

Another industrial event of extraordinary significance to Bellows Falls occurred in 1873 with the incorporation of the Vermont Farm Machine Company. A predecessor firm started in 1868 to make various farm implements; during the 1870's and 1880's, the company introduced a highly successful line of dairy machines, including the Cooley creamer and the Davis swing churn. Moving from one building to another during its rapid expansion, the Vermont Farm

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Machine Company grew to become the second most important industry in Bellows Falls by the end of the century.

The Sanborn insurance map published in 1874 shows the results of the first five years' development in Bellows Falls following the revival of its paper industry. Mills belonging to five different paper firms stood "under the hill;" some of these buildings have survived and been incorporated into the present White Mountain Paper Company complex (#22). On the Square, another hotel - the Second Empire style, three-story (plus mansard) brick Towns Hotel - had been erected the previous year on the interior corner. The remaining perimeter of the Square was being rapidly enclosed by three-story brick commercial blocks: blocks attached to the hotel defined the east side of the Square, the truncated flatiron block (#24) was being constructed at the southwest corner, and plans were laid for the erection the following year (1875) of the elaborate High Victorian Italianate style Centennial Block (#32) on the west side. Bellows Falls was taking on the appearance of a thriving commercial center.

Both industrial and architectural development continued apace during the following decade. In 1883, another Second Empire style, three-story (plus mansard) brick hotel appeared when L. T. Lovell, II - a descendent of the earliest settlers in Rockingham - built his Hotel Rockingham (#37) on Rockingham Street, giving prospective patrons direct access from the depot. Four years later, the village acquired a Town Hall commensurate with its rising status: an imposing Richardsonian Romanesque style masonry building with a five-story clock tower that immediately dominated the Square. The continuing expansion of the Vermont Farm Machine Company led it in 1889 to construct an extensive brick factory complex on the knoll south of the depot (outside the historic district); the company soon introduced the United States Cream Separator, which became its most successful product and was exported throughout the world.

The architectural diversity of the historic district received a significant addition in 1890 when the three-story, woodframed Brown Block (#11) was constructed with Queen Anne style features including a corner turret. The Brown Block was sheathed partly with stamped metal, a characteristic that the adjacent Exner Block (#10) extended to complete exterior sheathing when it was enlarged in 1905-1907; the latter block retains both its stamped metal sheathing and a range of embayed storefronts that rank it among the finest examples of its type in Vermont.

At the close of the nineteenth century, a "Souvenir Edition" of the Bellows Falls Times proclaimed that, along the Connecticut River, Bellows Falls was surpassed only by Holyoke, Massachusetts in industrial importance. The paper industry then (1899) employed about 700 persons and produced "almost every kind of paper known to the trade." The manufacture of farm machinery was the second largest industry with over 200 employees.

The last year of the century was marked by a fire that destroyed Towns Hotel on the Square; it was rebuilt with a fourth story in place of its mansard and became in 1902 the first Hotel Windham on the site. Also in 1899, the Cheshire Railroad bridge over the falls was replaced by the existing stone arch structure, whose two 140-foot arch spans are distinguished by an unusually low rise of 20 feet. (The bridge stands about one-sixth of a mile south of the depot outside the historic district, separated by a break in historic fabric.)

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Construction started the same year on another kind of railroad through Bellows Falls, an amenity that conferred a certain urban status on the village. The Bellows Falls and Saxtons River Street Railway began operation over its six-mile line in mid-1900, providing both passenger and freight service by trolley. From its connection with the Boston and Maine Railroad south of the depot, the trolley line followed Bridge Street and passed through the Square to Rockingham Street, continuing beyond to its namesake west terminal.

The greatest link yet established across the Connecticut River at Bellows Falls took the form of a steel arch suspension highway bridge erected in 1904-1905 just upstream of the canal (and outside the historic district). Its great main arch reaches 540 feet across the river, making it at the time of construction the longest highway arch span wholly within the United States; the arch rises 70 feet above the 32-foot suspended deck. A 105-foot secondary arch span crosses the railroad tracks along the Vermont side of the river. (In the 1970's, the arch bridge was closed owing to structural deterioration; the Federal Advisory Council on Historic Preservation agreed to eventual demolition and replacement of the bridge despite its eligibility for the National Register.)

A profusely illustrated book published in 1908, Bellows Falls and Vicinity Illustrated, provides a visual record of the village at the height of what proved its "golden age." The principal buildings of the historic district were in place (although both the contemporary Town Hall and Hotel Windham would have successors) and the Square had acquired a distinctly urban character. The extraordinarily attractive residential streets were arcaded with ranks of overhanging shade trees behind which stood substantial Italianate, Second Empire, and especially Queen Anne style houses. The population of Rockingham township - most of which resided in Bellows Falls - grew from 4579 in 1890 to 5809 in 1900 and 6207 in 1910, largely in response to continuing expansion of the paper and farm machine industries.

A veritable warren of paper mill buildings covered the area "under the hill" with the south end of the canal being reduced to a subsurface flume. William Russell again had played a prominent role in this expansion when he merged his Fall Mountain Paper Company into the International Paper Company in 1898; the "I. P." mills were overwhelmingly the largest in Bellows Falls. Altogether the several paper mills then produced about 1500 tons of paper per week; the mills obtained over 15,000 horsepower from the flow of the canal, and a local utility had begun to generate electricity from the same source of water.

At the peak of this development, disaster struck Bellows Falls in 1912 when the east side of the Square was once more ravaged by fire; four brick commercial blocks including the Hotel Windham were either gutted or destroyed. Three years later, a tradition ended on the river when the last drive of full-length logs came down the Connecticut past Bellows Falls (a few later drives of four-foot pulpwood actually concluded the practice). And the bulk of the paper industry itself at Bellows Falls would not last much longer.

Labor problems followed soon after the merger of Fall Mountain Paper into International Paper. Outdated facilities, absentee ownership, pay reductions, and lay-offs culminated in a 1921 strike. At first the company tried to break the strike with imported scabs (protected by the National Guard); however, local resistance mounted and finally the company withdrew its forces. Rather than settle the strike, International Paper simply closed the

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mills and left Bellows Falls - according to a local historian, "probably the biggest catastrophe Bellows Falls ever had." Other smaller paper mills remained but the dominance of the industry had ended along with the greatest prosperity of the village.

Bellows Falls suffered not only the loss of the International Paper mills during the 1920's. In 1921, the railroad depot was destroyed by fire; the present building (#3) was erected the following year. The village lost its trolley line in 1924, the final blow (aside from motor vehicle competition) to the Bellows Falls and Saxtons River Street Railway being a fire that consumed both its car barn and most of its rolling stock. The Town Hall became the casualty of the next spectacular fire in 1925; it was replaced the following year by the existing building (#34). The village felt another economic shock in 1925 when the declining Vermont Farm Machine Company fell into receivership.

Another significant shift of Bellows Falls' industrial thrust and the use of the canal occurred during the late 1920's. Having already purchased the canal company from the Russell interests in 1912, the New England Power Company next acquired for demolition the former International Paper mills that stood in the path of its planned hydroelectrical generating station. During 1927-1928, the canal was again substantially deepened and widened, a massive concrete dam with huge roller gates was built across the river, and a Georgian Revival style brick powerhouse containing three 20,000 horsepower turbines was constructed south of the Bridge Street bridge (outside the historic district). Both the project and Bellows Falls were disrupted in November, 1927, when the greatest flood of the century swept down the Connecticut Valley. Completion of the hydroelectrical generating system brought to an end the direct use of water power at Bellows Falls some fifteen years after the first paper mill was converted to electric power.

Early in the next decade (1932) and deep in the national economic depression, the Hotel Windham burned again - the fourth time for a hotel on its site; the present Georgian Revival style hotel (#15) was promptly erected to maintain the tradition. The architectural eclecticism of its design contrasted sharply with the appearance five years later of a modest example of the new Streamlined Style, the Chimes Cafe (#38) on Rockingham Street.

Following the Second World War, the accelerating shift to motor vehicle transport precipitated a drastic decline of the railroads, another of Bellows Falls' traditional industries. In 1953, the Rutland Railroad was halted by a strike, during which the company abandoned completely its passenger service. Already in 1951, the railroad had converted from steam to diesel locomotives, eliminating the need for servicing at the roundhouse and coaling tower north of the Bellows Falls depot; both were later demolished. Passenger trains on the Boston and Maine's Cheshire line to Boston disappeared in 1957. Finally in 1966 a tradition of 110 years came to an end when the last passenger trains under private railroad ownership left Bellows Falls on the Connecticut Valley line, the victims of an interstate highway system along their route.

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The historic fabric of Bellows Falls also suffered during this era. The storefronts of many buildings were sheathed with modern materials in attempts to conceal their "old-fashioned" appearance. Yet another traditional industry, the Adams Grist Mill (#23), ceased operation. The trend to suburban development more accessible by motor vehicles began to draw business activity away from the Square, and maintenance of the buildings declined.

With the onset of the 1970's, however, a revival took hold in Bellows Falls. As if to signal the beginning of this new era, in 1972 the recently established Amtrak rail passenger system restored train service on the Connecticut Valley line through Bellows Falls. A Townscape Improvement Committee was formed and, under its sponsorship, significant projects were undertaken to improve the visual environment of the historic district. In 1975-1976, the Square was refurbished with new pedestrian spaces defined by variegated paving and granite bollards, street furniture including "Victorian" light fixtures and plantings including small trees.

A concurrent attempt to alleviate the congestion of parked vehicles in the Square, however, caused the most drastic recent change in the character of the historic district. In 1976, most of the tracks were removed from the Boston and Maine Railroad freight yard between the depot and the canal, and the area was converted to a landscaped parking lot. About the same time, the Boston and Maine freight house - a two-and-one-half story, woodframed and clapboarded, gable-roofed building - was demolished on its site immediately south of the Depot Street crossing.

Meanwhile other buildings in the historic district, particularly around the Square, were being refurbished to complement their historic character. Matching funds for this work on several buildings were granted by the Economic Development Administration under a special Bicentennial program in Vermont. The Gast Block (#24) received an especially sympathetic treatment and now evokes strongly its original 1875 appearance. At the opposite (north) end of the Square, the commercial block #43 was also refurbished to regain much of its nineteenth century character.

More recently, the elaborate Centennial Block (#32) was nearly gutted by a 1978 fire; its shell survived the blaze and the interior is being reconstructed to contain shops and offices with a central arcade. A forthcoming rehabilitation project involves the deteriorated Hotel Rockingham; its exterior will receive thorough restoration and the interior will be rebuilt to contain commercial space on the arcaded first story and housing for senior citizens on the upper stories (also in a new east block connected to the hotel by a glass-enclosed atrium).

The Bellows Falls Downtown Historic District continues to convey a predominant sense of its nineteenth and early twentieth century character. To an extraordinary extent, the historic district remains free of contemporary intrusions: only one recently reconstructed building front (#33) interrupts the continuity of historic facades that surrounds the Square. The various storefront alterations constitute the most substantial detraction

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from the integrity of the historic district; however, these generally appear reversible or at least amenable to modification more appropriate to the buildings' architectural nature.

The historic district boundaries generally follow either distinct breaks in the continuity of the historic fabric or physical barriers in the surrounding landscape. The north-east lobe encloses the historic railroad core and its remaining buildings (#1-3) along the Connecticut River. South of the railroad yard, deteriorated sheds line the canal; they are intended for demolition in the near future. A marked break in development occurs along the south edge of the historic district owing to the steeply sloping terrain (the front of a riverine terrace). Along the west side, both a steep bank and an abrupt change in character from commercial to religious and residential development define the historic district. To the northwest, the boundary follows another distinct break in historic fabric across Rockingham Street and then includes the canal-related residential development along Canal Street opposite the railroad yard.

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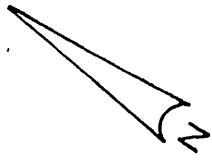
The boundary of the Bellows Falls Downtown Historic District begins at a Point A located on the north edge of the Green Mountain Railroad main track at its intersection with a line 25 feet east of, and parallel to, the east elevation of the former railroad freight house (#1); thence the boundary extends southerly along said line to a Point B located at its intersection with the north edge of the now or former Depot Street right-of-way as it passes the south elevation of said freight house; thence the boundary turns westerly and follows the north edge of said right-of-way (joining the actively used portion of said street) across the Boston and Maine Railroad main track to a Point C located at the intersection of said north edge of the Depot Street right-of-way with the east edge of the Bellows Falls canal right-of-way; thence the boundary turns southeasterly and across the Depot Street right-of-way and follows the east edge of said canal right-of-way crossing both the Boston and Maine Railroad main track and the Bridge Street right-of-way to a Point D located at the intersection of said canal right-of-way with the south/east edge of the Bridge Street right-of-way; thence the boundary turns southwesterly and follows the south/east edge of said right-of-way across the Bellows Falls canal to a Point E located at its intersection with the east property line of the U.S. Post Office (#18) lot; thence the boundary turns southerly and follows said property line and continues along the east property line of the White Mountain Paper Company mill (#22) to a Point F located at its intersection with a line 25 feet south of, and parallel to, the south elevation of building #22C in the mill complex; thence the boundary turns southwesterly and extends in a straight line to a Point G located at its intersection with a line 25 feet south, and parallel to, the south elevation of the Adams Grist Mill (#23); thence the boundary turns westerly and follows said line parallel to the south elevation of said mill and a westerly extension thereof across the Boston and Maine Railroad right-of-way and the Westminster Street right-of-way to a Point H located at its intersection with the east edge of the School Street right-of-way; thence the boundary turns northerly and follows the east edge of said right-of-way to its intersection with the west property line of the Edward Arms Block (#28) and continues along said property line and successively the corresponding property lines of buildings #29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, and 36 to a Point I located at the northwest corner of the I.O.O.F. block (#36) property; thence the boundary turns northeasterly and follows the north property line of said building and an extension thereof across the Rockingham Street right-of-way to a Point J located at its intersection with the east edge of said right-of-way; thence the boundary turns northwesterly and follows the east edge of said right-of-way to a Point K located at its intersection with the north property line of the former Hotel Rockingham (#37); thence the boundary turns northeasterly and follows said property line to a Point L located at its intersection with the west property line of LaFoe's Garage (#9A); thence the boundary turns northwesterly and follows said property line and successively the corresponding property lines of buildings #9, 8, 7, 6, 5, and 4 to a Point M located at the northwest corner of the house #4 property; thence the boundary turns northeasterly and follows the north property line of said house to a Point N at its intersection with the west edge of the Canal Street right-of-way; thence the boundary turns northerly across said right-of-way and follows a straight line to a Point O located at its intersection with the north edge of the Green Mountain Railroad right-of-way 25 feet west of the west portal of that railroad's canal bridge (#47); thence the boundary turns easterly and follows the north side of said bridge and continues along the north edge of the Green Mountain Railroad main track (crossing the Boston and Maine Railroad main track) to Point A, the point of beginning.




BELLOWS FALLS DOWNTOWN HISTORIC DISTRICT

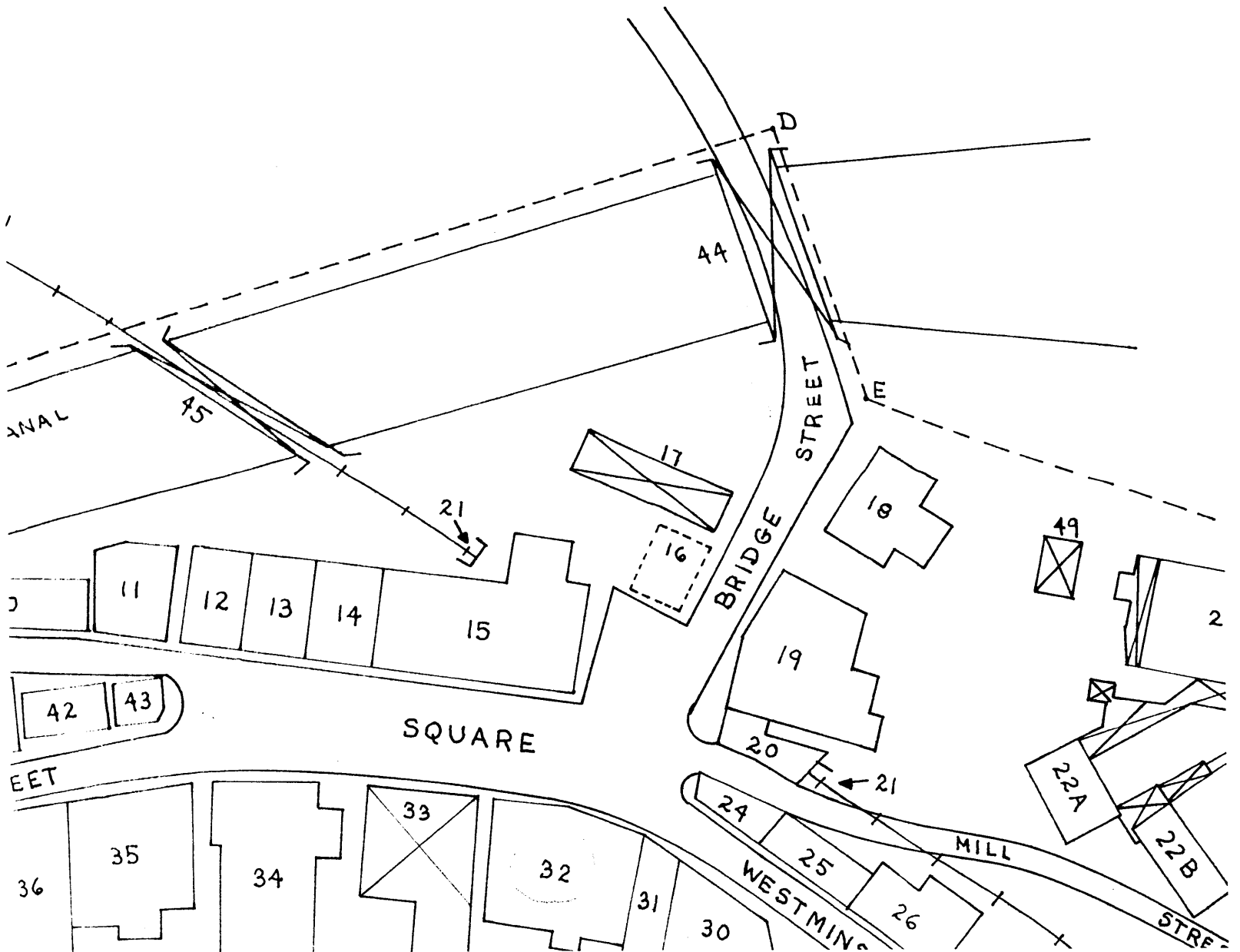
BELLOWS FALLS, VERMONT

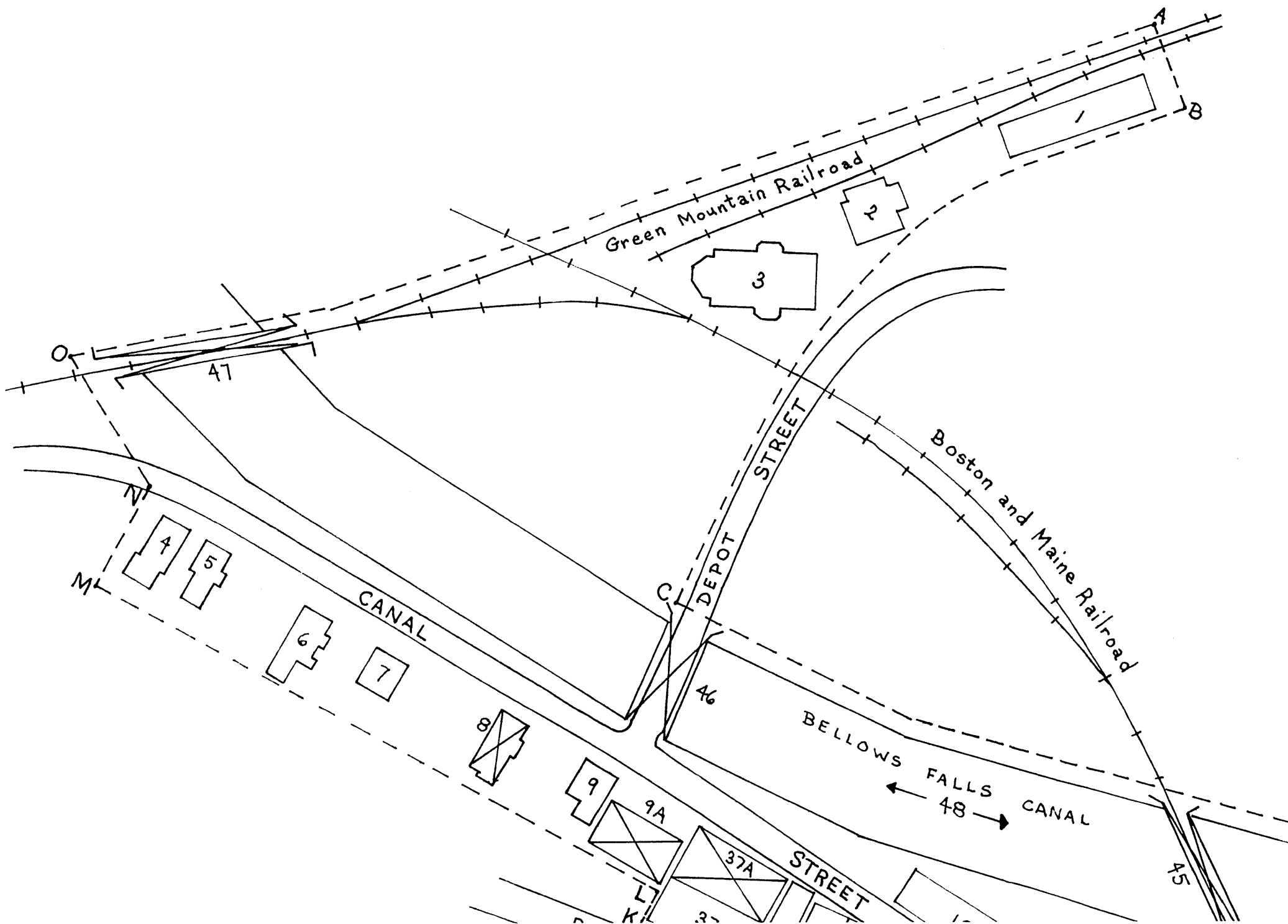
May 1982

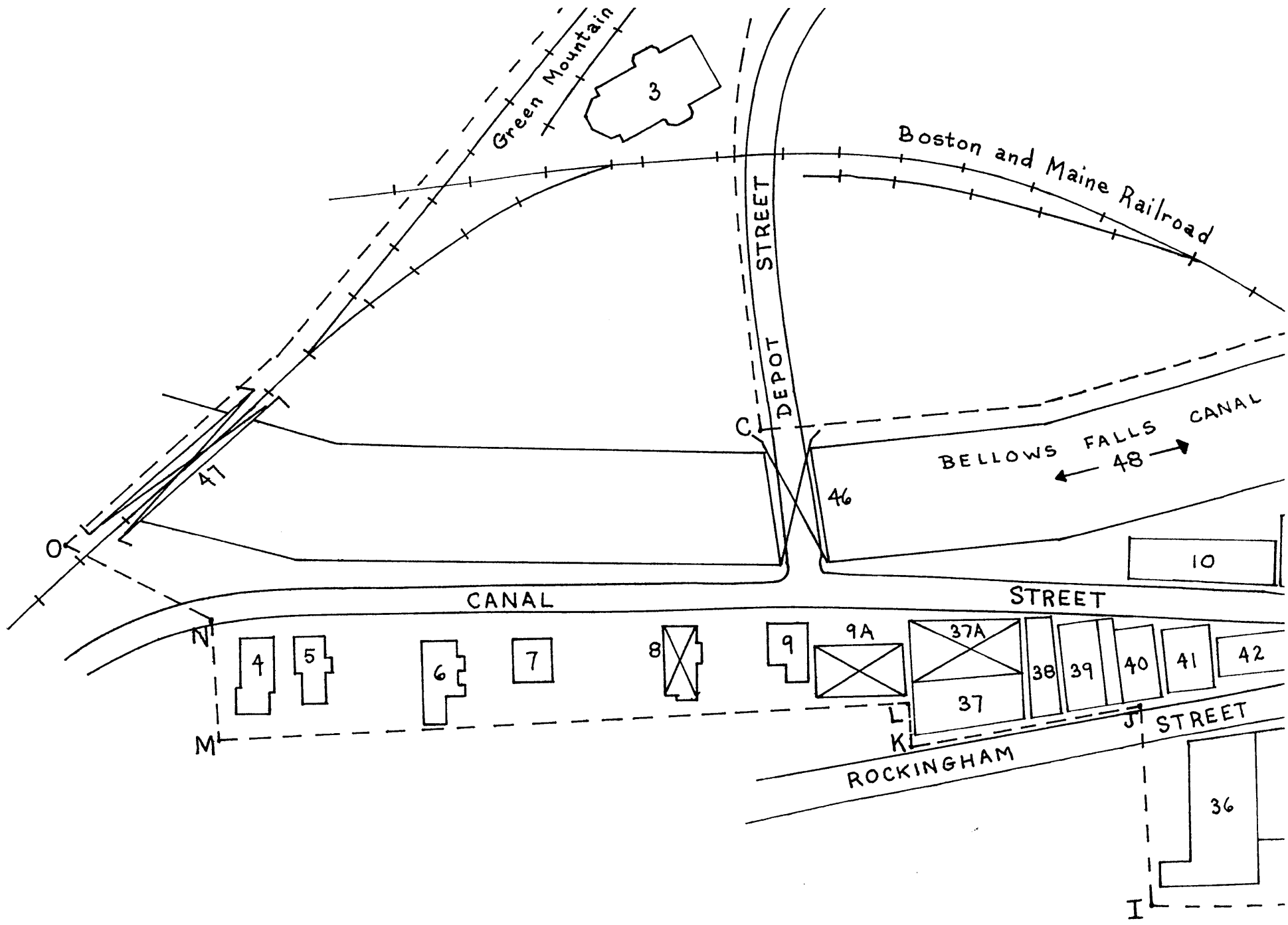
Approximate Scale: 1 inch = 100 feet



-  Historic Building or Structure
-  Noncontributing Building or Structure
-  Historic District Boundary







United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

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Bellows Falls Downtown Historic District
Windham County, VERMONT

ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION
APPROVAL

for Keeper Sharon Byers 12/26/89

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number _____ Page _____

Bellows Falls Historic District
Rockingham, Windham County, Vermont

The Bridge Street Bridge and the Depot Street Bridge were identified as non-contributing structures in the Bellows Falls Downtown Historic District, which was listed in the National Register of Historic Places on August 16, 1982. Recent research and the completion of a bridge survey has found that these structures are contributing to the district and meet the National Register criteria for eligibility.

44. Bridge Street Bridge, c.1920.

Bridge Street crosses the Bellows Falls Canal over a two-lane concrete arch bridge that is 96' long and 37' wide. The structure consists of a shallow elliptical arch with a raised ring suggesting ringstones. A paneled railing with pilasters flanks both sides of the bridge and extends along the canal bank to the south. A sidewalk spans the bridge inside the west railing, and cast iron streetlights resting on the paneled railing mark the four corners of the bridge.

This bridge is significant as a sizeable example of concrete-arch construction. First appearing in Vermont about 1910, reinforced concrete became increasingly popular for small and medium-sized bridges, until in the 1930s it was the standard material. Concrete bridges gained favor because the material was cheap, consisting mostly of locally available sand and gravel, because they promised low maintenance, and because in their arched form they were considered aesthetically desirable. Aesthetic considerations in this bridge are also evident in the raised ring, suggesting the stone masonry construction then prevalent for monumental urban arches, and in the railing details, recalling Neo-Classical architecture. This is the longest filled concrete bridge in Vermont.

46. Depot Street Bridge, 1909.

Depot Street crosses the Bellows Falls Canal over a two-lane concrete arch bridge that is 114' long and 37' wide. The structure consists of a shallow elliptical arch, with a raised ring suggesting ringstones. Pipe railing lines both sides of the bridge along the sidewalks.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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This bridge is significant as an early and sizeable example of concrete-arch construction. It belongs to the first generation of concrete bridges in Vermont, when reinforced concrete had first become widely accepted as a building material. Concrete bridges gained favor because the material was cheap, consisting mostly of locally available sand and gravel, because they promised low maintenance, and because in their arched form they were considered aesthetically desirable. Aesthetic considerations in this bridge are evident in the raised ring, suggesting the stone masonry construction then prevalent for the monumental urban arches. This is the earliest dated concrete arch in Vermont, as well as one of the longest.

Property Owners List

- | | |
|--------------------------|------------------------------------------------|
| 44. Bridge Street Bridge | Town of Rockingham
Bellows Falls, VT. 05101 |
| 46. Depot Street Bridge | Town of Rockingham
Bellows Falls, VT. 05101 |

"As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this amendment to the Bellows Falls Historic District nomination meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60."






Eric Gilbertson
Director/Deputy State Historic
Preservation Officer

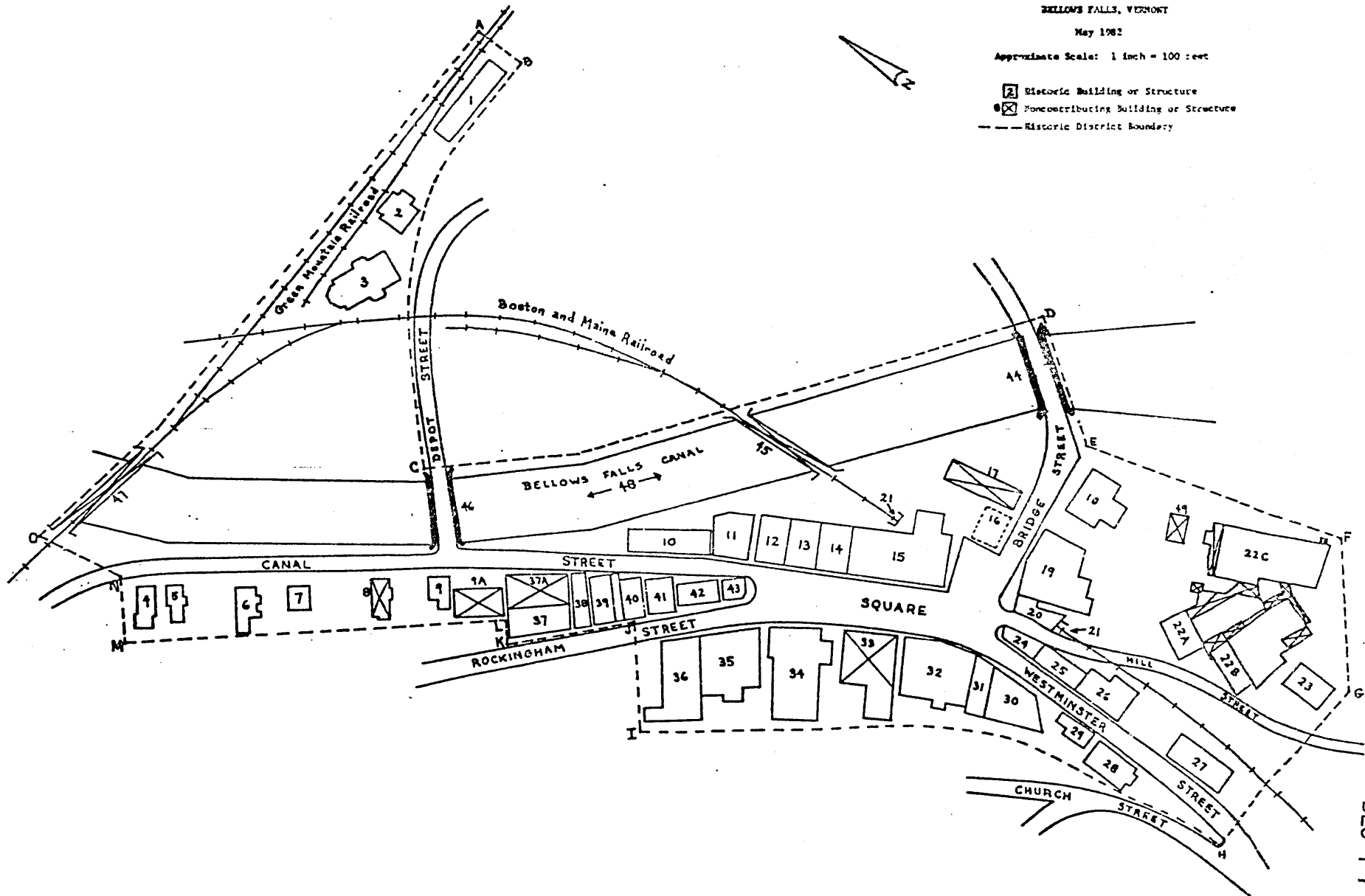
BELLOWS FALLS DOWNTOWN HISTORIC DISTRICT

BELLOWS FALLS, VERMONT

May 1982

Approximate Scale: 1 inch = 100 feet

-  Historic Building or Structure
-  Noncontributing Building or Structure
-  Historic District Boundary



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