

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number _____ Page _____

SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

NRIS Reference Number: 04001133

Date Listed: 10/7/04

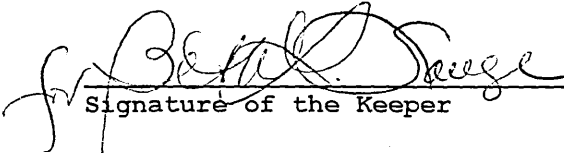
Burlington Traction Company
Property Name

Chittenden
County

VT
State

N/A
Multiple Name

This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.


Signature of the Keeper

10-7-04
Date of Action

Amended Items in Nomination:

8. Statement of Significance: Period of Significance:

The justified period of significance for this property's historical and architectural significance under criteria A and C is 1900-1952.

This information has been confirmed with Sue Jamele, National Register Coordinator, VTSHPO staff, by telephone.

DISTRIBUTION:

- National Register property file
- Nominating Authority (without attachment)

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

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM**

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

1. Name of Property

historic name Burlington Traction Company

other names/site number Burlington Rapid Transit Company

2. Location

street & number 662 Riverside Ave., (includes 321-343 N. Winooski Ave.) N/A not for publication

city or town Burlington N/A vicinity

state Vermont code VT county Chittenden code 007 zip code 05401

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Suzanne C. Jamieson, National Register Specialist 8-23-04
Signature of certifying official Date

Vermont State Historic Preservation Office
State or Federal agency and bureau

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

Signature of commenting or other official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
 See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register
 See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain): _____

[Signature]
Signature of Keeper

Date of Action

10/7/04

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

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

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

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

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
2	1	buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
2	1	Total

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

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register
0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

TRANSPORTATION: rail-related

TRANSPORTATION: road-related

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

WORK IN PROGRESS

DOMESTIC: multiple dwelling

TRANSPORTATION: road-related

OTHER: laundromat

COMMERCE: specialty store

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

Commercial Style

Colonial Revival

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation STONE

walls BRICK

roof STONE: slate

other GLASS

Narrative Description

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

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

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

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

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

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

Narrative Statement of Significance

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

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE

TRANSPORTATION

Period of Significance

1872 to 1952

Significant Dates

c. 1900

c. 1910

1929

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Unknown

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

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

Previous documentation on file (NPS)

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

Primary Location of Additional Data

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

Name of repository:

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 1.8 acres

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

1

1	8	6	4	2	6	2	6	4	9	2	7	7	90
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----

Zone Easting Northing

2

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

3

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Zone Easting Northing

4

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

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

Boundary Justification

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

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Amy S. Lord, Historic Preservation Consultant

organization _____ date August 1, 2002

street & number P.O. Box 694 telephone (802) 434-5540

city or town Richmond state Vermont zip code 05477

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

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

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

Photographs

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

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

Property Owner

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

name Bus Barns Housing Limited Partnership, c/o Burlington Community Land Trust

street & number P.O. Box 523 telephone 802-862-6244

city or town Burlington state Vermont zip code 05401

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

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

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Burlington Traction Company
Burlington, Chittenden County, Vermont

Section number 7 Page 1

Introduction

The Burlington Traction Company is a triangular, 1.8-acre property located at the intersection of North Winooski Avenue and Riverside Avenue in the Old North End, a historic, residential neighborhood just north of downtown Burlington, Vermont. The site contains two large, brick car barns, referred to as the Upper and Lower Car Barns, built c. 1900 to 1910 by the Burlington Traction Company for its electrified trolley. The structures historically functioned as trolley barns and bus garages and repair shops. Both of the barns feature structural brick masonry walls and window openings with segmental arched, brick lintels constructed with two header courses. In 1929, the Burlington Traction Company trolley system was taken over by the Burlington Rapid Transit Company bus system. Modifications to the buildings were made after this time to convert the structures to service buses. These changes included the addition of concrete floors and service pits, concrete block additions to provide storage, multi-pane metal windows, and a steel-frame garage addition. The barns continued to be used as bus garages and repair shops by Burlington Rapid Transit Company until 1972, and then Vermont Transit Bus Lines, a regional carrier started by Burlington Rapid Transit, until 1999, when the property was purchased by the Bus Barns Limited Housing Partnership which is converting the site to affordable housing and commercial space. A significant portion of the Upper Car Barn will house an automotive service garage, continuing the transportation history of the property. The property also contains a non-contributing 12-unit apartment building that was built next to the Upper Barn in 2001. Despite changes to accommodate new uses over time, the brick trolley and bus barns of the Burlington Traction Company retain their integrity of design, location, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.

Upper Car Barn, c. 1900

The Upper Car Barn is the older of the two brick barns and replaced a c. 1885, large, two story, wood-frame, horse barn that was the original transportation facility built by the Winooski and Burlington Horse Railway Corporation, the predecessor to the Burlington Traction Company, on this site. The Upper Barn faces southeast and is a large, nearly square, four-bay, flat roof, one-story, vernacular commercial style, brick building with three rear appendages. A c. 1905 addition is at the rear of the first bay, a c. 1910 addition is at basement level at the rear of the third and part of the fourth bays, and a c. 1971 concrete block addition is at the rear of the second bay. Another concrete block rear appendage, c. 1950, was removed in 2000. The building's massing and details remain intact. The main block of the building measures approximately 132 feet across the front (southeast) by approximately 100 feet along

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetBurlington Traction Company
Burlington, Chittenden County, VermontSection number 7 Page 2

each side. The grade of the side slopes down in a northwesterly direction so that the rear of the Upper Barn has an exposed basement. The building features a parapet roof with stepped walls on the side elevations, and a distinctive rough ashlar and mortar foundation under the main block. Exterior walls and interior walls dividing the bays are constructed of 13-inch thick common bond brick with butter joints. Some recent repointing has been done near the parapet and along the bottom courses on each façade.

Front (southeast) Façade

The front facade features a corbeled cornice and brick piers with corbeled capitals between each garage bay. Four connected 15-inch I-beams run across the full façade, just above the brick piers and garage bays. Sign panels are inset above each bay. The first and fourth garage bays have the logo *VTL* (for Vermont Transit Lines) painted in green with a white background centered above the bay. The sign panels above the second and third bays are painted white. The exterior remains intact overall with the primary non-historic modification, dating from the 2001 rehabilitation, being the front of the bays. Each of the four bays is fronted by an aluminum window-wall system trimmed in metal with multi-light transoms above three rows of multi-light glazing. Pass doors in each bay have a large single glass light. This system replaced c. 1960 non-historic wood and metal overhead garage doors and retains the feeling of the historic garage bay openings.

Northeast Facade

The northeast façade features eight evenly spaced double hung, six-over-six, wood windows in segmental arched openings along the first story. Window sills are wood clad with metal. The windows are replacements and have triple-track storm windows. The basement level has three window openings with segmental arched lintels, in the last three bays of the facade. One of the windows is boarded over, the second is boarded over and has exhaust fans and piping projection from it, and the third window has double hung, six-over-six wood sash that appear to be original. The last bay has a second story double hung, six-over-six window set in a square surround. This appears to be a replacement.

Southwest Façade

The southwest façade has two openings. A set of new metal double doors, each with a large, single glass light, is set in an historic opening, located near the front of the building providing a side access to the first bay. A new garage door opening with a metal overhead door was added near the back of the main block to provide vehicular access to the rear sections of the first three bays.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetBurlington Traction Company
Burlington, Chittenden County, VermontSection number 7 Page 3

Rear (northwest) Façade

The rear façade of the fourth bay has two double hung, six-over-six, wood windows with segmental arched lintels on the first story. The second story has one double hung, six-over-six window set in a square surround, and four small double hung one-over-one windows across the rear of the third bay. The basement level has one double hung, six-over-six, wood window with a segmental arched lintel. This window appears to be original. To the left of this window is a new metal pass door with a large single glass light. The door is set into the left half of wider historic opening; the right half of the opening is infilled with new clapboards. A steel I-beam extends across the top of the opening. The rest of the rear façade of the main block is covered by additions.

C. 1905 Addition

The c. 1905 addition, measuring approximately 34 feet across by 52 feet deep, is located at the rear of the first bay. It was originally built as a paint shop for the trolley cars, and was later used as a lacquer spraying and parts department for the buses. A large interior opening between the center of the first bay and the paint shop allowed trolleys and buses to be rolled in for service. Like the main block, this addition is constructed with 13-inch common bond brick walls. The southwest wall of the addition has a new metal pass door with a large single glass light, and two historic double-hung, six-over-six, wood windows in segmental arched openings. The rear (northwest) façade of this addition is painted and has three evenly spaced historic double-hung, six-over-six, wood windows in segmental arched openings. Window sills are wood clad with metal.

C. 1910 Addition

The c. 1910 addition is located at basement level at the rear of the third and part of the fourth bays. This one-story, shed roof, addition originally served as the rotary substation for the trolleys, and later served as a storage area for the buses. It measures approximately 45 feet wide by 31 feet deep, and is constructed with 13-inch common bond brick walls. The side (northeast) façade has one double hung, six-over-six, wood window in a segmental arched opening and wood sill clad with metal next to a pass door. The door is a 4-light half glass, wood, double door in a historic segmental arched opening. A rectangular, gable-roof skylight, measuring approximately 6 feet by 12 feet, is located at the center of the roof. The skylight has four, 6-pane fixed windows on each eaves side and two, 6-pane fixed windows on each gable end, an asphalt shingle roof, and clapboard walls. The skylight first appears on a 1942/1950 Sanborn Map, and appears to have replaced an earlier ventilator. The rear façade of the addition is painted and has two historic double hung, six-over-six wood windows in segmental arched openings with wood sills clad with metal. A large one-over-one fixed sash

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Burlington Traction Company
Burlington, Chittenden County, Vermont

Section number 7 Page 4

metal window with a rectangular concrete lintel is located between the two other windows and is slightly lower. A segmentally arched lintel, several courses above the top of the metal window, remains from an earlier window opening. A c. 1950 concrete block addition, removed in 2000, was located off the rear of the c. 1910 addition.

C. 1971 Addition. Non-historic due to age.

The c. 1971 concrete block addition is located at the rear of bay 2, between the c. 1905 paint shop addition and the c. 1910 substation addition. It measures approximately 34 feet across by 52 feet deep, the same dimensions as the c. 1905 addition. This addition served as tire storage space for the bus company. The rear wall is painted and has one, new, one-over-one fixed sash window on the main story. There is a metal double door on the basement level.

Interior

The interior of the Upper Car Barn has been modified to accommodate new uses, but the basic interior layout, spaces, and materials remain intact. Bays 1 through 3 have commercial space in the front third of the building that retains the full height of the original service bays. A stud and sheetrock wall separates the rear spaces from the front sections of the barn, and some previously exposed brick walls have been covered with sheetrock. A large opening between bays 1 and 2 has been retained, because the two bays are part of one commercial space. Openings between bays 2 and 3, and 3 and 4 have been filled with stud and sheetrock walls. Bay 4 has been converted to four housing units and has new stud and sheetrock walls and finishes.

The rear two-thirds of bays 1 to 3, and two of the rear appendages (c.1905 and c. 1971 additions) of the building will be used as an automobile service area and offices by the Good News Garage, an organization that provides reconditioned, donated automobiles to people in need. A new garage bay opening, c. 2001, was cut in the southeast wall of the building to provide vehicular access to the rear portion of the service bays. Features retained in the rear portion of bays 1 to 3 include exposed brick walls, corbeled brick wall brackets, and large openings between the bays to enable vehicles to move between the spaces. A two-story parts department and offices at the rear of bay 3 features beaded board wood walls. The most substantial historic interior modification dates from 1929, the beginning of the bus era, when trolley tracks were removed and the four-bay garage received a concrete floor and below grade service pits in each of the four bays. Concrete floor and service pits have been covered up in the recent rehabilitation of the front of the bays, but remain in the rear of the first three service bays.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Burlington Traction Company
Burlington, Chittenden County, Vermont

Section number 7 Page 5

The rear appendages retain integrity from their original construction date and will continue to serve as parts storage and office space. Three window openings along the former exterior, brick side wall of the c. 1905 addition (facing the c. 1971 addition) remain intact with double hung, six-over-six wood windows set in segmental arched openings. The c. 1910 addition is separated from the rear of bays 3 and 4. A stud and sheetrock wall covers historic openings between the spaces.

Lower Car Barn, c. 1910

The Lower Car Barn is a one-story, gable roof, vernacular Colonial Revival style building consisting of a main garage, measuring approximately 37 feet wide by 135 feet long, and a brick battery house, measuring approximately 20 feet wide by 40 feet long, that was constructed c. 1905 to the rear (west) of the garage. The two structures were connected c. 1930 by a one-story addition when the facility was modified for bus use. At that time the Lower Car Barn began to function as a bus washing and greasing facility. The battery house was converted to a locker room, or "gym," for bus company employees, and the addition connecting the two buildings served as a boiler room. Significant features of the Lower Car Barn include 13-inch structural brick masonry walls laid in common bond, slate roofing shingles, and an uncut, uncoursed, rubble masonry foundation. A tall brick chimney rises up the rear (west) wall of the main building. In 1950, a small brick ell, in keeping with the architectural style of the barn, was added to the west side of the original battery house. The same year a large, flat roof, 6-bay, open steel frame addition with corrugated siding was built on the south side of the car barn for use as a bus garage. This garage addition was inconsistent with the original architectural character of the Lower Car Barn and was removed c. 2001 during the rehabilitation.

Front (east) facade

The gable end front facade features a Colonial Revival style molded cornice with returns. The front originally had three bays to service the trolley cars. When the building was converted to bus use, the number of bays was reduced to two. As a result of the 2001 rehabilitation, the front facade now features a three-bay configuration that resembles the original, historic fenestration pattern of the building when it was a trolley barn. The 3-bay facade has wood panel transoms within the garage bay openings, two narrow rows of glazing below each transom, and three rows of wood panels below. The center bay has two metal, half-glass pass doors flanked by wood panels similar to the other bays. A steel I-beam spans the full façade above the three bays.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Burlington Traction Company
Burlington, Chittenden County, Vermont

Section number 7 Page 6

Rear (west) facade

A single garage bay at the rear of the main block is similar to the front bays, but as this opening is smaller, the wood and glass configuration, dating from the 2001 rehabilitation, is somewhat different. It has a wood panel transom, four side-hinged, multi-light, wood, casement windows, and wood spandrel panels at the bottom. This garage door opening was added to the building c. 1930 to enable buses to pass through the building after being serviced.

Side (north) Facade

The north side façade features three evenly spaced double hung, six-over-six, wood windows in segmental arched openings. Each window has an outer screen and appears to be an in-kind replacement of the original windows. Four 30-light metal windows set in square openings with brick sills are evenly spaced between the three wood windows. The center 4 panes by 2 panes of each make up a small awning window within the larger window. These windows are in-kind replacements of the metal windows that were added to the barn after Burlington Rapid Transit took over the property in 1929.

Side (south) Facade

The south façade has a fenestration pattern similar to the north façade, with three, double hung, six-over-six wood windows and three, 30-light metal windows with small awning windows within. This side of the barn also has a metal, half-light, pass door in a historic opening next to the one-story boiler room addition. A shed roof entry porch with square posts tops this entrance. A second metal, half-glass pass door is located at the center of the façade. This entrance has a gable roof entry porch with square posts. The brick on the south façade is painted. The c. 1950 steel frame garage extended off of this façade until it was removed in 2001.

Battery House

The battery house is located behind the main section of the Lower Car Barn. It is oriented north-south, the opposite of the main section of the barn, and features a gable roof with slate shingles, brick common bond construction, and oculus windows in the gable peaks. The north gable end has four, double hung, six-over-six, wood windows. The two in the center are paired and have a rectangular lintel composed of three rows of brick headers. The windows on either side of the center pair have splayed brick lintels. The west façade has a c. 1950, shed roof, brick addition with two, double hung, six-over-six wood windows. To the right of the addition, the west façade has another double hung, six-over-six wood window with a splayed

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Burlington Traction Company
Burlington, Chittenden County, Vermont

Section number 7 Page 7

lintel. The south façade of the structure has a bricked-in oculus window above a replacement beaded board, wood, double door that is similar to the original double door, but is fixed in place to accommodate the new use of the building. The door has a 6-pane by 6-pane window on the upper part of the right door. A steel I-beam spans the top of the opening. A metal, half-glass pass door is located just to the right.

C. 1930 Addition

A one-story c. 1930 brick addition was built by the bus company to connect the main barn with the battery house. The south façade of the addition has two metal, half glass pass doors with two-light transoms, set in a historic opening. To the right of the pass doors is a 30-light metal window with a brick sill that matches the windows found on the north and south eaves sides of the main block.

Interior

The Lower Car Barn now houses nine housing units: two in the former battery house and connecting appendage with a minimum of changes to the existing floor plan, and seven units are located in the main block, with the space divided by stud and sheetrock walls. The interior brick face of exterior walls have been mostly covered with sheetrock, although some interior brick walls remain exposed. Historic interior modifications that date from c. 1929 include the addition of a concrete floor and service ramp and two below-grade service pits. This historic modification has been covered up in the recent rehabilitation.

Apartment Building, 2001. Non-contributing due to age.

A new 12-unit, 3-story, flat roof, apartment building was constructed on a vacant site just north of the Upper Car Barn, parallel to North Winooski Avenue. The building is a rectangular shaped, 10-bay by 2-bay structure comprised of two mirror image blocks set side by side. Each block has a slightly recessed central entrance flanked by two bays of single and paired windows. Four two-story bay windows (in the second and third stories) slightly project from the front (southeast) facade. Windows are single and paired, double hung, two-over-two sash. The building is clad with vinyl siding and has a tinted concrete block foundation. Sanborn Insurance Maps from the late 19th and early 20th century show that the site formerly contained a row of multi-story, flat roof, residential and commercial buildings in the same basic footprint as the new building.

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

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Burlington Traction Company
Burlington, Chittenden County, Vermont

Section number 7 Page 8

Landscape

The two historic brick barns of Burlington Traction Company, and the property's new residential building, are located at the outer edges of the 1.8 acre triangular lot at the intersection of North Winooski Avenue and Riverside Avenue. The site slopes down from North Winooski Avenue, leaving a large, flat, open area in the middle and back of the lot. Most of this area, as well as space next to the Upper Barn (southwest) are asphalt covered parking areas. Concrete city sidewalks parallel both of the streets, and grass strips with small trees are located between the city streets and sidewalks, except in front of the Upper Barn, where the historic open space between the service bays and the street has been retained. The area in front of the Lower Car Barn and between the Lower Barn and the new residential building is primarily greenspace with minimal landscaping.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Burlington Traction Company
Burlington, Chittenden County, Vermont

Section number 8 Page 1

Introduction

The Burlington Traction Company property is eligible for the National Register under Criterion A for its local significance and contribution to the broad patterns of transportation history in Burlington and Vermont. The site has been in continuous use for local and regional transit operations since 1885, when it was the site for the Winooski and Burlington Horse Railroad, the first horse drawn street railway in the state, originally chartered in 1872. In 1893 the trolley system was electrified and three years later the business changed its name to Burlington Traction Company. The two brick car barns on the site were constructed in c. 1900 and c. 1910 for the electric trolley lines. In the 1920s, after the emergence of the automobile, trolley ridership declined sharply. In 1929, Burlington Rapid Transit, a local bus line, purchased the Burlington Traction Company. That same year, Burlington Rapid Transit also established a regional carrier, Vermont Transit Lines. The trolley barns were modified somewhat for use as bus barns to accommodate the bus fleets for both the local and regional bus lines. In 1972, Burlington Rapid Transit ceased its local service, but Vermont Transit Lines continued to lease the site until 1999. Today the property is being rehabilitated into affordable housing, commercial space, and an automotive service garage, which continues the facility's long transportation history. The property is also eligible for the National Register under Criterion C, as a good example of a transportation facility that served as trolley barns, bus garages, and repair shops. The Upper Car Barn is built in the vernacular commercial style, and the Lower Car Barn features Colonial Revival style details, including molded cornice returns and oculus windows. Distinctive characteristics that define the barns as early 20th century utilitarian transportation facilities include structural brick masonry construction, wide service bays, parapet rooflines, slate roofing, and segmental arch window openings. Both the Upper and Lower Car Barns are highly intact and have retained their architectural massing, details, and historic significance and are the best examples of this property type in the state. Despite modifications to accommodate new uses, the former Burlington Traction Company property retains its integrity of design, location, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.

Local Significance

The Burlington Traction Company is significant for its contribution to the history of public transportation in Burlington and Vermont. The site represents the need for public transportation during a period of tremendous growth during the late 19th and early 20th century

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Burlington Traction Company
Burlington, Chittenden County, Vermont

Section number 8 Page 2

when large numbers of immigrants flowed into Burlington to work in lumberyards, mills, and factories throughout the city and across the river in Winooski. The early trolley lines accommodated the transportation needs of the work force and affected development patterns of the city. Industrial and residential areas expanded beyond the 19th century city limits. Streetcars changed the form of the city, creating a “streetcar suburb” to the north of the city along North Avenue, and allowing industry to locate in the city’s southern end along Lakeside Avenue. All of the streetcar lines originated in the downtown, which helped to consolidate the central business district where it is today.

The property’s significance dates back to 1872 when the Winooski and Burlington Horse Railroad Company was given a state charter to meet a growing need for public transportation. It was not until 1885, thirteen years after receiving its charter, that the Horse Railroad Company attracted the money necessary to construct the first miles of track connecting Winooski and Burlington. When the line began operations, the board of directors that organized and financed Burlington’s trolley system included local businessmen from a wide range of backgrounds, including: John J. Flynn, banker and real estate broker; F.C. Kennedy, owner of the Winooski Woolen Mills; A.C. Humphrey, merchant; A. E. Richardson, co-founder of the Wells and Richardson Co., manufacturer of nationally famous patent medicines; and Louis H. Turk, clothier. By the 1890s, an electric trolley system was the latest thing in municipal transportation, and the directors of the Horse Railroad were eager to showcase the city’s worth by adopting the latest technology. In 1893, the system was electrified and three years later the company changed its name to Burlington Traction Company. Originally, the system’s power was obtained from the American Woolen Company steam plant and a flour mill’s generation plant on the nearby Winooski River. Later, water rights were obtained 22 miles away at the Otter Creek Falls in Vergennes, where a generation plant was constructed in 1910 as the Vergennes Electric Company. A substation was constructed the same year in Queen City Park, south of Burlington.

John J. Flynn’s leadership of Burlington’s trolley system is significant because of his involvement with other trolley lines in the state, and his contribution to the development of Burlington. Perhaps best known as the original owner and operator of Burlington’s Flynn Theatre in the 1930s, Flynn also founded the Chittenden County Trust Company in 1901, and owned substantial real estate holdings in the city, including Burlington’s Starr Farm Beach, a summer resort on Lake Champlain. His interests extended to granite quarries in Barre and Montpelier, and large timber holdings throughout the state. Flynn was born in Dorset in 1854 and worked in agriculture and the grocery business in Burlington before he began his career in real estate in the late 1880s and became rich speculating on 27,000 acres of timberland

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Burlington Traction Company
Burlington, Chittenden County, Vermont

Section number 8 Page 3

between Manchester and Bellows Falls, Vermont. Flynn recognized the potential for public utilities and transportation in Vermont, and was engaged in this work for over half a century. He built the Peru turnpike from Peru to Manchester, part of which was operated as a toll road across the Green Mountains.

Flynn served as president of the Burlington's trolley line and oversaw its conversion to an electric trolley system in 1893 and the formation of the Burlington Traction Company in 1896. He remained with the company until its demise in 1929. Flynn also organized the Military Post Street Railway in 1895, which connected to Burlington's system and provided trolley service between Fort Ethan Allen, Winooski, and Essex Junction. The Military Post Street Railway was eventually absorbed by the Burlington Traction Company in 1926. In addition to his work in the Burlington area, Flynn also financed and organized the Barre and Montpelier Traction and Power Company, which operated from 1898 to 1927, and the St. Albans Street Railway, which operated from 1901 to 1921. Flynn's involvement in utilities included the creation of the Vergennes Electric Company, which was used to power Burlington's electric trolley system from 1910 to 1929.

Many of the merchants and industries of Burlington, Winooski, and Essex Junction were served by the trolley line. Both workers and customers rode the trolleys regularly. Schedules were arranged so trolleys also met the steam trains of the Rutland, the Central Vermont, and the Burlington & Lamoille railroads. No freight, however, was ever carried by the Burlington trolley system. Before the advent of the automobile and bus, the Burlington Traction Company provided the quickest and least expensive way to travel around the area. The trolleys also provided weekend entertainment, taking local travelers to baseball games at Centennial Field, swimming and picnics at North Beach or Queen City Park, or to the fairgrounds at Fort Ethan Allen in Essex Junction. Between 1909 and 1910, at the peak period of its service, the system carried over three million passengers. By 1922, the system had a total of 12 miles of tracks, and was linked to another 5 miles of tracks on the Military Post Street Railway.

By the 1920s, the popularity of the internal combustion engine was beginning to compete with Burlington's electric trolley system. Private automobiles and taxis began to appear in Burlington in 1915, offering a new transportation alternative. In 1926, a local automobile dealer, William S. Appleyard, realized that Burlington was outgrowing its antiquated trolley system, which was costly to operate and expand, and would soon require a more modern transportation system. In February of 1926, Appleyard applied to the Vermont Public Service Commission for a permit to operate a bus loop around what he called the "Country Club

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service****National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**Burlington Traction Company
Burlington, Chittenden County, VermontSection number 8 Page 4

Loop,” linking South Prospect and Summit Streets, in the city’s wealthier hill section neighborhoods, to the downtown area. Officials of the Burlington Traction Company objected to the permit, believing that residents of the area were well served by the trolley lines and taxis. The Public Service Commission, responsible for preventing unnecessary or economically destructive competition among carriers, offered the Burlington Traction Company the option to provide the bus service. Although the trolley system was already experiencing decreased patronage, it apparently felt that establishing a bus route was not a good investment and declined the offer. The Public Service Commission granted Appleyard a Certificate of Public Good and the Burlington Rapid Transcript Company was officially in the bus business. During the next three years, the bus company was granted permission to run more routes throughout the city, extending public transportation service beyond the reaches of the electric trolley system.

While the new bus lines prospered, the trolley line’s ridership continued to deteriorate. The flood of November 1927 dealt a devastating blow to the trolley line’s infrastructure, and bus service provided a flexible and less expensive public transportation option. Although the Burlington Traction Company had started using buses to supplement its trolley lines, it was not able to compete with Appleyard’s bus company. In 1929, the Burlington Traction Company was purchased by the Burlington Rapid Transit Company to acquire its routes and eliminate competition. In a grand public ceremony at City Hall Park on August 4, 1929, trolleys were draped in black and set ablaze at the corner of St. Paul and Main Streets while twenty buses, comprising the fleet of the Burlington Rapid Transit Company, drove two-by-two down Main Street. This marked the official end of the 44-year trolley era in Burlington.

Although the Burlington Rapid Transit Company was not the first bus system in Vermont — this distinction was held by the Auto Bus Line, Inc., founded in Bennington in 1915 — it quickly grew into the largest bus carrier in the state. While expanding local service in Burlington, Appleyard was also purchasing other local and regional bus lines. In 1929, he bought out the interests of Yellow Bus Line, which operated a local Barre-Montpelier service and some regional routes, including a Barre-Burlington line. In November 1929, Appleyard, with partners Charles F. Black and John W. Goss, incorporated the Vermont Transit Lines, which took over the Yellow Bus Line routes and during the next few decades purchased more regional lines to become a major inter-city bus line serving Vermont and New England. The trolley barns of the Burlington Traction Company became the main bus barns for both the Burlington Rapid Transit and Vermont Transit Lines bus fleets.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service****National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**Burlington Traction Company
Burlington, Chittenden County, VermontSection number 8 Page 5

The Burlington Traction Company is eligible for the National Register for its architectural significance under Criterion C as a good example of a transportation facility that served both as trolley barns and bus garage and repair shops. Both the Upper and Lower Car Barns are highly intact and have retained their architectural massing, details, and historic significance. Despite some modifications, the structures overall embody their historic function as trolley and bus barns, and remain highly intact in both form and function and are the best examples in the state of this property type. Distinctive characteristics of the buildings that define them as early 20th century utilitarian transportation facilities include the structural brick masonry construction, wide service bays, parapet rooflines, slate roofing, beaded board interior details, and six-over-six double hung windows in segmental arch openings. Other early 20th century features are the Colonial Revival style molded cornice returns, oculus windows on the Lower Car Barn, and the vernacular commercial style architecture of the Upper Car Barn.

When the Burlington Traction Company was bought out by the Burlington Rapid Transit bus company in 1929, the transformation from trolley service to bus service resulted in minor modifications to the car barns to accommodate the needs of both the Burlington Rapid Transit and Vermont Transit Lines bus fleets. During the trolley era, trolley tracks led directly into the barns where cars could be stored and serviced. The Upper Car Barn had a total of twelve tracks, set in an earthen floor, leading cars into the building, three in each bay. The barn could hold approximately thirty trolley cars. In bay 1, the middle track led directly into a rear paint shop addition. Bay 4 served as the primary repair shop, with a parts and storage department at the rear. The Lower Car Barn had three bays with one track in each. The trolley cars were bi-directional and could be driven into the garages to be serviced or stored overnight. To leave the barn, a motorman would remove the controller handle from one end of the car and retract a spring-mounted trolley pole from its contact with the overhead wire, walk to the other end of the car, raise another trolley pole to the wire and insert the controller handle.

When the bus system took over, modifications made to the property in the early years included the removal of trolley tracks, ties, wires, poles and other electrical equipment. In the Upper Car Barn, a concrete floor was poured and two below grade service pits were added in each bay. Each bay could accommodate two buses side by side, and the barn could hold approximately fifty buses. The addition at the rear of bay 1 continued to be used as a lacquer and painting area. Bay 4 remained the primary repair shop, with a parts and storage department at the rear. A c. 1910 rear addition behind bays 3 and 4, which had been used as a substation for the trolley line, was converted to storage space for the buses, and openings were cut to the main block of the Upper Barn. The Lower Car Barn became an automotive washing and greasing facility. A combination concrete ramp and service pit were added, nine large

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Burlington Traction Company
Burlington, Chittenden County, Vermont

Section number 8 Page 6

multi-pane metal windows were installed on the eaves sides, and a garage door exit was installed on the rear (west) façade so that buses could pass directly through the building. A one-story boiler room addition was added to connect the Lower Barn with the battery house. The battery house became a locker room, referred to by employees as the “gym.” The yard between the two barns, where cars and parts from the trolley era had been stored, were cleaned up and landscaped.

Later additions to the property included two concrete block storage additions, c. 1950 and c. 1971, to the Upper Car Barn. The c. 1950 addition was removed during the 2001 rehabilitation. The Lower Barn had a 1950, large, 6-bay bus garage addition. This steel frame, metal sided addition was architecturally incongruous and noticeably different in materials and context from the period of significance when the property functioned as a trolley barn. The garage addition was removed from the Lower Barn during the rehabilitation of the building in 2001.

Following World War II, as automobile travel became increasingly popular and the Burlington suburbs grew, bus ridership began a steady decline. In 1972, Burlington Rapid Transit stopped providing local service. However, the corporate entity, known as BRT Co., Inc., continued to own the former Burlington Traction Company property, leasing it to Vermont Transit Lines until 1999. Today, the property is owned by Bus Barns Housing Limited Partnership, a partnership of the Burlington Community Land Trust and Housing Vermont, Inc. The property has been rehabilitated into affordable housing and commercial space. A significant portion of the Upper Car Barn will continue to be used as an automotive repair shop for the Good News Garage, a non-profit organization that repairs donated cars and provides them to people in need, continuing the transportation history of the property.

Statewide Significance

The Burlington Traction Company has statewide significance as the site of the first street railroad company in the state. It is the best-preserved Vermont example of a streetcar facility with intact trolley barns. Car barns exist in North Bennington, Rutland, St. Albans, and Montpelier. Many trolley barns around the state were destroyed in the flood of 1927, including those in Barre, and the trolley barns in Springfield have burned. A comparison of trolley barns around the state reveals that the Burlington Traction Company facility has retained the highest degree of architectural integrity. For example, the Bennington and Hoosick Valley Railway car barn, built in 1897 (site 60, North Bennington Historic District,

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**Burlington Traction Company
Burlington, Chittenden County, VermontSection number 8 Page 7

entered on the National Register on August 29, 1980) has been substantially altered. This long, rectangular, 1-story, four bay, gable roof, brick car barn with segmental arch windows has undergone numerous changes including concrete block infill of the garage bay openings and modifications on the interior for recent use as a roller skating rink. In Rutland, the 1-story, flat roof, brick and stucco trolley barn built in 1906 at 170 South Main Street opposite the fairgrounds, has a parapet roofline with corbelling, ornate rafter tails, and keystones. This facility has also been severely compromised due to an incompatible non-historic addition, which mimics but severely compromises the integrity of the original structure. The massing and fenestration patterns of the c. 1890, brick facility in St. Albans are generally intact but some of the garage bays have been infilled with inappropriate picture windows. The original Montpelier car barn has been nearly totally obscured by later additions and modifications. The Burlington Traction Company is the only existing, former trolley facility in Vermont that still retains a transportation use.

The Burlington Traction Company possesses significance under the Vermont Historic Preservation Plan under the theme of Transportation. According to the Plan, developed by the Vermont Division for Historic Preservation, the trolley holds an important role in the history of transportation in the state. The transportation overview in the Plan emphasizes the significance of trolley travel and the unfortunate loss of resources from this era. It states, "In the 1880s, horse drawn trolleys began to appear in a few of Vermont's larger towns such as Burlington, Springfield, Rutland, and others. By the 1890s electric rail cars were rapidly replacing horse drawn cars, providing speedy access to downtown commercial centers for people living in the outskirts of these towns. The trolley thus provided a tremendous boon to main street commerce during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The electric rail cars were stored in large warehouses known as *car* or *trolley barns*, most of which no longer stand." Compared to examples in North Bennington, Rutland, St. Albans, and Montpelier, the Burlington Traction Company car barns remain highly intact in both form and function and are the best examples in the state of this property type. The bus era adds to the significance of the property under the Vermont Historic Preservation Plan. The barns served as garages and repair shops, representing significant property types associated with automobile travel.

Today, the former Burlington Traction Company continues to serve the community with affordable housing, commercial space, and an automotive garage and repair shop that continues the site's long transportation history. The property serves as a good example of adaptive use of a transportation facility that meets the needs of the community and retains the property's historic form and function.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Burlington Traction Company
Burlington, Chittenden County, Vermont

Section number 9 Page 1

Bibliography

"Ancient electric car burns as taps sound for trolleys," *Burlington Free Press*. Burlington, VT, August 5, 1929.

Barker and Wheeler, Engineers. Burlington Traction Co., Burlington, Vermont: Report to Public Service Commission, State of Vermont, on Investigation of Assets. New York, NY, August 2, 1926.

Blow, David J. *Historic Guide to Burlington Neighborhoods*. Burlington, VT: Chittenden County Historical Society, 1991.

Blow, David J. "Landmarks: William Appleyard and the Burlington Bus System." *The Southend Times*. Burlington, VT, August 1980.

Fox, Gerald B. "Vermont's Big Green Machines: The Vermont Transit Lines." *UVM History Review*. Vol. 4, Issue 2, Spring 1991.

Holden, Alfred. "Rails on the roads: Trolleys and the growth of Burlington." *Chittenden County Historical Society Bulletin*. Vol. 27, No. 1, Winter 1993.

"John J. Flynn, leading Vermont business man, is dead at 86." *Burlington Free Press*. Burlington, VT, September 13, 1940.

Jones, Robert C. *Railroads of Vermont, Part I and II*. Shelburne, VT: New England Press, 1993.

Jones, Robert C. *Railroads of Vermont, a Pictorial*. Shelburne, VT: New England Press, 1994.

Redden, Robert. *The Vermont Transit Historic Photograph Portfolio*. Lynn, MA: Redden Archives, 1983.

Reference Files. The Wilbur Collection. Special Collections, University of Vermont.

Insurance Maps of Burlington, Vermont. Pelham, NY: Sanborn Map Company, Inc., 1889-1960.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Burlington Traction Company
Burlington, Chittenden County, Vermont

Section number 9 Page 2

Spaulding, Albert C. "Trolleys, Kings of Main Street." *Vermont Life*. Montpelier, VT, Spring 1964.

Spaulding, Albert C. "Trolleys in Chittenden County." *Chittenden County Historical Society Bulletin*. Vol. 10, No. 2, April 1975.

Vermont Division for Historic Preservation. *National Register Nomination for North Bennington*, 1980.

Vermont Division for Historic Preservation. *State Survey for Rutland City*, 1984.

Vermont Division for Historic Preservation. *State Survey for St. Albans*, 1984.

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

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Burlington Traction Company
Burlington, Chittenden County, Vermont

Section number 10 Page 1

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundary of the Burlington Traction Company is recorded in the City Assessor's Office, Burlington, Vermont, as Map and Lot No: 040-2-092-000.

Boundary Justification

The nominated property includes the entire parcel historically associated with the Burlington Traction Company and the Burlington Rapid Transit Company. The triangular shaped property is located at the intersection of Riverside Avenue and North Winooski Avenue and includes the addresses 662 Riverside Avenue and 321 to 343 North Winooski Avenue.

Riverside Avenue

Lower Car Barn
c. 1910

Battery House
c. 1905

c. 1930
Addition

New Apartment Building
2001

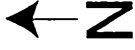
1971
Addition

c. 1910
Addition

c. 1905
Addition

Upper Car Barn
c. 1900

North Winslow Avenue



Non-contributing

Contributing

Contributing Addition

1 inch = approx. 65 feet

Burlington Traction Company
Burlington, Chittenden County, Vermont

Approx. Boundary

