

PH 0358576

DATA SHEET

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY	
RECEIVED	SEP 10 1976
DATE ENTERED	SEP 8 1976

# NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

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

## 1 NAME

HISTORIC  
Bethel Village Historic District  
AND/OR COMMON

## 2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER Along both sides of South Main, Main, North Main,  
and Church Streets

CITY, TOWN Bethel

STATE Vermont

VICINITY OF

CODE 50

COUNTY Windsor

CODE 027

NOT FOR PUBLICATION  
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

## 3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL	<input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	<b>PUBLIC ACQUISITION</b>	<b>ACCESSIBLE</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<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 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

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

VICINITY OF

STATE

## 5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Office of the Town Clerk

STREET & NUMBER

South Main Street

CITY, TOWN

Bethel

STATE

Vermont

## 6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE  
Vermont Historic Sites and Structures Survey

DATE

1973

FEDERAL  STATE  COUNTY  LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

Vermont Division for Historic Preservation

CITY, TOWN

Montpelier

STATE

Vermont

## 7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

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### DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Bethel Village Historic District covers the business center of Bethel Village on Main Street together with adjacent residential areas extending along South Main, North Main, and Church Streets. The major part of the historic district, including the business center, is aligned on a single north-south axis, Main Street, which curves along the east side of the Third Branch of the White River. Both the village and the historic district are focused on the Third Branch falls a short distance upstream from its confluence with the main stem of the White River. At this point the valley of the Third Branch is very narrow; a steep hillside rises immediately behind the buildings along the east side of Main Street. Just upstream of the falls, the single east-west axis of the historic district, Church Street, extends perpendicularly westward from Main Street, climbing a narrow ridge which rises abruptly above the open floodplains to the north and south.

The four principal sections of the Bethel Village Historic District are relatively homogeneous in type of development. South Main Street, North Main Street and Church Street are almost exclusively residential with religious buildings interspersed especially along the latter street. Commercial and industrial development is confined to Main Street along with a small number of public buildings.

Architecturally, the historic district contains a variety of styles which reflect especially the periods of the most intensive development. Several significant Federal style buildings--including a church, a former hotel, and houses--are scattered throughout the district dating from the early nineteenth century transition from the rudimentary buildings of the initial settlement. The Greek Revival style appears less commonly in Bethel than in many Vermont villages with only a few extant examples. The dominant architectural character of the business center of the village is Italianate Revival deriving from the extensive redevelopment of the north end of Main Street after a catastrophic fire in 1877. Various other architectural styles, including the Second Empire, Queen Anne, and Beaux-Arts Classicist, appear in the historic district but only in isolated examples.

The southeastern limit of the Bethel Village Historic District occurs at the point where the tracks of the Central Vermont Railway become contiguous to South Main Street (Vermont Route 12-107) south of the former creamery building which has been converted to the Bethel Town Offices (#2). From this point, the southwest boundary of the historic district follows the westernmost track of the Central Vermont Railway northward to the vicinity of the Third Branch falls; the east boundary extends parallel to, and 300 feet to the east of, Main Street northward to the vicinity of the Miller Memorial Methodist Church (#46).

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The southeasterly part of the historic district, south of the intersection of River Street (Vermont Route 107) and Main Street, is essentially residential in character. Next to the north of the Bethel Town Offices building on the west side of Main Street stands the finest example of Federal style domestic architecture in the Bethel Village Historic District, the Paige-Branliere House (#4). Built in 1833 by Lucius Paige for Dr. Alfred Paige (who is reputed to have designed the house), it is a 1 1/2-story, 5-bay, brick, gable-roofed structure with four interior end chimneys, oriented with the east gable elevation to the street. Doorways both on the east and south elevations are framed by fanlights and sidelights; internally the house is oriented to the south entrance. First floor windows on the south elevation are surmounted by elliptical relieving arches; those on the east elevation display stone sills and splayed lintels. Louvered fans decorate the east gable end. A large frame and clapboarded ell is attached to the west elevation. The semi-formally landscaped grounds of the house have been encroached upon by expansion of the highway on the east and construction of the railroad on the west.

Diagonally across South Main Street to the northeast of the Paige-Branliere House stands the Denison House (#6). Part of this small 1 1/2-story, 2-bay, frame, clapboarded, gable-roofed house was built in circa 1795 on the site of the Paige-Branliere House. Prior to construction of the latter in 1833, it was moved to its present site.

North of the intersection between River Street and Main Street and continuing to the Central Vermont Railway Depot the character of the Bethel Village Historic District shows a marked linear duality. On the west side of Main Street--owing to redevelopment after disastrous fires in 1938 and 1945 destroyed major nineteenth century buildings--recent commercial structures predominate; the east side of the street, in contrast, remains mostly residential. Indeed, this area along the west side of Main Street has suffered the worst intrusion in the Bethel Village Historic District of elements incompatible with its historic fabric: a large metal-sheathed grain elevator, three automobile service stations, and a one-story concrete block commercial structure have replaced the earlier generation of buildings represented by the Ellsworth House (#12), an 1854, 2 1/2-story, frame, clapboarded, gable-roofed house now surrounded and dominated by the intrusions.

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Northwest of the Ellsworth House next to the easternmost track of the Bethel yard of the Central Vermont Railway stands the three-section Central Vermont freight house (#13). The southern section of this 1 1/2-story, frame, clapboarded, gable-roofed building is the original Bethel passenger depot, built in circa 1848. Some of its original decorative features, principally the exposed collar beams in the south gable end, have survived the adaptation to its present use. The central section of the freight house was originally the depot of the White River Railroad, which formerly connected with the Central Vermont Railway at Bethel. The north section of the building is an office wing. Between the freight house and Main Street a semi-circular driveway encloses a small village park.

The generally residential east side of this part of Main Street is dominated by the Wilson Homestead (#11), which stands opposite the Ellsworth House. Built in 1863, the Wilson Homestead is a large 2-story, 3-bay, frame, clapboarded, Italianate house capped by a hip roof with deck and railing. The main (west) elevation displays a gabled central pavilion distinguished by segmental-arched window and door openings and a bracketed entrance canopy surmounted by a railing.

To the north of the Wilson Homestead on the same side of Main Street, the second next building is the Bethel Public Library (#15). Built in 1853 for the offices of the White River Bank and purchased by the Town of Bethel in 1911 for conversion to a library, it is a one-story, 3-bay, brick, gable-roofed, Greek Revival building with Federal style details, oriented with the west gable elevation to the street. Both the main (west) and south elevations are traversed by arcades into which doors and windows are set. Semi-elliptical fans mark the main doorway and the west gable end. The similar original arcade across the north elevation has been covered by the addition in 1969 of a one-story, brick, hip-roofed wing.

Farther to the north on the east side of Main Street stands one of the oldest buildings in the Bethel Village Historic District, the Gardiner-Wheeler House (#20). Built in 1803, this former hotel stands back from, and somewhat above the present Main Street, marking the alignment of the street in the early nineteenth century.

On the main (west) elevation of the building, its brick ground floor is exposed owing to the sloping site; the upper two floors are frame,

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clapboarded, and capped by a hip roof. An original central chimney has been removed. A two-story porch is attached to the west elevation; its upper level continues around to the south elevation. Corner pilasters and triglyph frieze and window cornices are the principle decorative features of the building.

Across Main Street to the west of the Gardiner-Wheeler House stands the present Central Vermont Railway depot (#22). Built in circa 1878, the depot marks the south end of a row of commercial blocks constructed after a disastrous fire in 1877. The depot and the next four buildings to the north share similar Italianate style, giving this section of the west side of Main Street a strongly cohesive appearance. The depot differs from the other four buildings principally by being set back from the street line next to the railroad track and by being capped with a gable roof.

Still used by the Central Vermont Railway for a freight agency, the depot is a 1 1/2-story, 5-bay, brick building oriented parallel to the street and track. On the trackside (west) elevation, the agent's office bay is centered under a pedimented gable; a manually operated semaphore rises above the bay and is still used for signalling trains. Distinguishing architectural details on the building include segmental-arched window and door openings, triptych windows in the gable ends, and a corbelled denticulated cornice. The depot has been altered by the removal of the wide bracketed canopy that originally surrounded it, the metal cresting along the ridge, and the corbelled chimney caps. A small brick, hip-roofed ancillary building (originally the baggage house) of similar design stands next to the track just south of the depot.

Next to the north of the depot stands the first of the four post-1877 commercial blocks, the Mill's Store (originally Brooks and Washburn) block (#25). Also built in 1878, it is a 2-story, 4-bay, brick, flat-roofed commercial block with a storefront on the first floor of the main (east) elevation. The recessed central entrance is flanked by large display windows separated by wood pilasters, the whole overhung by a wide suspended canopy. The other window and door openings are surmounted by corbelled segmental arches with stone keystones and sills. A corbelled denticulated cornice under projecting eaves encircles the building.

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Next to the north of the Mill's Store block stands the similar Arnold Block (#26). Also built in 1878, it is a 2-story, (3-story on the west elevation), brick, hip-roofed commercial block with two storefronts on the first floor of its main (east) elevation. The storefronts share a recessed central entrance and are overhung by a wide bracketed canopy. Other window openings, including the twin paired windows on the second floor of the main elevation, are surmounted by corbeled segmental arches.

Next to the north of the Arnold Block stands the Blossom Block (#27), the dominant commercial block on the west side of Main Street. When built in circa 1880, it was a 2 1/2-story, frame, clapboarded, gable-roofed building oriented parallel to the street with triple gables facing the street. In circa 1895 the building was altered by the removal of the triple gables and the addition of a full story across the main elevation (the original west slope of the gable roof remains in place over the rear of the building). The Blossom Block now presents to the street a 3-story, flat-roofed front with four storefronts on the first floor. A projecting display window bay marks each storefront, with the two end bays rising to the second story. Three bullseye windows are spaced symmetrically across the front under the projecting bracketed cornice.

Next to the north of the Blossom Block stands the similar Laverre Block (#29). Built in circa 1913, it is a 3-story, frame, clapboarded, flat-roofed commercial block of somewhat smaller proportions than the Blossom Block and polygonal in plan. On the main (east) elevation, storefronts open to the street with projecting display window bays flanking central entrances. On the second floor, fenestration consists of three asymmetrically-spaced window bays. A projecting bracketed cornice surrounds the building.

In marked contrast to the surviving architectural integrity of the four post-1877 commercial blocks on the west side of Main Street, two post-1877 commercial blocks on the opposite side of the street have been substantially altered with the consequent loss of much of their original architectural quality. The larger of the two, the Richardson's Store (originally Tupper and Martin) block (#23) was built in 1888 in the scale and Italianate style common to the buildings across the street. Even more elaborate in architectural detail than the other blocks, the Richardson's Store block contributed outstandingly to the character and balance of the streetscape. Recently, however, the block has been stripped of most detail and altered to a condition that is merely suggestive of its original design.

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A 3-story, frame, flat-roofed commercial block with a projecting bracketed cornice, the Richardson's Store block stands on the curve of Main Street opposite the depot. Accordingly, its main (west) elevation was built in two planes--the southerly being three bays wide and the northerly five bays wide--to fit the site. On the first floor, the original storefronts with large display windows separated by pilasters have been removed, the bays between the pilasters being infilled to form wall surfaces. The entire building has been sheathed with metal siding, and many architectural details were probably removed to accommodate application of the siding. The original corner pilasters, second and third story window cornices (which repeated the form of the bracketed cornice, still intact), and bracketed window sills have been removed; and the ornamental frieze has been either covered or removed. The original modillion cornice above the storefronts remains in place.

The other of the two post-1877 commercial blocks on the east side of Main Street, the I.O.O.F. (originally Kittredge) Block (#24), stands next to the north of the Richardson's Store block, and has been treated similarly. Built in circa 1878, it is a 2 1/2-story, frame, clapboarded, gable-roofed structure oriented parallel to the street. The original storefront on the first floor of its main (west) elevation has been extensively altered. The first story of the original two-story porch has been completely enclosed and converted to a storefront with a recessed entrance, and in 1913 one-story storefront wings were appended both to the north and south ends of the block. The alterations have obliterated the distinguishing details of the original porch, which related the building directly to the others in the vicinity.

Second next to the north of the I.O.O.F. Block stands the bank office building now owned by the Proctor Trust Company (#28). Built in 1906-7 by Thomas W. Rogers of Brandon, Vermont, for the former National White River Bank of Bethel, it is a 2-story, 3-bay, brick, flat-roofed structure in Beaux-Arts Classicist style. The main (west) elevation is marked by a central pedimented entrance reached by a massive projecting flight of steps. The first floor door and window openings are outlined with granite quoins. The second story windows on the main elevation are set between granite columns; other windows on that story are framed with rusticated granite lintels and sills. Corner pilasters are surmounted by a projecting cornice above which rises a brick parapet.

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Next to the north of the bank building stands the Bundy House (#30), the only detached residence remaining in the core of the business district. Built circa 1826 by Daniel Weston, it is a 1 3/4-story, 5-bay, frame, clapboarded, gable-roofed house oriented with the west gable elevation to the street. The main entrance on the west elevation has been altered somewhat and is now surmounted by a projecting bracketed hood.

Immediately next to the north elevation of the Bundy House stands the dominant structure on the east side of Main Street, the Bethel Inn (#32). The earliest section of this large building dates from 1816; subsequently it has been extensively altered and enlarged, such as in circa 1880 by the addition of the third story and in 1891 by the addition of a 3-story wing on the south elevation. Presently, the inn is a 3-story (with the ground floor also exposed on the main elevation), frame, flat-roofed structure sheathed with composition siding. The main elevation is dominated by a 2-story porch through and above which rise two 3-story window bays. A projecting bracketed cornice surrounds the building; individual mansard roofs which formerly capped the 3-story window bays have been removed.

Across Main Street from the Bethel Inn stands a row of three connected frame buildings belonging to the Bethel Mills Company. Two of the buildings, the former Weston Mill (#31) and the Tontine (#34), are similar large frame, clapboarded, gable-roofed warehouses oriented parallel to the street. The larger of the two, the 2 3/4-story former Weston Mill, was built in circa 1822; the 2-story Tontine was built in 1829 for offices and had a meeting room on the second floor. Attached to the southeast corner of the Weston Mill is a small one-story shed, which presents to the street a false front capped by a projecting bracketed cornice.

Standing between the two warehouses and attached to them is the office building of the Bethel Mills Company (#33). Built for that purpose in 1880, it is a 2-story, 3-bay, frame, clapboarded, shed-roofed building. On its main (east) elevation, the building has a central entrance flanked by projecting window bays; the windows are separated by pilasters and the whole is overhung by a projecting bracketed canopy. Corner pilasters rise above the canopy to a projecting bracketed cornice whose design is repeated in cornices over the second story windows. Although smaller in scale than the commercial blocks to the south, the Bethel Mills office building exhibits similar Italianate design and physical features.

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Diagonally across Main Street to the northeast of the Bethel Mills buildings stands the Bethel Town Hall (#35). Built in 1891-92 by Henry O. Maxham of Pomfret, Vermont, the Town Hall was possibly designed by the Montpelier (Vermont) architect, George Gurnsey, in his highly eclectic Romanesque style. It is a large brick, gable-roofed structure dominated by a bell tower, oriented with the west gable elevation to the street. The tower rises from a projecting central pavilion - which incorporates the recessed semi-circular-arched main entrance on the ground level - breaking the fully pedimented west gable. Above the cornice the tower tapers upward and is sheathed with stamped metal to the level of the modillion cornice at the base of the pilastered arcaded bell chamber, above which rises the pyramidal peaked roof with ornamental gables. Other architectural details of the building include semi-circular-arched windows with granite keystones and sills and a corbelled arcaded cornice. The original design of the building has been altered somewhat. The town clock has been installed in the tower, penetrating from below the modillion cornice. In 1969, the original main entrance and a semi-circular window in the bay to its south were replaced with large doors to accommodate fire equipment. A new pedestrian entrance was cut through the west end of the north wall on the same level.

Next to the north of the Town Hall stands the Armstrong House (#36). Built in circa 1866, it is a 2-story, brick, flat-roofed, Italianate house with a projecting bracketed cornice whose form is repeated in the cornices over the paired windows. The main entrance on the west elevation is surmounted by a similar bracketed canopy.

Next to the north of the Armstrong House stands the originally similar Cushing House (#37) at the beginning of North Main Street. Also built in circa 1866, it has subsequently been altered, enlarged, and recently converted to bank offices. In 1898 a mansard roof was added to the 2-story, brick structure and the original cupola was removed. Recently a gable roof has been constructed atop the mansard. On the west and south elevations, 2-story window bays rise nearly to the projecting bracketed cornice, whose form is repeated in the window cornices. A columned, shingled porch with a circular entrance pavilion at its south end was added to the west elevation in circa 1900.

Across Cushing Avenue to the north and rear of the Cushing House stands the Joel Marsh House (#38), the oldest surviving house in Bethel. Built in 1781

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on a site directly across Cushing Avenue, it was moved to its present site at the time of the construction of the Cushing House; its original center chimney was removed then. The Marsh House is a 1 3/4-story, 5-bay, frame, clapboarded, gable-roofed house oriented parallel to the street. The main doorway on the south elevation is framed by a rectangular transom and sidelights.

North of Cushing Avenue on the east side of North Main Street stands Christ Church Bethel (#43). Built in 1846, it is a frame, clapboarded, gable-roofed Greek Revival building treated with Gothic Revival details. The main (west) gable elevation displays a full pediment broken by a projecting square bell tower capped by a flat roof (an original projecting cornice has been removed). The base of the tower incorporates the four-centered arched main doorway. A tracery window marks the second story of the tower, and is surmounted by the bell chamber defined by trefoil and quatrefoil belts respectively below and above the quatrefoil bell chamber openings.

Second next to the north of Christ Church Bethel stands the Whittaker House (#45). Built in circa 1840, it is a 2 1/2-story, 3-bay, brick, gable-roofed Federal style house oriented with the west gable elevation to the street. A frame, clapboarded ell of similar scale is attached to the rear of the south elevation. A later Queen Anne style porch with paired turned posts extends across the west and south elevations. The west gable end is distinguished by a louvered Palladian opening under the denticulated cornice; the shingled south gable displays a Palladian window. A large frame carriage barn with cupola stands to the east of the house. The northern boundary of the historic district falls on the north side of the small Miller Memorial Methodist Church (#46), built in 1905 next to the north of the Whittaker House.

Opposite the Armstrong House just north of the business district, Church Street extends perpendicularly westward from Main Street, crossing the Third Branch and the Central Vermont Railway on a high steel and concrete bridge. Before the flood of 1927 washed away the previous wood covered bridge on the site, Church Street intersected the railroad track at grade and then climbed rather steeply the narrow ridge to the west. Until construction of the new elevated bridge in 1928, the Russell House (#47) stood at street level on the west side of the railroad track. Built in circa 1820, it is a 2 1/2-story, 3-bay, brick, gable-roofed structure oriented with the south gable elevation to the street. Now the house stands below, and overshadowed by, the bridge embankment, and is reached by a side road to the north of the embankment.

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A short distance to the west of the Russell House the bridge embankment intersects the rising natural slope of the ground, and Church Street continues westward on its original grade. The north and south boundaries of this part of the Bethel Village Historic District extend westward from the railroad track along the upper edges of the abrupt escarpments which lie behind the buildings on each side of the street. Three churches now stand along the street, which passes through the principle residential area in the historic district. Just west of the bridge embankment on the north side of the street stands the Old Brick (United) Church (#51), the oldest and architecturally most significant of the churches in Bethel. Built in 1815-16 by one Willard of Windsor, Vermont, with joinery by Simeon Babbitt of Bethel, the church was known originally as the First Proprietors' Meeting House after its sponsors, and stood facing the original town common across the street (later used for the site of public school buildings). The original Federal style exterior of the church survives essentially intact, with alteration limited to details.

The Old Brick Church is a 2-story, 5-bay by 7-bay, brick, gable-roofed structure oriented with the south gable elevation to the street. The main elevation is dominated by a projecting 3-bay central pavilion incorporating triple doorways on the main entrance with a second story Palladian window surmounted by a fully pedimented, clapboarded gable. Above the pavilion, the square clapboarded base of the bell tower (showing blank clock faces) rises to a balustraded octagonal open bell chamber, which in turn is surmounted by a balustraded octagonal cupola capped by an octagonal inflected dome. Owing to deterioration, the original cupola was removed in circa 1930; it was replaced in 1953. Other architectural details include semi-circular-arched window and door openings on the first story. An original Palladian window in the rear (north) elevation has been removed.

The residential structures along Church Street, particularly on its south side, constitute a cohesive group which remains free of detrimental intrusion. Generally, the houses share the scale of 1 1/2 stories, orientation perpendicular to the street, and the almost uniform color of white. Outstanding among the houses are two basically identical Greek Revival style houses, the Putney House (#58) and the Gay House (#61). Built in circa 1843, they are 1 1/2-story, 3-bay, frame, clapboarded, gable-roofed structures oriented with north gable elevations

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to the street. Their main (north) elevations are distinguished by recessed main entrances, each being flanked by pilasters supporting a cornice. Two fluted Ionic columns stand within the recess; the doorway is framed by rectangular sidelights and transom. Both houses have dormers but they are of the shed type on the Putney House and the gable type on the Gay House.

The west end of the Church Street residential area is terminated visually by the Marsh-Adams House (#69), which stands just west of the intersection between Church Street and Vermont Route 12 north, oriented perpendicularly to the former street. Built in 1833, it is a 2 1/2-story, 5-bay, brick (except for the clapboarded northwest corner), gable-roofed Federal style house with four interior end chimneys. The main (east) elevation, which faces the length of Church Street, is distinguished by a doorway framed by a rectangular transom and sidelights. The western boundary of the Bethel Village Historic District falls at the southward curve of Church Street a short distance west of the Marsh-Adams House.

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INVENTORY OF HISTORIC STRUCTURES LOCATED WITHIN THE BETHEL VILLAGE  
HISTORIC DISTRICT

1. Stearns House, South Main Street: circa 1867, 1 1/2 stories, 5 bays, frame, composition siding, gable roof, recessed main (west) entrance, 1 1/2-story wing on south (elevation).
2. Bethel Town Offices (former Bethel Cooperative Creamery) building, South Main Street: 1927, 1 1/2 stories, frame, clapboarded, gable roof, former trackside (west) loading dock removed.
3. Hawkins House, South Main Street: 1880, 2 1/2 stories, 5 bays, frame, composition siding, gable roof, entrance porch on west, 1 1/2-story wing on south.
4. Paige-Branliere House, South Main Street: 1833, Federal, 1 1/2 stories, 5 bays, brick (stone lintels and sills on east), gable roof with shed dormers, four inside end chimneys, fanlights and sidelights on east and south doorways, elliptical-arched windows on south, louvered fans on east gable, 1 1/2-story (2 1/2-story on west elevation) frame and clapboarded ell on south, semi-formal grounds.
5. Shepard House, South Main Street: 1913, 1 1/2 stories, frame, composition siding, gable roof, window bay on west, bracketed canopy on main (west) entrance, 1 1/2-story wing on south.
6. Denison House, South Main Street: circa 1795, 1 1/2 stories, 2 bays, frame, clapboarded, gable roof, 1 1/2-story ell with porch on north, moved from original site across street pre-1833.
7. Amsden House, South Main Street: 1888, 2 1/2 stories, 3 bays, frame, clapboarded, gable roof, 2-story ell on south.
8. Clifford's of Vermont warehouse (former automobile garage), corner of River and South Main Streets: circa 1914, 2 stories, brick (frame with composition sheathing on second story), flat roof, segmental-arched windows and doors on first story, 3-sided wing on north.

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9. Gaiko House, Main Street: circa 1900, 2 1/2 stories, 3 bays, frame, composition siding, gable roof, bracketed canopy on main (east) entrance, 1 1/2-story ell on south.
10. Goon House, Main Street: 1885, Queen Anne (vernacular), 2 1/2 stories, 3 bays, frame, clapboarded (shingled gables), 2-story gabled window bay on south, one-story window bay on north, shingled porch on west, ornamental stickwork in gables, 1 1/2-story ell on south, second story added 1893.
11. Wilson Homestead, Main Street: 1863, Italianate, 2 stories, 3 bays, frame, clapboarded, hip roof with deck and railing, gabled central pavilion on west, bracketed canopy with railing over segmental-arched main (west) entrance, paired windows, projecting bracketed cornice, 1 1/2-story gable-roofed wing on east.
12. Ellsworth House, Main Street: 1854, 2 1/2 stories, 2 bays, frame, clapboarded, gable roof, 2-story porch on south.
13. Central Vermont Railway freight house, off Main Street: circa 1848 (southernmost of three sections) and later, 1 1/2 stories, frame, clapboarded, gable roof, office wing on north, southern section original Central Vermont Railway depot with ornamental exposed collar beams and triptych window in south gable, central section former White River Railroad depot.
14. Bagley House, Main Street: 1845, Greek Revival, 1 1/2 stories, 3 bays, frame, clapboarded, gable roof, recessed porches on west and south, west porch has 3 polygonal fluted columns and pilastered doorway with sidelights, fluted corner pilasters.
15. Bethel Public Library (originally White River Bank), Main Street: 1853, Greek Revival, 1 story, 3 bays, brick (stone keystones, lintels, sills, foundation), gable roof, arcades inset with windows and door across west and south, semi-elliptical fans on west gable and over doorway, 1-story brick wing with hip roof added on north in 1969.
16. Wilson House, Main Street: circa 1870, Second Empire, 1 story with mansard roof, 3 bays, frame, clapboarded, 1-story window bays on west and north, projecting bracketed cornice, bracketed canopy over main (west) entrance, porch on west, 1 1/2-story frame ell with gable roof on east.

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17. Spaulding Press printing shop, Main Street: 1848, 1 story (originally 3 stories; mostly burned post-1940), frame, clapboarded, gable roof, pilastered recessed main (east) entrance with transom, corner pilasters.
18. Richardson apartment house (originally Irwin Weston House), Main Street: pre-1842, 2 1/2 stories, frame, clapboarded, gable roof, two 3-story gabled shingled Queen Anne window bays with pedimented gable fans added circa 1870 flanking central entrance porch on west.
19. Courier Building, Main Street: 1870, 2 stories, 3 bays, frame, clapboarded, gable roof, 2-story porch on west and north, two storefronts with recessed central entrance on west.
20. Gardiner-Wheeler House, off Main Street: 1803, Federal, 2 stories (3 stories on west), 5 bays, frame, clapboarded, hip roof, 2-story porch on west (one-story on south), corner pilasters, triglyph frieze and window cornices, various wings and ells on east.
21. Edson Block, Main Street: circa 1857, 3 1/2 stories on west (1 1/2 stories on south), frame, clapboarded, gable roof, storefront at street level on west; lower 2 stories added 1877 to original 1 1/2-story, 5-bay house with corner pilasters; pilastered, sidelit recessed main entrance on south.
22. Central Vermont Railway depot, off Main Street: circa 1878, Italianate, 1 1/2 stories, 5 bays, brick, gable roof, agent's office bay centered on west under pedimented gable, semaphore above office bay, corbelled segmental-arched first floor windows, semi-circular-arched triptych windows in gables, corbelled denticulated cornice.
23. Richardson's Store (originally Tupper and Martin) block, Main Street: 1888, Italianate, 3 stories, 8 bays, frame, metal siding, flat roof, projecting bracketed cornice, storefront on west with pilasters and projecting modillion cornice.
24. I.O.O.F. (originally Kittredge) Block, Main Street: circa 1878, 2 1/2 stories, 7 bays, frame, clapboarded, gable roof, second story porch on west above storefront with recessed entrance, one-story wings on north and south added 1913.

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25. Mills Store (originally Brooks and Washburn) block, Main Street: 1878, Italianate, 2 stories, 4 bays, brick (stone keystones, sills), flat roof, corbelled denticulated cornice, corbelled segmental arches over windows, pilastered storefront with recessed central entrance on east, suspended canopy over storefront.
26. Arnold Block, Main Street: 1878, Italianate, 3 stories (two on east), brick, hip roof, corbelled segmental-arched windows (paired on second story on east), two storefronts with recessed central entrances on east, bracketed canopy over storefronts.
27. Blossom Block, Main Street: circa 1880, 3 stories, frame, clapboarded, flat roof over east (single slope over west), 4 storefronts on east with projecting display window bays (end bays are 2-story), bullseye windows under projecting bracketed cornice.
28. Proctor Trust Company office building, Main Street: 1906-7, Beaux-Arts Classicist, 2 stories, 3 bays, brick, flat roof with brick parapet; granite lintels, sills (some rusticated), water table, foundation, and quoins on first floor windows and main (west) entrance; second floor windows on west quoined and set between columns, massive flight entrance steps, pedimented hood over main entrance, brick corner pilasters.
29. Lavere Block, Main Street: circa 1913, 3 stories (four on west), frame, clapboarded, flat roof, projecting bracketed cornice, 3 storefronts on east with projecting display window bays, 3 window bays on second story of east, bracketed canopy over main entrance, polygonal plan (3-sided north end).
30. Bundy (originally Daniel Weston) House, Main Street: circa 1826, 1 3/4 stories, 5 bays, frame, clapboarded, gable roof, projecting bracketed hood over west entrance, 1 1/2-story wing on east.
31. Bethel Mills Company warehouse (formerly the Weston Mill), Main Street: circa 1822, 2 3/4 stories (3 3/4 stories on west), frame, clapboarded, gable roof, one-story shed on south with false front and projecting bracketed cornice.
32. Bethel Inn (originally Babbitt Tavern), Main Street: 1816 (first section converted from barn) and later, 4 stories on west (main) elevation (3 on others), frame, composition siding, flat roof,

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- 2-story porch on west, two 3-story window bays on west, projecting bracketed cornice, 2 1/2-story gable-roofed wing on north.
33. Bethel Mills Company office building, Main Street: 1880, Italianate, 2 stories (3 on west), 3 bays, frame, clapboarded, shed roof, projecting pilastered window bays flanking central entrance on east, projecting bracketed cornice, similar cornices over second story windows and storefront, corner pilasters.
34. Bethel Mills Company warehouse (originally the Tontine), Main Street: 1829, 2 stories (3 on west), frame, clapboarded, gable roof.
35. Bethel Town Hall, Main Street: 1891-92, Romanesque (vernacular), 2 1/2 stories, 3 bays, brick (granite keystones, sills), gable roof, corbelled, arcaded cornice, pedimented gable on main (west) elevation broken by projecting bell tower, tower tapered above horizontal cornice and sheathed with stamped metal, semi-circular-arched openings in pilastered balustraded bell chamber capped by pyramidal peaked roof with ornamental gablets, semi-circular-arched windows.
36. Armstrong (originally Wright) House, Main Street: 1866, Italianate, 2 stories, 2 bays, brick, flat roof, projecting bracketed cornice (also over windows), 2-story window bay on north, paired windows, bracketed canopy over main (west) entrance; 1 1/2-story, frame, gable-roofed ell on south; gambrel-roofed barn on south of ell.
37. Cushing House (now Randolph National Bank office), North Main Street: 1866, Italianate, 2 stories with mansard roof (added 1898) capped by gable roof, projecting bracketed cornice (also over windows), 2-story window bays on west and south, some paired windows, columned shingled porch on west with circular entrance pavilion at southwest corner (added circa 1900); 1 1/2-story, frame gable-roofed wing on east.
38. Joel Marsh House, Cushing Avenue: 1781, 1 3/4 stories, 5 bays, frame, clapboarded, gable roof, main (south) entrance has rectangular transom and sidelights, 1 1/2-story ell on north, moved from original site directly across street.
39. Izzo House, North Main Street: circa 1915, 2 1/2 stories, frame,

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- shingled, gambrel roof, window bay on south, shed dormers on north and south, enclosed recessed porch on west.
40. Episcopal Rectory, North Main Street: 1895, 2 stories, frame, clapboarded, hip roof with deck, window bay and porch on west.
41. Thornton House, North Main Street: 1854, 2 1/2 stories, 5 bays, frame, clapboarded, gable roof, 1 1/2-story ell on south.
42. Cornell House, North Main Street: 1865, 1 1/2 stories, 5 bays, frame, metal siding, gable roof, bracketed canopy over main (east) entrance.
43. Christ Church Bethel (Episcopal), North Main Street: 1846, Gothic Revival (vernacular) details on Greek Revival building, frame, clapboarded, gable roof, pedimented west gable broken by square projecting bell tower with tracery window, 4 quatrefoil openings in bell chamber defined by trefoil (lower) and quatrefoil (upper) belts.
44. Washburn House, North Main Street: 1838 (probably east wing), 2 1/2 stories, 3 bays, frame, clapboarded, gable roof, main (west) entrance has rectangular transom and sidelights, 2-story wing on east.
45. Whittaker House, North Main Street: circa 1840, Federal, 2 1/2 stories, 3 bays, brick, denticulated cornice, recessed main entrance on west, Queen Anne porch with paired turned posts and balustrade on west and south, 2 1/2-story frame clapboarded ell on south (possibly added 1869), louvered palladian in west gable, Palladian window in shingled south gable, second story window bay on south gable end, frame carriage barn with cupola to east.
46. Miller Memorial Methodist Church, North Main Street: 1905, one story, frame, clapboarded (except shingled on gable), small bell tower at northwest corner with open bell chamber and pyramidal peak, window bay on south, gabled entrance porch on west.
47. Russell House, off Church Street: circa 1820, Federal, 2 1/2 stories, 3 bays, brick, gable roof, semi-elliptical fan over main (south) entrance, 2-story, frame wing on north.

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48. Brown House, off Church Street: circa 1894, 2 1/2 stories, frame, clapboarded on first story, shingled on upper stories, gable roof, enclosed entrance porch and window bay on south.
49. Blow House, Church Street: circa 1895, 1 1/2 stories, frame, clapboarded, gable roof, various additions.
50. Woodworth House, Church Street: circa 1836, 1 1/2 stories, 5 bays, frame, clapboarded, rectangular transom and sidelights on main (west) entrance, 1 1/2-story wing on north with prominent pedimented entrance porch.
51. Old Brick Church (originally First Proprietors' Meeting House), Church Street: 1815-16, Federal, 2 stories, 5 bays, brick, gable roof, projecting central pavilion with clapboarded pedimented gable on main (south) elevation, main pedimented south gable broken by square clapboarded base of bell tower showing blank clock faces, open octagonal bell chamber surrounded by low balustrade and surmounted by octagonal cupola with oval windows also surrounded by low balustrade and capped by inflected dome, semi-circular relieving arches above windows and doors on first story, Palladian window centered on second story of main elevation (similar window removed from north gable elevation).
52. Sloan House, Church Street: 1906, 2 1/2 stories, frame, clapboarded, hip roof with gable dormers on south and east, 2 window bays and pedimented porch with triplet columns on south, 1 1/2-story ell and carriage barn on east.
53. White (originally Congregational) Church, Church Street: 1893, Queen Anne, frame, clapboarded, jerkinhead roof; 3-story, round bell tower with colonnaded and louvered bell chamber capped by a conical roof, tower shingled above polygonal first story with pedimented entrance on north, 1 1/2-story wing on west.
54. Aikens House, Church Street: 1896, 1 1/2 stories, frame, clapboarded (shingled on gables), gable roof, porch on south.
55. Clifford House, Church Street: 1917, 2 1/2 stories, 5 bays, frame, composition siding, gable roof, pedimented columned entrance porch on main (north) elevation.

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56. Osborne House, Church Street: 1913 (converted from barn), 1 1/2 stories, frame, clapboarded, gable roof, shed dormers on north and south, entrance porch on east.
57. Moulton House, Church Street: circa 1910, 2 1/2 stories, frame, clapboarded, gable roof, 2-story gabled shingled window bay on south.
58. Putney House, Church Street: circa 1843, Greek Revival, 1 1/2 stories, 3 bays, frame, clapboarded, gable roof with shed dormers on east and west, recessed main (north) entrance with 2 fluted Ionic columns and rectangular transom and sidelights, corner pilasters, entrance porch on east.
59. Sturk House, Church Street: 1894, 1 1/2 stories, 3 bays, frame, clapboarded (shingled on gables), gable roof, window bay on west, enclosed porch on north.
60. Michaud House, Church Street: 1894, Queen Anne, 2 stories, frame, clapboarded on first story, shingled on second, hip roof with deck, 2-story round tower with conical roof at northwest corner, enclosed porch on north, carriage barn with gambrel roof to south.
61. Gay House, Church Street: circa 1843, Greek Revival, 1 1/2 stories, 3 bays, frame, clapboarded, gable roof with gable dormers on east and west, recessed main (north) entrance with 2 fluted Ionic columns and rectangular transom and sidelights, corner pilasters, enclosed entrance porch on east.
62. Hill House, Church Street: circa 1894, 1 1/2 stories, frame, metal siding, gambrel roof with shed dormers, window bays on east and west, enclosed entrance porch on north.
63. St. Anthony's Catholic Church, Church Street: 1913, 1 story, frame, shingled (stucco on half-timbered gables), gable roof, small shingled bell chamber and spire on north end of roof, central gabled entrance porch on north, triplet windows between 'buttresses' on east and west.
64. Blodgett House, Church Street: circa 1853, Greek Revival, 1 1/2 stories, 5 bays, frame, clapboarded, gable roof with shed dormers on east and west, corner pilasters, one-story wing on north, barn to north.

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65. Catholic Rectory, Church Street: 1895, 2 1/2 stories, frame, clapboarded (except shingled spandrels and gables), recessed corner main entrance on northwest, 2-story gabled window bay on east, entrance porch on east.
66. Marsigli House, Church Street: circa 1895, 1 1/2 stories, frame, clapboarded (except shingled gables), gable roof, shingled porch on north, ornamental stickwork in gables.
67. Whitcomb House, Church Street: 1894, 1 1/2 stories, 2 bays, frame, composition siding, gable roof, bracketed hoods over main (north) entrance and adjacent window, 2-story gabled window bay on east.
68. Richards House, Church Street: circa 1845 (altered 1910), 1 1/2 stories, 3 bays, frame, clapboarded, gambrel roof with shed dormers on east and west, bracketed canopy over main (north) entrance, window bay and enclosed porch on east, barn with cupola on south.
69. Marsh-Adams House, west corner of Church Street and Vermont Route 12 north: 1833, Federal, 2 1/2 stories, 5 bays, brick (except clapboarded northwest corner), gable roof, 4 interior end chimneys, rectangular transom and sidelights on main (east) entrance, frame shed on north.
70. Former elementary school building, Church Street: 1894 (moved to present site in 1905 from original site on east side of White Church, #53), 1 1/2 stories, 3 bays, frame, clapboarded, gable roof, columned entrance porch on north.
71. Manning House, Church Street: pre-1833 (possibly moved from site of Marsh-Adams House, #69, across street), 1 1/2 stories, frame, clapboarded, gable roof with shed dormers on east and west, pilastered main entrance on east, corner pilasters (partly missing).
72. Burrell House, Church Street: detached from Manning House (#71) in circa 1937-38, 1 1/2 stories, frame, clapboarded, gable roof with shed dormers on east and west, porch on north.

# 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 checked="" 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

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Bethel Village Historic District encompasses a right-angled, biaxial area of Bethel Village which possesses particular significance (1) for the architectural quality and historic integrity both of the individual buildings and the collective village environment, (2) for being the site of the earliest and longest operated industrial development in the town, and (3) for being the junction of important transport routes (both highway and railroad) at the confluence of two major rivers and their valleys. The historic district is focused on the falls of the Third Branch of the White River near the north end of the business district, where the first mills and houses were built in the late eighteenth century.

In addition to the advantage of waterpower provided by the Third Branch falls, Bethel has benefited from its location at the convergence of transport routes coming from three directions along the valleys of the main stem of the White River and its Third Branch, whose confluence occurs on the west side of the village. Historically, the most important north-south route through east-central Vermont follows the White River valley from White River Junction on the south, and then at Bethel turns into the Third Branch valley to continue north to Montpelier, the state capital. The main stem White River valley extends westward from Bethel, with principal routes leading to Rutland and Middlebury on the western side of the state and southward to the Windsor County seat of Woodstock. Highways succeeded early trails along the valleys to the junction at Bethel, and railroads later followed the highways along two routes (although one, westward to Rochester, has since been abandoned).

The original proprietors of Bethel were undoubtedly attracted by both physical advantages of the location. In any case, they delineated a new township from the northwestern part of Royalton and the adjoining area of what was then called Middlesex. The proprietors happened to undertake their venture about the time that Vermont entered its period of political independence. Consequently, the Town of Bethel holds the distinction of being the first town chartered by the independent State of Vermont.<sup>1</sup> The charter itself is dated 3 December 1779, 'in the third year of the Independence of this State' (and eleven years before Vermont became the first state to join the original colonies in the Union).<sup>2</sup>

See Continuation Sheet 8-1

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET 9-1

# 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 55 (approximately)

UTM REFERENCES

A	1,8	6,9,0,1,50	4,8,56,2,5,0	B	1,8	6,9,0,9,0,0	4,8,5,5,0,5,0
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C	1,8	6,8,9,7,0,0	4,8,5,5,5,0,0	D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET 10-1

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

# 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Hugh H. Henry, Historic Sites Researcher

ORGANIZATION

Vermont Division for Historic Preservation

DATE

March 1976

STREET & NUMBER

Pavilion Building

TELEPHONE

802 828-3226

CITY OR TOWN

Montpelier

STATE

Vermont

# 12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL     

STATE X

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.

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE

*William B. Pinney*

William B. Pinney

TITLE

Director; State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE

April 28, 1976

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

*William B. Pinney*

DATE

9/8/76

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST:

*Robert B. Kelly*

DATE

9/2/76

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

*Acting*

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During the same month when they received the charter, the proprietors of Bethel admitted Colonel Joel Marsh to their group and proceeded to grant him the mill lot of 450 acres around the falls of the Third Branch, on the condition that he 'build a good sawmill by the first day of September, next [1780] and a good gristmill by the first day of November following.'<sup>3</sup> The first settlement at Bethel had probably occurred during 1779. Joel Marsh arrived the next year<sup>4</sup> and in 1781 built his 1 1/2-story, frame, gable-roofed, center chimney house (#38), which remains standing near its original site east of the falls, the oldest extant building in Bethel.

Marsh fulfilled the conditions of his grant, building the sawmill and gristmill just above the falls on the east bank of the Third Branch. The mills were destroyed fifty years later by the 'great freshet' of July 1830<sup>5</sup>, but Peleg Marsh, son of the original builder, subsequently rebuilt them on the same site. The mills passed through several changes of ownership until the present Bethel Mills Company was formed in the latter part of the nineteenth century. That company continued to operate the same types of mills on the site until after 1940,<sup>6</sup> extending to about 160 years the record of continuous operation. Appropriately, the company continues to deal in building materials, occupying early nineteenth century buildings (#31, 33, 34) standing along the west side of Main Street near the mill site.

After the establishment of the milling industry, the nascent village began to grow quickly and acquire some of the amenities of a proper town. In 1803, the present Gardiner-Wheeler House (#20) was built; owned by Tilly Parker, it became a favorite hotel for travelers along the White River valley, especially legislators en route to or from the state capital at Montpelier.<sup>7</sup> The former hotel constitutes the finest example in the historic district of the Federal style applied to a wood frame building. The Gardiner-Wheeler House stands beside the original alignment of Main Street, about 100 feet higher on the hillside than the present street. The street was relocated on the more nearly level alignment circa 1830-40 (after the failure of the Parker tavern) to facilitate commercial development in the village center.<sup>8</sup>

Although it had acquired a variety of successful secular enterprises by the first decade of the nineteenth century, Bethel still lacked a church building, for none of the denominations could individually afford the cost. To overcome the handicap, five denominations--the Universalists Congregationalists, Episcopalians, Methodists, and Baptists--joined together to build a church, which received the neutral name of the First Proprietors' Meeting House.<sup>9</sup> Now known as the Old Brick Church (#51), it

See Continuation Sheet 8-2



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stands beside Church Street on the height of land to the west of the falls facing the original town common across the street.

Their combined resources enabled the five denominations to build an exceptionally fine church. A master builder, one Willard, was brought from Windsor (Vermont) to direct the project;<sup>10</sup> he must have been familiar with the Old South Meeting House (1798) in his home town and probably as well with the architectural pattern books published by Asher Benjamin. In any case, he created an extraordinary Federal style church for Bethel similar to (but simpler than) the church in Windsor, the Old First Meeting House (1805) in Bennington, and the Congregational Church (1809) in Middlebury, all of whose designs are thought to have been copied from illustrations in the Benjamin edition of 1797.<sup>11</sup>

Owing to the high cost of brick, few churches were built of such material in Vermont during the early nineteenth century.<sup>12</sup> In this respect also, the Bethel church achieves distinction. Willard used brick from the yard owned by Jonathan Marsh at the west end of Church Street.<sup>13</sup> The exterior of the church, with its wood frame roof structure and bell tower, was completed in 1815; the interior was finished the following year.<sup>14</sup>

During the two decades following the construction of the Old Brick Church, Bethel acquired a number of brick Federal style private residences. Within the historic district, they include the Russell House (#47), circa 1820, at the foot of Church Street; the Marsh-Adams House (#69), 1833, at the head of Church Street; and the finest example of high-style Federal, the Paige-Branliere House (#4), also 1833, on South Main Street.

Within a decade after the Federal style had received its highest development in Bethel with the Paige-Branliere House, the Greek Revival style had begun to displace it. The finest examples of Greek Revival domestic architecture in the historic district are the essentially identical Putney (#58) and Gay (#61) Houses on Church Street, built in circa 1843.

Just before the midpoint of the nineteenth century, the railroad - originally the Vermont Central and now the Central Vermont - reached Bethel along the White River valley from the south. The first passenger

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train to operate in Vermont arrived in Bethel from White River Junction on 26 June 1848, the event being celebrated with 'flags, guns, crowds, and speeches.'<sup>15</sup> For Bethel, 'the curtain had rung down once and for all on the age of pioneers - modern times had begun.'<sup>16</sup> In contrast to the experience of its neighboring towns, Royalton to the south and Randolph to the north, Bethel did not have to relocate its business center to accommodate the route of the railroad. The nature of the local terrain compelled the railroad builders to follow the river parallel to Main Street, crossing the Third Branch just downstream of the falls. Also in contrast to the experience of the two neighboring towns, the arrival of the railroad in Bethel brought only moderately increased growth to an already thriving town.

Accidentally, however, the railroad caused the latter nineteenth century redevelopment of northern Main Street that defines the character of central Bethel at the present. On 10 December 1877, a spark from a passing locomotive is supposed to have ignited the great fire which swept the west side of the street from the former Weston Mill (#31) to the south of the present depot.<sup>17</sup> In the subsequent redevelopment, seven major buildings eventually emerged sharing similar scale and Italianate style or details, thereby giving the business district its unusually cohesive appearance. The group of buildings includes on the west side of Main Street, from south to north, the Central Vermont Railway depot (#22), the Mill's Store block (#25), the Arnold Block (#26), the Blossom Block (#27), and the Laverre Block (#29); across the street are the Richardson's Store block (#23) and the I.O.O.F. Block (#24). These buildings demonstrate graphically the civic pride and cooperative spirit which motivated the businessmen of Bethel in their commitment to the town. Coincidentally, during the following decade, both neighboring Randolph and South Royalton also experienced disastrous fires in their business districts which precipitated similarly cohesive and even more extensive rebuilding projects.<sup>18</sup>

Among the post-1877 Main Street buildings, the Central Vermont depot, the Mill's Store block, and the Arnold Block share brick construction, arched window and door openings, and similar ornamental details; the latter two blocks retain their original pilastered storefronts. The Blossom and Laverre Blocks share frame and clapboarded construction and, more significantly, retain intact their several original storefronts distinguished by projecting pilastered display window bays flanking recessed entrances. The Blossom and Laverre Block storefronts are among the last of their kind in Vermont; together with the storefronts of the adjacent Mill's Store and Arnold Block they create a unique commercial streetscape and deserve careful preservation.

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The post-1877 redevelopment along Main Street continued for a quarter century while Bethel achieved the zenith of its commercial importance and general prosperity. In 1891-92, the Town contributed a major public building to the north end of Main Street, the Bethel Town Hall (#35). Its similarity to contemporary South Royalton and Bradford (Vermont) school buildings - particularly their bell towers and ornamental details - suggests that the architect of those buildings, George Gurnsey of Montpelier, also designed the Town Hall in his highly eclectic adaptation of the Richardsonian Romanesque style then in national fashion. Dominated by a pyramidal-peaked bell tower which breaks the pedimented west gable front, the massive brick building represents clearly its function as a secular nineteenth century meeting house.

Adjacent to the north side of the Town Hall are two substantial brick houses built by Lucius B. Wright (#36, now the Armstrong House) and Josiah D. Cushing (#37), co-owners for a period of the Bethel Mills Company across Main Street. These originally matched houses pre-date the 1877 Main Street fire by about a decade; nevertheless, they anticipated, in their materials and Italianate style, the predominant nature of the post-1877 redevelopment. The two houses demonstrate clearly the success of Bethel enterprise at the time, and they continue to contribute significantly to the cohesive character of the streetscape.

Soon after the turn of the twentieth century, another major commercial block appeared on Main Street representing a different architectural fashion. Outgrowing its original Greek Revival office building (#15) farther south on Main Street, the National White River Bank of Bethel contracted with Thomas W. Rogers of Brandon, Vermont, for the construction in 1906-7 of its new headquarters.<sup>19</sup> Opposite the Blossom Block, the new bank (#28) introduced to Bethel the elaborately decorative character of the Beaux-Arts Classicist style which by then had supplanted the Richardsonian Romanesque in national favor.

A contemporary newspaper account declared that 'Bethel takes pardonable pride in the new building...not only on account of its general artistic excellence but as an ever-present evidence of the solid prosperity of both the banking institution and the general community.'<sup>20</sup> The bank building, which is now owned by the Proctor Trust Company, represents the architectural and financial culmination of Main Street development. Seventy years after its construction it remains in original condition, an irreplaceable architectural asset to the community.

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The importance of Bethel as a junction of transport routes increased considerably around the turn of the twentieth century. In 1899, the White River Railroad was completed from its connection with the Central Vermont main line at Bethel to the upper White River valley town of Rochester.<sup>21</sup> Six years later, in 1905, the short Bethel Granite Railroad was opened to serve the expanding granite industry,<sup>22</sup> which had begun large scale operation in 1903. The five-mile railroad hauled the unique 'Bethel White' granite from the quarries on Christian Hill to the large new Woodbury Company sheds beside the Central Vermont track on the Noble flat south of the village. The quarries supplied Bethel White for the construction of several major buildings throughout the country including Union Station in Washington, D.C., the State Capitol at Madison, Wisconsin, and the Western Union Building in New York City.<sup>23</sup>

During the second quarter of the present century, Bethel began to experience the national trend of economic decline in small towns. Its industrial and commercial activity suffered from the effects of the Great Depression. With the development of better highways and the accompanying shifts of traffic, Bethel lost its position as a railroad junction when both the Bethel Granite and White River lines were abandoned. And twice again, in 1938 and 1945, disastrous fires ravaged the west side of Main Street,<sup>24</sup> destroying major nineteenth century frame commercial blocks south of the depot such as the Depot House hotel.<sup>25</sup> Indicative of the prevailing economic conditions, that section of Main Street has never been rebuilt in the same scale or architectural quality as the section to the north. Instead it has become the scene of the most incompatible intrusions into the historic fabric of the village environment, being redeveloped with roadside strip buildings such as automobile service stations and one-story concrete block storefronts.

During the 1960's, this trend of commercial decline was exacerbated by the construction of an Interstate superhighway about four miles to the east of Bethel Village. That development cost Bethel its historic position on the principal north-south highway for the Interstate replaced Vermont Route 12 as the principal White River Junction-Montpelier route. Subsequently the superhighway has drained commercial vitality from Bethel by increasing competition from, and diverting trade to, larger regional centers to the north and south.

At the beginning of the last quarter of the twentieth century, Bethel retains substantial historic and architectural resources, although in varying physical condition. Equally important to the future of the

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village, the kind of civic pride and cooperative spirit which marked the reconstruction of Main Street after the 1877 fire has emerged again. Early in 1976, several property owners began planning a community project of repairs and refurbishment involving several major buildings in the historic district. Concurrently, the Town has developed a plan to reclaim the town common opposite the Old Brick Church for diverse public uses as well as to restore an appropriate aesthetic environment for the church itself. The actual work on the buildings and the common is scheduled for the summer of 1976. With completion of the work, Bethel will regain much of its former visual quality and thereby offer a unique and an increasingly attractive village environment to its residents and visitors.

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  21. Stone, p. 245.
  22. Cushing and stafford, p. 56.
  23. Ibid., p. 55.
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BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The boundary of the Bethel Village Historic District begins at a Point A in the centerline of the westerly passing track of the Central Vermont Railway 200 feet south of the south elevation of the Bethel Town Offices building (#2); thence the boundary extends northeasterly and perpendicular from the track to a Point B in the centerline of South Main Street (Vermont Route 12-107); thence northeasterly and perpendicular from the highway 300 feet to a corner at a Point C; thence northwesterly parallel to and 300 feet easterly of the centerlines of South Main Street, Main Street, and North Main Street successively to a Point D in the north property line (or an extension thereof in an easterly direction) of the Miller Memorial Methodist Church (#46); thence southwesterly along said property line and an extension thereof to a Point E in the centerline of North Main Street; thence southeasterly along the centerline of said street to a Point F at the intersection of the centerline of the access road to the Bethel Mills Company mill yard; thence southwesterly in a straight line to a Point G in the centerline of the Central Vermont Railway track at the north end of its bridge over the Third Branch of the White River; thence southeasterly along the centerline of said track to a Point H at the intersection of an extension in an easterly direction of the north property line of the Russell House (#47); thence southwesterly along said property line and the adjoining north property lines of the Brown House (#48), the Woodworth House (#50), and the Old Brick Church (#51) to a Point I at the upper edge of the prominent escarpment which lies to the north of Church Street; thence southwesterly along the upper edge of said escarpment to a Point J at the intersection of the north property line (or an extension thereof in an easterly direction) of the Blodgett House (#64); thence southwesterly along said property line and an extension thereof to a Point K in the centerline of Vermont Route 12; thence southwesterly along the north property line of the Marsh-Adams House (#69) to a Point L at the northwest corner of said property; thence southeasterly along the west property line of the Marsh-Adams House and an extension thereof to a Point M in the centerline of Church Street; thence southeasterly along the west property line (or an extension thereof) of the Burrell House (#72) to a Point N at the upper edge of the prominent escarpment which lies to the south of Church Street; thence northeasterly along the upper edge of said escarpment and an extension of the line thereof to a Point O in the centerline of the Central Vermont Railway track;

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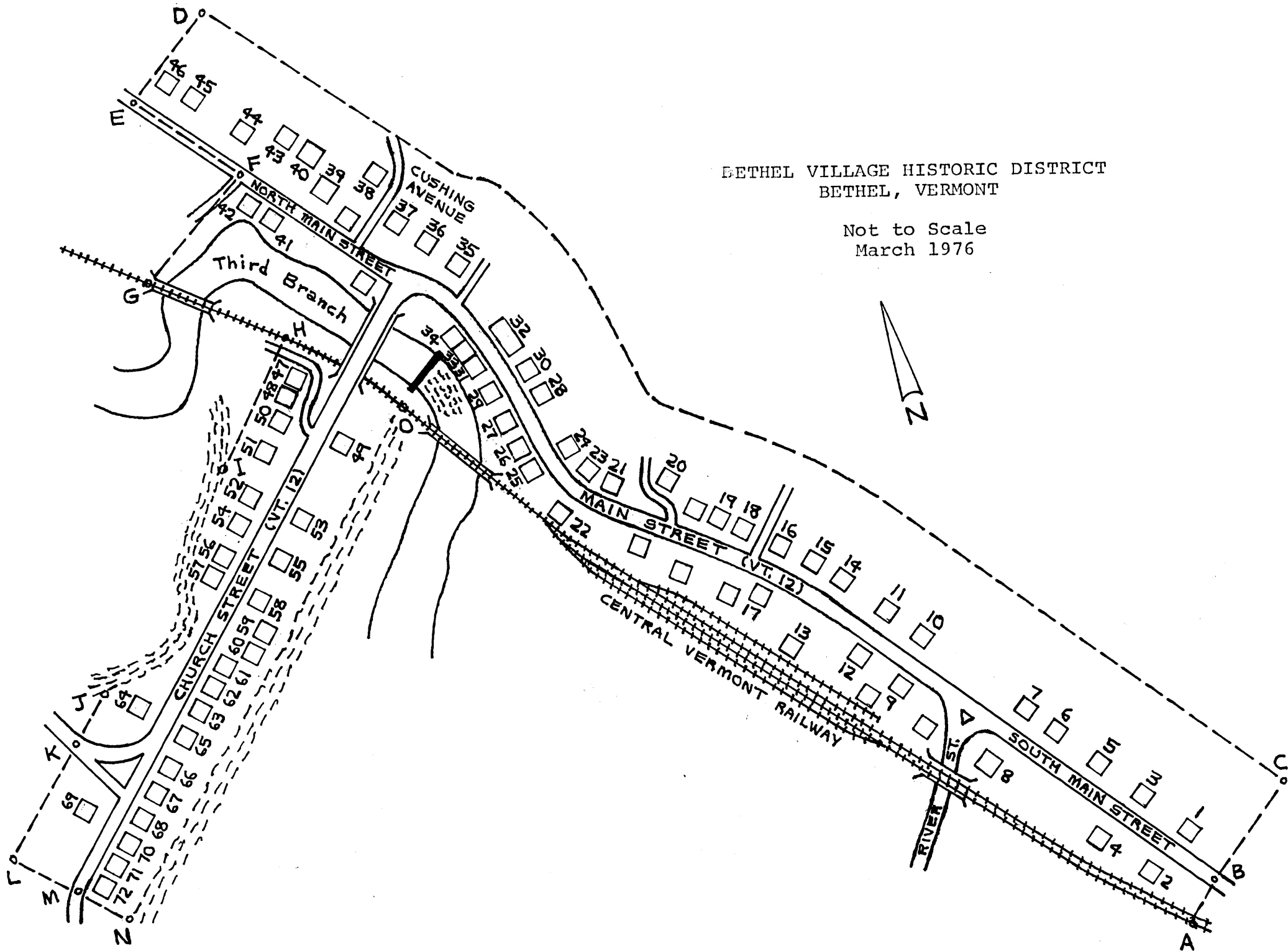
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thence southeasterly successively along the centerline of said track, the centerline of the westernmost track of the Bethel station yard, and the centerline of the westerly passing track south of said yard to the point of beginning.

BETHEL VILLAGE HISTORIC DISTRICT  
BETHEL, VERMONT

Not to Scale  
March 1976



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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
PROPERTY MAP FORM**

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SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- ENCLOSE WITH MAP

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC  
Bethel Village Historic District  
AND/OR COMMON

**2 LOCATION**

CITY, TOWN	___ VICINITY OF	COUNTY	STATE
Bethel		Windsor	Vermont

**3 MAP REFERENCE**

SOURCE Sketch map drawn by Hugh H. Henry for the Vermont Division  
for Historic Preservation  
SCALE Not to scale DATE March 1976

**4 REQUIREMENTS**

- TO BE INCLUDED ON ALL MAPS
1. PROPERTY BOUNDARIES
  2. NORTH ARROW
  3. UTM REFERENCES