

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

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received JAN 25 1983  
date entered

# 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 Martin L. Kelsey House

and/or common N/A

## 2. Location

street & number 43 Elmwood Avenue N/A not for publication

city, town Burlington N/A vicinity of

state Vermont code 50 county Chittenden code 007

## 3. Classification

<b>Category</b>	<b>Ownership</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Present Use</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<u>N/A</u> <input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other: Apartments

## 4. Owner of Property

name Mckenzie Packing Company, Inc.

street & number c/o John Mckenzie, 160 Flynn Avenue

city, town Burlington N/A vicinity of state Vermont

## 5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Land Records, City Clerk's Office

street & number Burlington City Hall

city, town Burlington state Vermont

## 6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Vermont Historic Sites and Structures Survey has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date June 16, 1978  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records Vermont Division For Historic Preservation

city, town Montpelier state Vermont

# 7. Description

**Condition**

excellent  
 good  
 fair

deteriorated  
 ruins  
 unexposed

**Check one**

unaltered  
 altered

**Check one**

original site  
 moved

date \_\_\_\_\_

**Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance**

The Martin L. Kelsey House is a Late Victorian building with Stick Style, French Second Empire, High Victorian Gothic and Italinatate embellishment. The 3-story, 3-bay structure sits on a narrow lot in a once prestigious residential neighborhood. Rectangular, though irregular in form, the structure is dominated by a steeply pitched mansard roof with dormers. Narrow window and door openings flanked by applied brackets or stickwork that represent the verticals of the skeletal structure, panels of clapboards between the verticals, applied horizontal bands of stickwork, incised or applied decorative window and door treatment, king-post trusses and Gothic lintels are all elements that give this building its eclectic definition.

The main block of the building is three-stories in height on the street or east end, but it then drops a half a story and ends with a one story garage attached to the back. A projecting one-story porch and bay, a second-story projecting gable and a recessed porch contribute to the irregularity of the massing of the building.

The house rests on a redstone (Winooski Formation) foundation. The wall material is wood clapboards and trim, and the roof is covered with gray/green slates laid in alternating bands of fish scale and embricated patterns. The canted profile Mansard roof sports a kick at its base and is capped with a wood band decorated with recessed square blocks with central discs. This motif is also found in other locations throughout the building.

Separating the building from the sidewalk is a low stone wall or curb with one foot high chamfered posts framing the walkway to the front entrance. The wall continues up the stone steps in curvilinear profile and becomes incorporated into the architectural decoration of the building, serving as the base and balustrade of the 1-story, 1 x 1 bay entrance porch. Chamfered posts rise from the pedestals of the balustrade to support the flat porch roof. An early 20th Century photograph of the building shows that this roof once had a low wood balustrade. All that remains are the engaged end posts on the facade of the building. Under the cornice of the porch roof is a frieze band decorated with a scaled down version of the stylized motif found on the roof cap. The double-leaf door is arched and has six panels surrounded by heavy Italinatate moldings. The lower two panels display a central stylized flower; the panels are capped with moldings that form lintels with central peaks. The central, long panels and the two small top panels in the arch of the door are glass.

The entrance is located in the north bay on the building's street or east elevation. It is the only break in the consistency of the pattern of this facade. The narrow 1/1 windows are given a different treatment on each level. The first floor windows are capped with projecting lintels with central peaks supported by small, flat brackets at each end. Below the peak of the lintel is a simple incised flower, and below that is a narrow band of incised circles separating the window hood molding from the sash. The three second-story windows are slightly shorter than those on the first story and they have a different lintel treatment. They sit under the projecting bracketed cornice of the mansard, with the scrolled cornice brackets flanking simple architrave moldings which serve as window lintels. Each window on the first and second stories is decorated with a pierced triangular applique extending from the top and bottom of each vertical jamb; however, the windows closest to the corners of the building lack this detail on their outer jamb. On the third-story, two dormer windows, smaller in scale than the other windows in this facade, are covered by projecting gable roofs. The peak of each gable is decorated with a gable screen with an incised floral or leaf pattern and a king-post truss which terminates with a central pendant. Long brackets with incised panels support the projecting gables and the lower portion of the window jambs are decorated with bulging curvilinear appliques with an incised pattern similar to the one in the gable peak.

The narrow window openings combined with the steep pitch of the mansard and the gabled dormers give the structure a strong vertical reading. However, wide horizontal bands applied in a board and batten pattern run the width of this and the other facades of the building below both the first and second story windows. Between the long vertical window jambs, the battens are replaced by boards the width of the jambs which continue those vertical elements in spite of the horizontal interruption.

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The south elevation of The Kelsey House is its most complex. A shallow 2½ story gabled wing projects the width of one bay from the rear southwest corner of the main block. A one story open porch runs along the south side of the main block from the front of the building to the wing where a secondary entrance gives access to the interior. The porch has simple square posts, x-braces below the railing and a bracketed cornice and frieze similar to the entrance porch. The door in the wing has six panels and heavy Italianate moldings.

The porch cornice and frieze continue around the rectangular bay window that projects from the first floor of the wing. Tall, narrow sash marks the 1 x 3 bay projection. Above the bay windows, there is a second floor open porch with a solid rail pierced with trefoil arch cutouts, and chamfered posts supporting a steeply pitched slate-clad pent roof. The projecting gable of the wing boasts a king post truss screening the peak and an incised flat finial on the roof ridge above.

To the rear of the main block and the shallow wing, the building's dimensions are reduced. This rear portion of the building was originally two stories, with the mansard housing the second story. The gable windows that project from the roof on this section of the building lack the detail of those on the front portion of the house. It appears that around 1900, the roofline of the mansard was continued up about six feet to accommodate a third story addition. The vertical slate walls of this addition are interrupted by a continuous band of windows on the south wall, with one window in the west elevation and two small windows facing north. Although this appendage is obviously a later addition to the building, an attempt was made, by the use of matching slate, to blend with the mansard.

On the south face of the first floor of this back portion of the building is a one story, projecting bay capped with a continuation of the cornice and frieze band of the wing and a series of four, (three full length and one half length) windows. The upper sash of each window is bordered by small colored lights and each window is capped by a peaked lintel with an incised central flower, similar to the peaked lintels of the street facade, but much more simple and two-dimensional.

At the southwest corner of this block of the building, a glassed-in porch with a "Boom town" parapet decorated with a continuation of the standard cornice and frieze band extends from the building.

Attached to the rear of the house is a one story clapboard garage. Double doors lead into the main bay and another door, also on the south side, opens into stairs that lead to a hall in the third story addition. The garage most likely replaced the original two story barn attached to the building when that barn was demolished and replaced by a carriage house at the back of the property around 1890.

On the north, and simplest facade of the building, the window treatment is identical in detailing to the windows on the street facade. However, two windows on the first floor and one on the second are currently covered by louvered shutters.

When the Kelsey House was subdivided into apartments in the middle of this century, the integrity of the interior was very much diminished. Some original elements do remain however. The ornate Italianate staircase with its bulky, massive newel post and wide railing, typical of its period, is still in place in the entrance hall, as are the two simple Italianate marble fireplaces, one white and one pink, in the front rooms. The ground floor of the front part of this building was used as a doctor's office beginning in 1922, and the highly polished woodwork, along with the fireplaces and some wainscoting were untouched. The lacy spindle screens which decorate the arched opening between the two front rooms and frame the south side bay window were most likely added then.

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The c.1890 carriage house associated with the Kelsey House still stands behind the house but has been almost completely incorporated into the Mckenzie meat packing plant which began using it in 1939. All that is visible is the north clapboard wall and the slate hipped roof with its simple dormers and central cupola. Nothing remains of the original interior or of the other three walls. The nominated property does not include the remains of the carriage house.

# 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 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 type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

**Specific dates** 1879                      **Builder/Architect** Not Known

**Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)**

Built on what was once a fashionable residential street during Burlington's heyday as a retail and lumber manufacturing center, the Martin L. Kelsey House displays an eclectic array of Late Victorian architectural elements with an exuberance and grandeur that is outstanding, even in a city known for its fine architecture of this era. High Victorian Gothic, Stick Style, French Second Empire, Italianate and Queen Anne details are sympathetically combined to create a unified and successful architectural statement.

43 Elmwood Avenue was built in 1879 at the northern edge of Burlington's main retail district. Its construction was commented upon in the April 21, 1879 edition of the "Burlington Free Press". "Elmwood Avenue, already a notably handsome street is to be still further improved by the erection of a fine house by Mr. M.L. Kelsey next to those of Mrs. Ballard and K.B. Walker." Martin L. Kelsey was a co-owner of Kelsey & Brodie, a boot and shoe store located on Church Street, just two blocks away from his new residence.

In the middle of the 19th Century, Burlington, located on Lake Champlain, rapidly developed into one of the nation's leading lumber manufacturing centers. Between 1860 and 1870, the population doubled and the city boasted nearly 15,000 residents. The building industry was booming and with a port full of lumber and the mills to manufacture the necessary architectural components, fine residences sprang up throughout the city. While the barons of the lumber and manufacturing industries were building grand houses on the hill, the "North End", an area within easy walking distance of the factories became a predominantly working middle-class neighborhood. However, some of the streets near the downtown, like the broad, tree-lined Elmwood Avenue provided the locations for homes of merchants and professionals who could afford stylish residences. Mr. Kelsey's neighbors included, among others, the manager of the Howard Opera House, a dry goods merchant, a grocer, the Chittenden County clerk, a doctor and a druggist, and the widow of the owner of the local pottery.

In 1886, the house was sold to Thomas Arbuckle, owner of Arbuckle & Co., the largest manufacturer of candy and cigars in the state. Arbuckle employed fifty-five people and distributed his products throughout Vermont, New Hampshire and northern New York.

Later residents were Moses Lawrence, 1908-1909; Milo D. Cross, 1909-1910; Arzo Aseltine, 1910-1922; Dr. George and Anna Coutu, 1922-1948; and the present owner. Aseltine was an agent for the Equitable Life Assurance Company. Dr. Coutu established his medical practice on the first floor of the house.

With the development of a commercial district on North Street, only a block and a half away, and with the increasing prevalence of worker housing, Elmwood Avenue become caught between two commercial districts and the pattern of deterioration began. More and more homes were converted to apartments or other commercial uses. 43 Elmwood Avenue's northern neighbors were demolished in the 1960's to make way for a parking lot for the large Federal Building constructed on the corner. The elms slowly died and traffic was converted to one-way. This structure was also converted to apartments and the yard paved for cars, but it stands, along with a few others of similar grandeur, as evidence of the prestigious nature of this street in the city's heyday.

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

The Burlington Book, Historic Preservation Graduate Program, Univeristy of Vermont, 1980.  
"Burlington Free Press", April 21, 1879.  
Burlington and Winooski City Directories, 1878-1922.  
(continued)

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property Approx. 1/5 acre

Quadrangle name Burlington Quadrangle

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UTM References

A 

1	8	6	4	2	0	0	1	0	4	9	2	1	6	6	1	5	1	0
Zone			Easting						Northing									

B 

Zone			Easting						Northing									

C 

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D 

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E 

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G 

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H 

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**Verbal boundary description and justification** The nominated property corresponds generally to that described in the deed reference for the property owned by Mckenzie Packing Co., Inc. found in vol. 129, page 861 of the Burlington Land Records with the following exception: the deed reference describes a property which measures 62.5 feet by 205.6 feet, more or less. The

**List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries**

state N/A code N/A county N/A code N/A

state N/A code N/A county N/A code N/A

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Emily E. Wadhams, Historic Preservation Consultant

organization self-employed

date December 28, 1982

street & number 5 Murray Street

telephone (802) 658-4342

city or town Burlington

state Vermont

## 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national  state  local

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

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

*William B. Pinney*

title Director/Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

date January 20, 1983

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I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

Entered in the  
National Register

date

2/24/83

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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Burlington, Vt. As a Manufacturing, Business and Commercial Center, Burlington Board of Trade, 1889.

Conant, Edward. A Textbook of the Geography, History, Constitution and Civil Government of Vermont, Rutland, 1915.

Scully, Vincent J. Jr. The Shingle Style and The Stick Style, New Haven, 1955.

Vermont Historic Sites and Structures Survey, Burlington. Vermont Division of Historic Preservation, 1978.

MAPS

Ammi B. Young, 1830 Map of Burlington

Presdee and Edwards, 1853 Map of Burlington

Worley & Bracher, Lithographers, 1869 Map of Burlington

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Description

nominated property measures approximately 62.5 feet by 140 feet only, and eliminates the rear or west portion of the lot described in the deed which is no longer of historical significance to the nominated property. Irreversible changes to the carriage house, which is located on the rear portion of the lot, and modern intrusions have permanently altered the character of that section of the property, deeming it unsuitable for inclusion in the nominated property. The nominated property boundary description includes all land immediately associated with the building and is sufficient to enclose and protect it.