

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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DATE ENTERED	NOV 17 1978

**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

AND/OR COMMON

Benson Village Historic District

**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER

Stage Road and Benson Landing Road

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Benson

VICINITY OF

Vermont

STATE

CODE

COUNTY

CODE

Vermont

50

Rutland

021

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input checked="" 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 checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

Multiple Ownership (See Continuation Sheet)

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

VICINITY OF

STATE

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Office of the Town Clerk of Benson

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Benson

STATE

Vermont

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

Vermont Historic Sites and Structures Survey

DATE

1977

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 type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input checked="" 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 Benson Historic District is a rural village of outstanding architectural and historical character, located at the northeast edge of the Taconic Range. The village derives its architectural merit from its varied assortment of early to mid-19th century domestic, religious, educational, commercial and agricultural buildings. About 80 in number, the district includes quality examples of the Federal, Greek Revival, Italianate and Colonial Revival Styles. On their sites along the tree-lined Stage Road and Benson Landing Road, these buildings form a visual continuity in scale and proportion. Modern intrusions are minimal, and the village retains much of the character which distinguished it during the last century as an important rural, agricultural trade center and prestigious residential district.

Among the district's 80-odd buildings, 30 were built for residential purposes. The remainder provide the backdrop support system for a sophisticated 19th century rural village. A majority of these relate to the agricultural nature of the surrounding area. There are three farms within the district, two of which (#1 and #39) are still worked. Each has a variety of specific function barns and outbuildings. The Kellogg Homestead Farm (#'s 1-10) is most representative of the type of agricultural complex that remains at the center of Vermont's rural economic and social life. The Kellogg barns and outbuildings trace the agricultural history of the town with facilities for grain, sheep, horse and dairy farming.

Most of the houses in the district have facilities for horses, carriages and hay storage. These are attached to the rear of the house in some instances and detached in others. The Congregational Church (#28) retains a section of its once long carriage shed.

The remaining buildings of the district include a school (#60), two churches (#28, #62) (six have been built at various times), and a variety of commercial buildings. As was characteristic of the times, stores, taverns and craftsmen's shops were frequently extensions of a domestic household. This was predominately the case in Benson. A few of the early stores and the district's leading tavern were consumed by fire and replaced in the late 19th century with vernacular buildings of lesser character.

The houses in the Benson Historic District which contribute to its character range in date from 1792 to about 1890. There are high-style and vernacular examples of some of the major architectural styles of the first three quarters of the 19th century. However, Benson's architectural strength lies in those of the first half. Of exceptional quality are the Federal and Greek Revival style buildings of Captain Joel Dickinson (see #1) and William Cowee, (see #28), respectively. Both were talented designer-contractors working in different styles at different times and both made important contributions which distinguished Benson among neighboring towns for its unique and fashionable appearance. Excepting the intrusion of modern electrical poles, paved sidewalks and roads, much of this early character remains, nestled in the Taconic foothills and serves as a fine example of a regionally differentiated New England culture.

The edges of the village district are distinct from their surroundings. The main entrance to the village is from the southeast along the Benson Landing Road. The transition between open farmland and the dense village is made at the crest of a hill where Robert Lussier's horse barn (#78) is located. Heading west past two fine domestic dwellings is the intersection of Benson Landing Road and the Stage Road. The four corners mark the center of Benson's commercial development.

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Owners of Properties in the Benson Historic District  
(See Sketch Map)

1. Mr. Charles Kellogg	Benson, Vermont	05731
2. Mr. Charles Kellogg	Benson, Vermont	05731
3. Mr. Charles Kellogg	Benson, Vermont	05731
4. Mr. Charles Kellogg	Benson, Vermont	05731
5. Mr. Charles Kellogg	Benson, Vermont	05731
6. Mr. Charles Kellogg	Benson, Vermont	05731
7. Mr. Charles Kellogg	Benson, Vermont	05731
8. Mr. Charles Kellogg	Benson, Vermont	05731
9. Mr. Charles Kellogg	Benson, Vermont	05731
10. Mr. Charles Kellogg	Benson, Vermont	05731
11. Shoreham Telephone Company	Shoreham, Vermont	05770
12. Mr. Charles Kellogg	Benson, Vermont	05731
13. Mr. Karl Chanski	Benson, Vermont	05731
14. Mr. Karl Chanski	Benson, Vermont	05731
15. Mr. Robert Lussier	Benson, Vermont	05731
16. Mr. Robert Lussier	Benson, Vermont	05731
17. Mr. Robert Lussier	Benson, Vermont	05731
18. Ms. Annette Lacroix	Benson, Vermont	05731
19. Ms. Annette Lacroix	Benson, Vermont	05731
20. Mr. Joseph Shepardson	Benson, Vermont	05731
21. Mr. Joseph Shepardson	Benson, Vermont	05731
22. Mr. Prentiss Smith	Benson, Vermont	05731
23. Mr. Prentiss Smith	Benson, Vermont	05731
24. Mr. Robert Hutchins	70 Higley Drive, E. Hartford, Connecticut	
25. Mr. Robert Hutchins	70 Higley Drive, E. Hartford, Connecticut	
26. United Church of Benson	Benson, Vermont	05731
27. United Church of Benson	Benson, Vermont	05731
28. United Church of Benson	Benson, Vermont	05731
29. United Church of Benson	Benson, Vermont	05731
30. Reverend Lisle Bartholemew	Benson, Vermont	05731
31. Reverend Lisle Bartholemew	Benson, Vermont	05731
32. Reverend Lisle Bartholemew	Benson, Vermont	05731
33. Mr. John Trutor	Benson, Vermont	05731
34. Mr. John Trutor	Benson, Vermont	05731
35. Reverend Robert Snyder	Benson, Vermont	05731
36. Reverend Robert Snyder	Benson, Vermont	05731
37. Reverend Robert Snyder	Benson, Vermont	05731
38. Reverend Robert Snyder	Benson, Vermont	05731
39. Kathryn Welch and Veronica Driscoll	Benson, Vermont	05731
40. Kathryn Welch and Veronica Driscoll	Benson, Vermont	05731

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41.	Kathryne Welch and Veronica Driscoll	Benson, Vermont	05731
42.	Kathryne Welch and Veronica Driscoll	Benson, Vermont	05731
43.	Kathryne Welch and Veronica Driscoll	Benson, Vermont	05731
44.	Kathryne Welch and Veronica Driscoll	Benson, Vermont	05731
45.	Mr. Warren Davis	Benson, Vermont	05731
46.	Mr. Judson Belden	Benson, Vermont	05731
47.	Mr. Donald Belden	Benson, Vermont	05731
48.	Mr. Donald Belden	Benson, Vermont	05731
49.	Mr. Donald Belden	Benson, Vermont	05731
50.	Mr. Donald Belden	Benson, Vermont	05731
51.	Mr. Frederick Burlette	Benson, Vermont	05731
52.	Mr. Rex Reichart	234 E. 9th Avenue, Colledgeville, PA	19426
53.	Mr. Rex Reichart	234 E. 9th Avenue, Colledgeville, PA	19426
54.	Mr. Clayton Moore	Benson, Vermont	05731
55.	Mr. Kenneth Davis	Benson, Vermont	05731
56.	Mr. Donald Munger	Middlebury, Vermont	05753
57.	Mr. Donald Munger	Middlebury, Vermont	05753
58.	Mr. Donald Munger	Middlebury, Vermont	05753
59.	Mr. Richard Bower	Benson, Vermont	05731
60.	Town of Benson	Benson, Vermont	05731
61.	Town of Benson	Benson, Vermont	05731
62.	Town of Benson	Benson, Vermont	05731
63.	Ms. Rosie Fowler	Benson, Vermont	05731
64.	Ms. Charlotte Collett	Fair Haven, Vermont	05743
65.	Ms. Charlotte Collett	Fair Haven, Vermont	05743
66.	Mr. Kenneth Beattie	110 Mt. Avenue, Summitt, New Jersey	07901
67.	Mr. Kenneth Beattie	110 Mt. Avenue, Summitt, New Jersey	07901
68.	Reverend Janes Yee	Cross Road, Redding, Connecticut	
69.	Town of Benson	Benson, Vermont	05731
70.	Mr. Hollis Bower	Benson, Vermont	05731
71.	Mr. Hollis Bower	Benson, Vermont	05731
72.	Town of Benson	Benson, Vermont	05731
73.	Mr. Paul Bower	Benson, Vermont	05731
74.	Mr. Paul Bower	Benson, Vermont	05731
75.	Mr. Grayton Rich	6 Crescent Street, E. Hampton, CT	06424
76.	Mr. Grayton Rich	6 Crescent Street, E. Hampton, CT	06424
77.	Mr. Grayton Rich	6 Crescent Street, E. Hampton, CT	06424
78.	Mr. Robert Lussier	Benson, Vermont	05731
79.	Ms. Phyllis Re	Benson, Vermont	05731
80.	Town of Benson	Benson, Vermont	05731

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✓81. Mr. Ashton Bosworth	Benson, Vermont	05731
82. Mr. Ashton Bosworth	Benson, Vermont	05731
✓83. Ms. Mary Beavin	Benson, Vermont	05731
84. Ms. Mary Beavin	Benson, Vermont	05731
✓85. Mr. Harley Hasbrook	Benson, Vermont	05731
86. Mr. Harley Hasbrook	Benson, Vermont	05731

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The major area of the Benson Historic District is located along both sides of the Stage Road north of its intersection with Benson Landing Road. At the southeast of the four corners is located the Town Clerk's Office (#80), once Strong's Carriage Shop and now considerably altered. The district continues south to the house owned by Harley Hasbrook (#86), a modest vernacular house of noteworthy character and one of the lates in the village. At the southwest corner is the sprawling Kellogg Homestead Farm (#'s 1-10) with its high-Federal style house and cluster of barns.

Heading north of the four corners, on both sides of Stage Road, are the buildings which comprised the original commercial center of town; many of the buildings now standing replace earlier structures. Here were once located stores, houses, a tavern, a blacksmith's shop, a church and the post office. Proceeding past the Greek Revival home built by William Cowee (#23), is the section of the village which has always been the educational and religious center of town. Here are located two churches (#28, #62), the parsonage (#26), the village school (#60) and a cemetery. North of the Congregational Church (#28), and along the westerly side of the Stage Road, which continues past the intersection with the Chesboro Road and to the Howard-Welch-Driscoll House (#39), are the most prestigious dwellings in Benson which are grand in scale for their periods. The Howard-Welch-Driscoll House (#39) is an outstanding landmark and makes an ideal terminal point near the crest of the hill overlooking the district.

The east side of Stage Road, north of the Congregational Church, was once equal in quality to the west but has lost some of its original buildings to fire and demolition. Outstanding among the remaining houses are the Norton-Munger House (#58), attributed to William Cowee, and the Smith-Reichart House (#52). The Stage Road is broken to the northeast by an unnamed access road. Just beyond that is located the Ladd-Davis House (#45); this is the largest and finest brick house in the district and marks the northern boundary of the district on the east side.

The buildings within the Benson Historic District are as follows:

1. Kellogg Homestead Farm. House, Federal, 1829.

An outstanding example of Rutland County domestic architecture exhibiting the highest quality of craftsmanship and design characteristic of the first quarter of the 19th century. Excepting the exterior use of aluminum siding, the house is in excellent and original condition. It has fine Neo-Classical proportions and its 2-1/2 story mass is divided into five by two bays. The house has end chimneys and a sheet metal-clad gable roof. One of the most distinctive features of this house is the entablature which includes a delicately molded cornice with Doric mutules, which surrounds the front and sides and rakes along the pedimented gables. A louvered, semi-elliptical fan, with central keystone, embellishes the pedimented gables. All of the windows are 12/12 with molded surrounds and shutters.

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Across the facade is a one-story porch with a central projecting, pedimented bay, and a full entablature with Doric mutules. The most distinctive features of the facade are the door and Palladian window. The latter is constructed on a classical three-part design with a central keystone arch, multi-delineated sidelights, a full entablature with tiny Doric mutules, cornice, flushboard frieze, and four fluted pilasters. The frontispiece is of similar design with slight variations. Here the frieze is embellished at the pilasters with four carved, 16-point stars. The board and batten door is wide and is flanked by fluted pilasters and 2/3 sidelights over side panels.

The ell was the original house; its plan, though altered and obscured by the addition of the main mass, is a plain, early American leanto. Other details suggestive of its early character (c. 1790) include featheredge panelled doors, a massive braced frame and a massive chimney foundation in the cellar. Attached to the original front of the leanto is a later addition of 1-1/2 stories, gable roofed, two arched bay carriage barn and woodshed.

The interior is extraordinary. The door opens into a wide central hall with a double arch which leads upstairs on the south side and through a barrel vault to the back rooms and ell on the north. These arches are elaborately embellished with keystones with a beaded center column, similar to a design published in Asher Benjamin's Country Builder's Assistant (1797). The intrados are reeded and both arches rest on fluted pilasters with molded capitals and panelled pedestals.

The south parlor is the most elegant room in the house with fluted door architraves with articulated corner blocks which are similar to those of the front hall. The wainscot is of rectangular raised panels with scalloped corners. The mantelpiece is the most elaborate of the three in the house; it has a wide, delicately molded cornice, fluted pilasters and a projecting central panel in the frieze with an inset rectangular panel which has scalloped corners. The north parlor has similar but simpler detailing.

The earliest known owner of this farmplot was Josiah Goodrich who settled in Benson in 1785 from Pittsfield, Massachusetts. It is likely that he built this ell for his house.

The history of the farm, however, belongs to the Kelloggs. John Azor Kellogg came to Benson in 1809 from Amherst, Massachusetts. He studied law in a Middlebury, Vermont law office under two of Vermont's more distinguished lawyers, Loyal Case and Horatio Seymour. Upon admission to the bar he settled in Benson. He acquired this farm in 1825 and after retiring from law in 1840, spent the remainder of his life pursuing agricultural business. The farm has been maintained for agricultural purposes continuously and is operated by a fifth-generation descendant, Charles G. Kellogg.

A distinction belonging to this house and family is their choice of Captain Joel Dickinson as master-builder. Dickinson was an early settler of neighboring West Haven and moved to Benson in 1809. He was born and raised in Pittsfield, Massachusetts and marched with the

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Pittsfield company of minutemen to Cambridge in April, 1775. More important for Benson was his role as a master-builder of Charles Bulfinch's Pittsfield Congregational meeting-house (see #28). Dickinson's work on the Kellogg house is retarditaire for its date and there is doubtless evidence that he continued to be inspired by the leading builders, replacing Bulfinch with others such as Thomas Dake of Castleton, whose Federal style domestic architecture is among the best in rural New England. Dake's influence is especially pronounced in the plan for the front hall and in various details of the interior and exterior.

2. Kellogg Homestead Farm - Horse Barn, c. 1885.

Two levels, gabled roof clad in sheet metal, mixed shiplap and clapboard siding.

3. Kellogg Homestead Farm - Milk House, c. 1915

A small building with 12/12 windows, clapboard siding and a slate-clad gable roof.

4. Kellogg Homestead Farm - Cow Barn, c. 1882.

This is the main barn of the complex and was built in four or more sections. The oldest and largest is 2-1/2 levels with a slate-clad gable roof, clapboard siding, a modern attached milkhouse, two attached wooden silos and a variety of attached sheds. The major additions are noncontributory and include a 2-1/2 level wing and a modern one-level milking parlor with a sheet-metal clad gable roof.

5. Kellogg Homestead Farm - Tool Shed, c. 1940.

One level, one bay, shiplap sided, sheet metal clad gable roof.

6. Kellogg Homestead Farm - Horse Barn, c. 1890.

One-and-one-half level barn with a very long, corrugated sheet metal clad shed roof. The first level has been partly resided; the rest is clapboarded.

7. Kellogg Homestead Farm - Granery, c. 1870.

One-and-one-half levels, corrugated sheet metal clad gable roof, vertical siding, strap-hinged doors.

8. Kellogg Homestead Farm - Hay Barn, c. 1950.

This barn, built in four sections, is not old but is sympathetic to the 19th century character of the farm. The two largest sections are built end to end, 1-1/2 levels with a

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corrugated sheet metal clad gable roof with a central dormer and an end derrick. The sides are plank clad and there are two major doors, one is double leaf (hinged) and the other is the sliding type. Attached to the side is a long shed, and to that, a one-level sheet metal tool shed.

9. Kellogg Homestead Farm - Tool Shed, c. 1960.

Though not sympathetic with the original complex, this modern tool shed is part of the ongoing development of the farm. Five bays, vertical sided, sheet metal clad shed roof.

10. Kellogg Homestead Farm - Tool Shed, c. 1920.

This is a small building, that, while not especially old, maintains the character of the farm. It is one level with a sheet metal clad gable roof, shiplap siding and an attached shed.

\* 11. Shoreham Telephone Company Switching Station.

This modern, cinder block building intrudes upon the character of the district.

12. Kellogg Homestead Farm - Law Office, c. 1820.

This was the original law office of John Azor Kellogg. It is prominently sited at the southwest corner of the intersection of Stage Road and Benson Landing Road. It is 1-1/2 stories, frame, three by three bays. The facade is unaltered and the building is an important element of the diminishing commercial area within the district. The building is clapboarded, and has a fully articulated gable and molded box cornice. The gable has one 6/6 window. The first story has 15/15 windows and a plain board and batten door. There are three rooms. The front room is the largest and best preserved with flushboard wainscoting and a featheredge panelled door with H-L hinges, which opens to the back rooms. Loyal Kellogg writes in 1852 that "it was repaired and covered anew in 1829."

13. Howard-Chanski Store, 1862.

o This is a good example of vernacular Italianate commercial architecture. It is 2-1/2 stories, three by four bays with a front-gable orientation. The store has a steeply pitched roof with wide overhanging eaves resting on plain, cut-out brackets with a flush-board frieze. The windows, though some have been altered, retain much of their early character with heavy label moldings and 6/6 sash. The doors are double-leaf with a large label mold surround. The first story has a full-length porch with four simple piers that was added later. The building is clapboarded.

The interior has been largely altered with only a few of the original features remaining. Of interest are three fluted cast-iron columns with acanthus leaf capitals. Presumably, the original interior had rows of these columns.

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The original store on this site was built about 1850 and was occupied by J. W. Dorsey. This building burned and was replaced by the present one. The store changed hands continuously throughout its past and presently serves as the only store in the village. The original store specialized in hardware and tin goods.

14. Chanski Horse Barn.

Two-and-one-half levels, steeply pitched gable roof, clapboarded, slate shingle roofing, hinged doors. This barn has lost some of its original character and is somewhat deteriorated.

15. Robert Lussier House, vernacular c. 1835.

This two-story house is interesting for the variety of additions and alterations that have changed the character of the basic structure. Most of these alterations were made to accommodate the building's changing function and the tastes of its owners. The original mass is three by two bays, two stories with a gable front. It is frame, covered by clapboards and has a molded, raking, box cornice which returns at the gable ends. Additions include a 1-1/2 story, steeply pitched gable roofed ell with wide overhanging eaves. Still later was the addition of a shed which is attached to the ell. Other additions include a two-story wing on the south side of the original house with an elaborate, Italianate, bracketed bay window. A late 19th century veranda begins on the south side and continues around the front where it is topped by a later added second story enclosed porch. The first story section of the porch has turned posts, scroll sawn brackets, a latticework foundation skirt and an interesting balustrade with alternating diagonal and horizontal clapboard panels with a square center panel. Windows, doors, and interior detailing have been altered throughout so that this house, while failing to represent any specific period or style, is a good example of the "organic" character of domestic architecture, with a variety of interesting alterations representing the tastes of its successive owners.

The house was owned in 1854 by a Mrs. Aurelia Barber, likely a relative of the Barbers who first settled in Benson in 1784.

\*16. Robert Lussier Trailer

This small sheet metal and aluminum house trailer intrudes on the character of the district.

On this site was an early cabinetmaker's shop owned by Joseph Dean, whose work can still be found in the collections of at least one early family.

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17. Old Grange Hall - Good Shepard Gift Shop - c. 1860.

This is a plain, gable front vernacular building. It is 2-1/2 stories, three by three bays with a sheet metal clad gable roof with an end derrick and a molded, raking, box cornice which returns at the gable ends. Clapboarded, altered windows, plain front door, plain interior.

This building has served a variety of functions; a meeting hall for the Grange, the Masons and Acacia Lodge and as a store.

18. Annette Lacroix Horse Barn - c. 1888.

This 1-1/2 level barn, with sheet metal clad gable roof, braced frame and shiplap siding is in poor repair and adds little to the character of the district.

19. Reed-Lacroix House - vernacular, 1865.

Two-and-one-half stories on a T-plan, this house is an example of a rather plain vernacular house type that prevailed in this area during the last period of the 19th century. This gable front house has a steeply pitched gable roof with slate shingle roofing, a simple molded box cornice and frieze, 2/2 windows and clapboard siding. This is flanked by 2-1/2 story wings fronted by two-story shed roofed porches. Originally, the porches were one-story, quite elaborate, and carried across the entire front. The house was built by Jonas Reed and later served as a hotel and post office.

This site is the original location of the Baptist meeting house which was built in 1843. The meeting house was built of wood and can be seen in early town pictures. The Baptists were small in number and unable to support a church during the Civil War.

20. Joe Shepardson Horse Barn, c. 1885.

One-and-one-half levels, with a long attached shed. Rolled asphalt roofing, mixed shiplap and board and batten siding, hinged doors. This is a good example of a small c. 1885 horse barn with attached tool shed.

21. Joe Shepardson House, c. 1830.

This house has been considerably altered since it was built. It is two stories, three by five bays, gable front with a slate clad gable roof. There is no certain front and the original facade may have been the long side. The house has a molded raking box cornice with gable end returns, is clapboarded and has altered windows. Attached to the south side is a full-length two-story porch with chamfered posts, flushboard balustrade and a

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lattice-work foundation skirt. A later added porch over the present gable front entry has similar chamfered posts and a pair of scroll sawn decorative brackets. It is uncertain for whom this house was built, but it may have been owned by William Cowee.

\* 22. Prentiss Smith's Shop, 1973.

This is a two-level, low pitched gable roofed garage and tool shed, built in 1973. It intrudes upon the character of the district.

23. Cowee-Smith House, Greek Revival, 1848.

This house is a fine example of a Greek Revival house type that is found in the town of Benson. One distinguishable characteristic is its very wide raking entablature, unusual for Vermont domestic Greek Revival where the norm is for the full entablature to surround the main mass and only the cornice and frieze to be raking. Here a wide molded cornice, wide flushboard frieze and very wide molded architrave continue around the pedimented gable front, sides and along the raking eaves. The house is three by three bays with wide panelled corner pilasters, 6/6 windows with shouldered architraves, molded window caps, and a grand frontispiece. The frontispiece is elaborate with wide pilasters and a full, wide entablature which echoes the motifs of the main mass. The plan for this frontispiece was probably inspired by Asher Benjamin who included a similar design in his Practise of Architecture. Other characteristics of that design which are found here include the 18-light sidelights, 33 light transom and the six-panel door.

An attached period wing on the south side is 1-1/2 stories with an identical wide entablature which returns at the gable ends. A later added enclosed porch on the wing diminishes the character of the house. Its construction truncated the entablature of the wing's frontispiece. Wide panelled pilasters remain.

There are four houses in the Benson Historic District of similar design (#'s 23, 36, 79, 83), all of which relate stylistically to the Congregational Church (#28). This house was built by its first owner, William Cowee, a builder-contractor-coffinmaker who was probably responsible for the design of the Congregational Church (#28).

24. Donahue-Hutchins House - c. 1882.

This house is a good example of a vernacular house type that is found in scatterings throughout this part of Vermont. The house is a 1-1/2 story L-plan with a polychrome slate clad, steeply pitched gable roof, molded box cornice and panelled frieze. It is clapboarded, with 2/2 windows and molded window caps. The most distinctive feature of this house is its fine Queen Anne style porch which has been enclosed with screens which detract from its original intended character. This porch has a distinctive appearance

# 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 checked="" 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

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Benson Historic District represents a village of residences, churches, farms and schools which date primarily from the first half of the 19th century. Outstanding examples of high style Greek Revival and Federal buildings reflect the work of William Cowee and Captain Joel Dickinson, respectively. Both were masters of their trade who lent their talents to the development of Benson and helped to create a visually coherent and sophisticated village cluster which is outstanding among the towns of Rutland County. Cowee's work achieves its highest form in the Congregational Church (1842) (#28). This is one of the finer examples of Greek Revival architecture in Vermont and bears a distinct correlation with a design popularized by Asher Benjamin in his Practise of Architecture (1833). Dickineson's work achieved its highest form in an earlier Congregational meeting house in the village and is still represented by the high Federal style Kellogg Homestead (1839) (#1). The Cowee and Dickinson buildings represent less than half of the outstanding buildings in the village. The remainder are houses and commercial buildings which represent the economic support system vital to a small village economy of the early 19th century. These include stores, barns, schools and workshops which are highly compatible with the formal surroundings and contribute to the visual integrity of the villagescape.

The Village of Benson has retained much of its early character due in part to its location off of the main road. The continued strength of its agricultural economy, and the prominence of nearby Route 22A as the major north-south commercial route in western Vermont, has provided the townspeople with sufficient work so that only a few of the early houses have been neglected. The Stage Road, on which the village is located, was the earliest road along the Champlain corridor. It was completed around 1790 and was the main route between Whitehall, New York and Vergennes, Vermont (entered on the National Register, September 3, 1976). The present Route 22A was not completed until 1810 and it was not until many years later that it surpassed the Stage Road as the main traffic route in this area.

The Town of Benson was chartered on May 5, 1780 but was not settled until 1782. Many of the early settlers hailed from the area around Pittsfield and Williamstown, Massachusetts. During its early years, development was lessened due to the poor system of roads, high taxes, credit problems and the War of 1812 which reduced the accessibility to distant markets. Following the war, conditions improved. Easier transportation and the increased demand for farm land brought prosperity to the village, which is clearly reflected in the buildings of the district. During the 1820's, the Kellogg Homestead (#1), the Walker-Bartholemew House (#32) and possibly the Howard-Welch-Driscoll House (#39) were built and were among the outstanding residences in Rutland County during that time.

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similar to others found in this area. It features turned posts, a decorative spindled valance, cut-out square blocks flanking the turned posts (similar to #33, 47 and 86), corner brackets, a fine balustrade, and a latticework foundation skirt. Attached to the back of the house is a full-length, one-level shed and a large one-level, gable roofed wood shed with vertical siding.

This house was built for Patsy Donahue of whom little is known except that she was a carriage painter by trade.

25. Robert Hutchins Garage.

This is a one-level, two-bay garage with a low pitched gable roof. It intrudes upon the character of the district.

26. Congregational Parsonage - Federal, c. 1828.

This house sits on a prominent hillside next to the meetinghouse and is an outstanding component of the Benson Historic District. It is five by two bays, two stories in height with a semi-heavy molded box cornice and a frieze defined by two bands of moldings. Both the frieze and cornice are raking with returns at the gable end. Windows on the second floor are 6/6, while those on the first have been altered to 1/1. This house has received alterations or additions on half a dozen occasions. The Greek Revival frontispiece, with wide panelled pilasters, sidelights, side panels, and transom, is one of the alterations. Another later alteration resulted in the truncating of the frontispiece entablature. What remains is a modest Queen Anne entry porch with turned posts, corner brackets, molded cornice, balustrade and a latticework foundation skirt; originally this porch had a flat roof, but it has had a shed roof slant added.

Attached to the back of the house is an ell built in two sections. The first 1-1/2 stories and the second is one story, both with gable roofs. Both have slate roofing like the main mass, and both were built before the middle of the 19th century and are thus representative of the tradition of trailing ells.

This parsonage is larger and grander than the house lived in by Benson's first ordained minister, Dan Kent (#65). Kent retired from service after 36 years, in 1828, at the age of 71. His wife remained in the house and it was most likely at that time that this parsonage was built.

27. Parsonage Horse Barn - c. 1895.

Two levels, slate clad gable roof, shiplap siding, sliding door, built c. 1895. This was once very much larger.

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28. Benson United Church, 1842.

This is one of the most remarkable examples of Greek Revival church architecture in Vermont and is visually the central landmark of the Village of Benson. It is also an example of a type which can be found in at least three other western Vermont towns (Shoreham, Poultney and neighboring Orwell). This type was undoubtedly influenced by plate 53 of Asher Benjamin's Practise of Architecture, (Boston, 1833). The features of this plate are especially pronounced in the tower and cupola. This tower is composed of a two-tier octagonal belfry cupola resting on a four-sided base which rests on the front of the church about a foot back from the cornice projection of the gable. The top dome of the tower is surmounted by the original weathervane which is a fine wrought-iron Greek anthemion leaf design with an arrow resting on a brass ball and lightning rod. Below it is a tier which surmounts the elaborate belfry. Two of its eight sides have elaborate paired consoles, fluted with decorative side panels. The other four sides have recessed panels with delicate handsawn Greek foliar patterns including the anthemion leaf. Above the consoles and foliar panels is a molded cornice. Below the cornice is an undefined frieze with a band of dentils and a bead and reel. This dentil, bead and reel combination is continued on all three tiers of the tower increasing size in proportion to the size of the tier. The main tier of the belfry-cupola is a grand elaboration on the Benjamin design. It is topped by another molded cornice which wraps around its eight sides. This time the dentil bead and reel motif, is enlarged and the frieze is fully articulated with a wide, molded architrave below making for a full entablature. Four of the eight sides have louvered openings with shouldered architrave surrounds. This is the belfry. Below the belfry is the lowest tier and the base of the tower. It is four-sided with a very wide entablature, resting on panelled corner pilasters, which border plain flushboard sides. The use of a wide, clapboarded architrave is suggestive of a vernacular detail in Benson which was probably the work of William Cowee (see #25). The main mass of the meetinghouse is about 50 feet by 74 feet. It has a slate clad gable roof with a fully articulated gable and a projecting bay which rests on four monumental Ionic columns. The full entablature is extraordinary and is so wide that little space is left in the pedimented gable for the flushboard siding that defines the inner triangle. The meetinghouse is three by four bays with clapboard siding (except around the frontispiece behind the columnar portico where it is flushboard). The panelled corner pilasters are wide with molded pedestals and capitals. There are three engaged pilasters to a side and between each are paired tall windows with a triple hung sash of later stained glass, surrounded by a shouldered architrave and topped by a molded window cap. Similar windows flank the grand frontispiece which is recessed behind the columnar portico. The frontispiece is interesting in that it breaks the Ionic flavor of the building with its full Doric entablature resting on panelled, wide pilasters which surround eight-panel, double-leaf doors. The Doric frieze has accurate triglyphs and the cornice has mutules in the Doric tradition.

To increase its monumentality, the meetinghouse rests on a high foundation and is entered by a flight of steps.

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The interior has been altered but much of its original character has been retained. The most obvious changes were in the use of ashlar cut stone corkboard on the walls, the stained glass windows, and the pressed tin ceiling, all of which add to the unique character of the church. The pressed tin ceiling is an excellent example of the high level of taste this material achieved at about the turn of the century when its use flourished. It is composed of 346 modulating decorative square panels with an elaborate center panel which encircles the floral support for the center light, which has replaced an earlier chandelier.

The most distinctive features of the original interior include a massive arched chancel with a central keystone supported on very wide, panelled pilasters. An architrave surrounds the room above the molded window caps and suggests that beneath the elaborate pressed tin cornice there may be an earlier wooden frieze and cornice that echoes the exterior. There are 36 slip-box pews, each with a panelled and numbered door. At the rear of the church is a second-story chair gallery which is approached from the vestibule by symmetric staircases.

The Benson Congregational Church (now the United Church of Benson) has a long and colorful history. From the earliest years, the small community of Benson worked to provide for their spiritual betterment. The first minister was hired during the summer of 1789 to preach alternate weeks in Benson and Fair Haven. In March, 1790, the Congregational Society was "formed at a meeting . . . by Rev. Matthias Cazier of Castleton. The first meetinghouse was a small building in the Plain Style, finished by Major Ozias Johnson in 1790. The first settled minister was Dan Kent, who guided the congregation for 36 of its formative and most prosperous years (see #65). He was ordained September 5, 1792.

On October 9, 1794, it was voted to "procure a draught of a meeting-house and employ a carpenter for the purposes of building the said house." The man hired was Captain Joel Dickinson of West Haven who had worked on Charles Bulfinch's church in Pittsfield, Massachusetts (1787), which is the supposed model for the famous plate by Asher Benjamin which inspired so many New England church builders. Supposedly, Dickinson had the original plan and copied it in Benson.

Around 1839, the society began deliberating regarding the Dickinson meetinghouse which was in need of repairs. They concluded to demolish it and in 1842 built the present meetinghouse. The designer-contractor was probably William Cowee (see #23).

29. Benson United Church, shed.

One level, sheet metal clad gable roof, board and batten sided. Two bays each with hinged double leaf doors.

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30. Walker's Store, c. 1820/1840

This building was a Federal style house, c. 1820, that was converted to a store and then Greek Revivalized. The original massing has been added to and altered but remains a sensitive and important contributor to the historic character of the Benson District. The original mass was a five by two bay, 2-1/2 story house with a slate clad gable roof, delicately molded cornice with returns at the gable ends, clapboarded, with a stone foundation. Alterations include recessing the first story gable end and adding wide pilasters at the corners and around the entrance. The latter has glazed and panelled double leaf doors, panelled wainscoting beneath the altered front windows, and modest Queen Anne type chamfered posts with decorative corner brackets supporting the upper stories. Most of the original window sash have been altered, but there is one 8/8 in the gable end, below a later added projecting derrick which was used to hoist goods into the second floor. Attached to the south side is a later two-level shed roofed wing with a false front. Its front has a heavy box cornice, on 12/12 and one 6/6 window, and two sliding doors. Also attached to the south side is a two-story porch, c. 1910; balustraded with a shed roof. It is uncertain for whom the house was built. The store was first run by Franklin Walker who specialized in dry goods, groceries, shoes and clothes around 1865.

31. Lisle Bartholemew Carriage Barn, c. 1835.

This is a fine early carriage barn and workshop c. 1835. It was built in two parts; the earliest part probably the south end which is hip-roofed with slate shingle roofing, 1-1/2 levels, and with flushboard siding and two arched openings. At a later date, the central arch had a sliding door built onto it. The north end is clapboarded and has two 12/12 windows. It was originally used as a woodworking shop.

32. Walker-Bartholemew House, 1826.

This fine house makes an important contribution to the Benson Historic District and is one of the outstanding landmarks of the town. It is five by three bays, two stories with an unusual plan. The proportions are of an elongated Federal Style house. The original 1826 house, which is the south end of the present house, was added onto about 1828. The house has a low pitched, slate clad gable roof with an elaborate and delicately molded raking box cornice. The frieze is plain flushboard and there is a molded architrave below. The foundation is stone with window at the south end. The fenestration is unusual throughout, with 12/12 window sash on the second floor, 6/6 on the south part of the first story and period 6/6/6 triple hung sash on the north part of the first story. The most elaborate features of the exterior are the three frontispieces. The south frontispiece has a full Doric frieze of mutules and triglyphs with wide panelled pilasters; 6/6 sidelights above clapboards flank the door. The north frontispiece is also of the Doric order but with slightly different mutules and six guttae under the triglyphs as opposed to five on the south frontispiece. The north frontispiece has no sidelights, but retains the wide panelled pilasters found on the south side. On the north end (east side) of the house is

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a Federal frontispieces, the others tending more towards Greek Revival. Here there is a full entablature with a semi-elliptical fanlight in the frieze (the glass has been removed). It has a delicate cornice with dentils, drill holes, and fluted frieze panels over the pilasters. Below are major and minor pilasters flanking 2/3 length sidelights (also with glass removed) and side panels. The door and sidelights are recessed behind panelled jambs and the door has five rectangular panels. Attached to the back of the house is a 1-1/2 story clapboarded ell, with 6/6 windows, eyebrow windows and a slate clad gable roof with molded cornice. It was used as a bedroom and a woodshed; there is still an outhouse attached to it.

The interior reflects the combining of two major sections of the house with an unusual plan. There are 15 rooms. Those in the north section are particularly elaborate with Federal-Greek Revival transitional detailing. Of special note is the grand circular staircase in the north front hall. It has scroll panels on the stair risers which are reminiscent of a motif suggested in William Pain's builders' guides and of the work of Thomas Dake of Castleton, Vermont. The handrail is of cherry and terminates at the base of the stair in a scroll. The northeast parlor is the most elaborate room in the house. It features a fine period mantelpiece of black marble, with tapered columns and a panelled frieze. In this part of the house the windows have triple hung sash which are recessed behind splayed, panelled interior shutters. The windows and doorways to this room are surrounded by elaborate architraves with bevelled, panelled pilasters and articulated square corner blocks.

An interesting feature of the older section of the house is the basement kitchen with a cooking fireplace. This is not unusual in early houses but that this one is still operating makes it rather unique.

The house was built for Chauncey R. Walker, a prominent man in Benson who served the town variously as a selectman, lister, merchant and as postmaster for nearly 20 years. It is uncertain who built the house (see #23, 79, 86).

33. Goodrich-Trutor House - Vernacular Italianate, c. 1885.

This house is one of a few quality late 19th century buildings in the district and the only one that exhibits some style. It is a cubic, two-story three by three bay Italianate Style house with an asphalt shingle clad hipped roof. There are wide overhanging eaves and a plain, flushboard frieze above the clapboarded walls. Windows are 2/2. The most elaborate feature of the house is the veranda, which surrounds the south and east sides. It is of a type found in Benson and is characterized by a spindle valance with square, cross, cut-out border panels flanking the turned posts (similar to #24, 47, 86); corner brackets; balustrade; and a fine latticework foundation skirt. Attached to the back is a 1-1/2 story, gable roofed woodshed that was added at a later date.

The house was built for Sereno Goodrich, a descendent of the Goodrich family who were among the first settlers of Benson.

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34. Trutor Garage, c. 1930.

One-level, sheet metal clad hipped roof, shiplap sided with a diagonal cross panelled sliding door.

35. Robert Snyder Barn.

This barn is part of one of the Benson Historic District's three remaining farms. Only two of these farms (#1 and #39) are still in operation. This 1-1/2 level, gable roofed building was probably a granery at first and was later converted to a chicken house. It has slate shingle roofing, shiplap siding, a strap-hinged door and an attached shed.

36. Bascom-Snyder House, c. 1835.

This is one of the finest houses in the Benson Historic District and has benefited from regular maintenance over the years. Like the Walker-Bartholemew House (#32), it has two formal fronts; one on the gable end facing east towards the Stage Road, and one north on the Chesboro Road. The house has a Federal plan with early Greek Revival detailing, and was probably built around 1835. The main mass is five by three bays with a slate clad gable roof and a fully articulated raking cornice, moderately molded with a flushboard frieze and no architrave. The house is clapboarded and has second-story 6/6 windows with shutters and replaced first-story 2/2 windows. The north and east frontispieces are identical, each with a wide, full entablature with a flushboard frieze and architrave, and wide flushboard pilasters with three-quarter length sidelights, transom, side panels and eight-panel doors. The house has a slightly off-center chimney. Attached to the south end is a three by two bay, 1-1/2 story ell, built about the same time as the main mass. It has a low-pitched, slate clad gable roof with a molded cornice which returns at the gable ends. The ell is clapboarded and has altered windows and a later added porch with chamfered posts, balustrade, and a latticework foundation skirt. Attached to the south-west end of the ell is a one-level clapboarded woodshed with a sheet metal clad gable roof.

The house was built for Joseph Bascom who settled in Benson in 1815 from Newport, New Hampshire. He was among the leaders in the community and served as representative to the State Legislature and as deacon of the Congregational Church.

37. Snyder Hay Barn.

One-and-one-half levels, slate clad gable roof, heavy braced frame; vertical siding.

38. Snyder Horse Barn, c. 1895.

One-and-one-half levels, slate clad gable roof, clapboarded with a wide entrance bay and a second level hinged door.

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39. Howard-Welch-Driscoll House - Federal, c. 1818.

This is the most extraordinary example of domestic architecture in the Benson Historic District and is as important as any house from its period remaining in Vermont today. It is in an advanced, but not hopeless, state of deterioration.

Built on an unusual three-story L-plan, this is an excellent example of Federal detailing. The third story was not built at the same time as the lower stories. It is Greek Revival in character and has detailing that is quite similar to that found on the Congregational Church (#28). It is topped by a hipped roof and has a very wide denticulated entablature with a molded cornice, flushboard frieze and lapped architrave resting on wide, panelled corner and engaged pilasters. The third story continues the use of unusually wide clapboards which is found on the lower stories. Windows are 6/6 with louvered shutters. The effect of the additions is similar to that of a belvedere, and may have been designed with that in mind. The third story is set back on all sides from the main mass and is not very large. The third story is three by three bays.

The main mass of the house is five by five bays with a later added Gothic Revival veranda and two formal frontispieces. The house has a full entablature with a molded cornice resting on modillion blocks over a narrow frieze and molded architrave. All of the windows on the second story are 12/12. The south side entrance opens into a central hall and staircase and was the original formal entrance. This facade has a fine, central Palladian window on the second floor with a semicircular fanlight (boarded over), a full entablature with a molded modillion block cornice, eight-paned sidelights, fluted pilasters and a central 8/12 window. The first story windows have been altered to tall windows, probably about the time the veranda was added. The south frontispiece, if original, suggests a later date for the house than might be otherwise thought. It is enframed by tall, tapered pilasters which once supported an entablature which was removed when the veranda was added. Minor pilasters and panelled jambs enframe elaborately delineated sidelights, side panels, and an eight-panel door. The sidelights and transom are delineated with decorative wood and plaster.

The east side is identical to the south side except that a 12/12 window replaces the Palladian window and the panelled door on the east frontispiece has been altered and glazed.

The veranda spans both the south and east sides of the house. It has deteriorated considerably. It has panelled piers, central arched and cusped valance, a shed roof, molded cornice and a decorative diamond panelled foundation skirt.

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Attached to the northwest corner of the house is a 1-1/2 story ell with a slate clad gable roof, a plain molded cornice and a variety of original and altered windows and doors. The ell was probably added shortly after the house was built.

The interior is no less outstanding. The third floor is a most unusual room and may have been used originally as a ballroom. There is a balustraded oak staircase that leads up from the second floor. A modern partition divides the original space. Though the third floor reads as an L-plan on the exterior, the north corner is false and was never finished. The third floor detailing is Greek Revival in character which makes sense in relation to the exterior. There are five 6/6 windows, each with a shouldered, molded architrave and double window panels. The only other elaboration is a fine, molded baseboard.

The present second floor was the original top story. The southwest chamber is reached by a rather plain staircase. The room is entirely in its original condition though the fireplace is no longer in use. There is a central mantelpiece flanked by two closets with featheredge panelled doors. The mantelpiece has a full entablature with a molded cornice, a plain frieze and plain pilasters. There are exposed corner posts, a molded baseboard and rather plain architrave moldings around the windows.

The southeast chamber is not as elaborate and has been altered. There may have once been a mantelpiece; there remains fine panelled doors and molded architraves.

The north part of the second floor is divided into four rooms, not including attic space in the attached ell. They are smaller and less elaborate than the front rooms of the second floor.

The most elaborate room in the house is the first floor southwest parlor. It has a fine molded cornice and a central mantelpiece with overmantle flanked by two featheredge panelled doors. The lower level of the mantelpiece has a full entablature with a molded cornice that was originally supported by modillion blocks, a plain open frieze and a molded architrave resting on fluted pilasters. The upper level of the mantelpiece has an open space flanked by panelled pilasters. The room is circled by a bolection and rope molded chair rail. There is also an elaborate baseboard with decorative gauge marks.

The main facade of the house opens on the south side and this is where the original central hall is located. This is relatively unelaborate with a plain open stair with bracketed side panels. The southeast parlor has been considerably altered and there is a more recent black marble mantelpiece there. The east central hall was once quite formal but also has been altered. It has a mantelpiece with a full entablature, pilasters and a panelled fireboard. The northeast parlor is a small room and was probably a bedroom. It has two closets similar to those in the second story chambers which may have flanked a fireplace, now gone.

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The house was built for Major Samuel Howard and was known during the 19th century as "the Maj." Howard settled in Benson in 1785 from Hartford, Connecticut. He served the town during the 18th and 19th century variously as selectman and representative to the State Legislature. The Howards have been continuously active members of the Benson community from that early day to the present.

It is uncertain who built the house but Captain Joel Dickinson should be considered a strong possibility (see #1).

40. Welch-Driscoll Tool Shed, c. 1900.

One-and-one-half levels, slate clad gable roof. Shiplap siding, windows, sliding doors.

41. Welch-Driscoll Horse Barn, c. 1890.

Two-and-one-half levels, sheet metal clad gable roof, clapboarded, sliding door.

42. Welch-Driscoll Young Stock Barn, c. 1888.

One-and-one-half levels, steeply pitched gable roof, clapboarded, deteriorating.

43. Welch-Driscoll Cow Barn, c. 1850.

This is the main barn on this farm. It is two levels, with a rolled asphalt clad gable roof, vertical siding and a later added shed roof.

44. Welch-Driscoll Milkhouse, c. 1940.

Small one level, gable roof, clapboarded with an attached shed.

The Howard-Welch-Driscoll Farm is one of the two working farms (#1 and #39) remaining in the Benson Historic District.

45. Ladd-Davis House, c. 1843.

This is one of two brick houses (#52 is the other) in the Benson Historic District and an important addition to the building stock of the village. The house is Greek Revival in character and was probably built around 1843. The house is three by three bays, built on a hill and is 2-1/2 stories on the front and three stories on the south side with a full basement that was once panelled and plastered and had the original kitchen fireplace. Unfortunately, this basement like most of the house, has suffered considerable deterioration.

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The brick bonding pattern is an unusual one that is found on a few of the brick buildings in Benson. It alternates seven courses of stretches with one course of alternating headers and stretchers. The lintels and sills are rectangular marble blocks; the windows which were 6/6 have been altered to 1/1. The house has a slate clad gable roof with a molded, raking box cornice which returns at the gable ends. In the gable end is a fine, though deteriorated, triangular, louvered fan. The house is built on a gable front side hall plan, and the front door is very plain with a massive marble lintel and a six-panel door. There is a deteriorated rear two-story ell which was built about the same time as the main mass. The north side of the ell is brick with lintels and sills similar to those of the main mass. The south side of the ell is clapboarded.

The interior of the main mass is relatively plain, with one formal parlor which has shouldered architraves around the windows which are above fine panels.

The house was built for Benoni Ladd, who purchased the site and existing structures around 1840 from Benson's only settled proprietor, Ruben Nash. Ladd was a descendant of General Pere G. Ladd, a farmer and blacksmith who settled in Benson, like many of the early settlers, from Pittsfield, Massachusetts in 1798.

46. Judson Belden Trailer

This is a modern brown and beige colored trailer which intrudes upon the character of the district.

47. Donald Beldon House

This is a late 20th century house of a type found commonly in this area. It is two stories, four by two bays, including an attached period wing, and features a steeply pitched, slate clad, gable roof with a raking molded cornice and a narrow frieze band. The house is clapboarded, has a gable front orientation, has 2/2 windows, molded window caps and a stone foundation. The most distinctive feature of the house is the vernacular, Benson type, screened in veranda, which wraps around the front of the main mass and wing. The veranda has a shed roof spindle valance bordered by square, cut-out, cross panels which flank the turned posts (similar to #24, 33, 86); corner brackets, a lattice-work foundation skirt and a most elaborate balustrade with a cut-out inch-board pattern reminiscent of Gothic Revival bargeboard. The south front window has a later added bay and there is a period ell off the back, one-story with similar detail.

48. Donald Beldon Horse and Dairy Barn, c. 1885.

This is a large barn built about 1885 for a small farm on this site. Two levels, tin clad gable roof with a square louvered cupola on the ridge. Clapboarded with hinged and sliding doors.

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49. Donald Beldon Granery, c. 1910.

Small granery built about 1910. One level with a sheet metal clad gable roof and a sliding door.

50. Donald Beldon Milkhouse.

Small, one level, sheet metal clad gable roof, clapboarded.

51. Fred Burlett House, 1956.

This house was built in 1956 and is a modern split-level with aluminum siding, picture windows and Colonial Revival type casement windows. The house intrudes on the character of the district.

The house replaces a house that was demolished in the early 1950's called "The Ark." The Ark was supposedly so named because many families boarded here while their own houses were being built. The Ark was large, clapboarded, 2-1/2 stories, five by three bays, with 12/12 windows and a gable roof, c. 1790. It was thought to be the oldest house in Benson and was built for Dr. Chauncey Smith who settled in 1786.

52. Smith-Reichart House - c. 1833, Federal.

This is a fine example of Federal-Greek Revival transitional architecture and is one of two brick buildings (#45 is the other) in the Village of Benson. It has been kept in good condition and adds to the character of the district. The house is a 2-1/2 story, three by three bay gable front structure with a later added clapboarded ell off the back. The brick is laid in eight-course American Bond and is topped by a fine, low-pitched slate clad gable roof with a delicately molded cornice which returns at the gable ends. There are two end chimneys, and a fine louvered, semi-elliptical fan in the gable. The windows which have been altered to 2/2, have rectangular marble lintels and sills. A plain frontispiece is behind a later added porch. The porch is simple, with chamfered posts and inchboard corner brackets. The frontispiece has a massive rectangular marble lintel, three-quarter length sidelights with five lights each, and a panelled door. On the side of the house is a wrought-iron double, back-to-back C tie-bar; a structural device found, occasionally on masonry buildings. There is also a side entrance porch and a wing off the ell.

The house was built for Milo W. Smith who practiced law in Benson from 1831 until 1852 when he moved west. Smith was the son of Dr. Chauncey Smith, who settled Benson in 1786.

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53. Rex Reichart Horse Barn - c. 1890.

This is a two-level small horse barn with a sheet metal clad gable roof, steeply pitched with overhanging eaves, shiplap sided with a sliding door and an attached shed on the north side.

54. Clayton Moore House - Vernacular, c. 1850.

This is a retarditaire but interesting example of a mid-19th century building type that is more early-19th century in character than its date would suggest. Rutland County is scattered with buildings of this type which retained the post-colonial facade and detailing close to the end of the century. This house has a commercial as well as a residential history but has been added to and has suffered some alterations. The original mass was a three by two bay, pedimented gable front, clapboarded house with a slate clad gable roof. A later addition was a full two-story ell which carries the lines of the house an additional two bays to the rear. The house has a plain molded, raking cornice and a plain flushboard frieze. Windows are 2/2 and there are plain entries on the north and west sides. The north entrance is more formal with three-quarter length sidelights, side panels and a six-panel door. A later but fine feature of the house is the open veranda which surrounds the front and north side. It has chamfered posts, scroll sawn corner brackets, a balustrade and a latticework foundation skirt.

The interior is quite plain. Its most distinctive feature is a pressed tin ceiling in the southeast parlor.

It is uncertain for whom this house was built. In 1854, it was owned by a D. Nickerson of whom little is known, During later years, a meat market was kept in the basement.

55. Carter-Davis House, c. 1852.

This is a late, modest example of vernacular Greek Revival domestic architecture, built c. 1852. Its design is a departure from the traditional symmetrical massing. The house is four by two bays, two stories with a later added 1-1/2 story rear ell. It is clapboarded and has a sheet metal clad gable roof and central chimney. The cornice is molded and raking, and has a plain flushboard frieze and returns at the gable ends. Windows have been altered to 1/1. There is a fine Greek Revival frontispiece with wide panelled major pilasters and thin molded minor pilasters, three-quarter length sidelights and a seven-light transom. The sidelight jambs are fluted. The entablature was truncated at the time the front porch was added. The porch has a shed roof, chamfered posts, elaborate corner brackets, a plain balustrade, and a latticework foundation skirt. The ell is plain and clapboarded with a woodshed, converted to a garage, and an outhouse at the back. The interior of the house is plain. Its most distinctive features are the shouldered window architraves in the northwest parlor and the fine decorative pressed tin ceiling in the southwest parlor.

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The house was probably built for Elijah Carter, who lived there in 1854 and was a stone-cutter by trade. He had a marble shop in his backyard and made tombstones.

56. Donald Munger Workshop.

This is a little shed-roofed workshop that appears to have been built using some parts from an old house at the end of the last century. Rolled asphalt roofing, mixed plank, shiplap and board and batten siding, two old 12/12 windows on the north side. It is not in good condition.

57. Donald Munger Horse and Carriage Barn - c. 1895.

This is a large horse barn that has suffered some alterations. It is clapboarded, and has a sheet metal clad gable roof. The west gable end has a triangular six-light window. There are few other windows. The barn opens to the south with altered doors, although the track for an original sliding door exists.

58. Norton-Munger House.

This is the most elaborate Greek Revival house in the Benson Historic District. It is three by three bays, two large stories with a massive, pedimented two story columnar porch. In massing, and detail it is similar to the Congregational Church (#28) across the street. The projecting, pedimented gable has a fully articulated entablature with a molded cornice, wide frieze and an accurate classical architrave. The pediment rests on two large panelled piers with molded capitals. The facade is embellished with four engaged pilasters of similar profile. The house is clapboarded with altered 1/1 windows and fine window architraves with molded caps. The frontispiece has a wide, full entablature that echoes the entablature of the house with similar wide panelled pilasters and a modern glazed door. The lower portion of the porch has been modernized with a latticework foundation skirt.

The south side has had some unfortunate alterations. The most intrusive is a 20th century shed roofed sun porch. There is a fine period ell attached to the back of the house with similar detailing in the corner posts, entablature and windows. On the back of this is attached a second ell and shed roofed enclosed porch. The back ell is late 19th century, 1-1/2 stories with shiplap siding, hinged doors and a re-used 8/12 window. It is the only one of the three sections that does not have a slate clad roof. The interior has been altered but the front formal parlor is fine with molded window surrounds and stop panels.

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The house was built for Isaac Norton, a successful merchant who settled in Benson in 1815. He arrived in Benson trained for the medical profession but abandoned it for a more lucrative mercantile career. Norton served the town and county as a representative to the State Legislature and later as Rutland County State Senator.

The house was most likely built by William Cowee, Benson's talented Greek Revival housewright to whom #'s 23, 28, 79 and 83 are also attributed.

59. Gibbs-Bowens House, c. 1860.

This house is a small 1-1/2 story vernacular house built around 1860 or later which exhibits a retarditaire sense of classical detailing. The main mass is a clapboarded, three by two bay gable front house with a steeply pitched gable roof with wide overhanging eaves and a molded box cornice. The windows have been altered but the house is generally in good repair. The frontispiece is Greek Revival in character with light detailing. It has a full molded entablature, pilasters with molded capitals, full sidelights and a panelled door. Attached to the south side is a 1-1/2 story period wing with a later added enclosed porch. Attached to the back of the house is a later added ell with shiplap siding and a steeply pitched gable roof. All of the roofs are clad in slate.

This house was built for Joseph A. Gibbs, who was listed in an 1881 directory as a carpenter. He may have built the house for himself. He was a descendent of an early Gibbs clan that were among the first settlers of Benson, arriving from Litchfield, Connecticut before 1790.

60. Benson Village School, 1935

This is a fine nine by four bay, hip-roofed schoolhouse that was built in 1935 to replace an earlier school on the same site. This is a modest example of the Colonial Revival Style. Its distinctive features include a fine slate clad roof, tall 12/12 windows and a pedimented entry porch with tapered columns. The school is clapboarded with four large classrooms on the first floor and a large open basement which houses offices and the library.

The school replaces an earlier building of unique character that was built around 1865 in a vernacular Italianate Style. The original school would have made an important addition to the Benson Historic District had it not burned. The present structure is a quality building which adds to the character of the district.

The style and character of the old school, from evidence of old photographs, seems to have influenced the 1876 alterations to the neighboring Methodist Church (#62).

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Also located on this site or on the site of the present school addition (#61) was the original Methodist parsonage, demolished in recent years.

61. Benson Village School Addition, 1973.

This is a separate building used to house grades one through four and was completed in 1973. It is a plain aluminum box and intrudes on the character of the district.

62. Old Methodist Church. 1841/1876.

This is one of two remaining churches (#28 is the other) in the Benson Historic District. There have been four. It is a fine building, an important addition to the building stock of the village, and is one of the few quality buildings from its period in the village. It has been abandoned for some time and is presently in an advanced state of deterioration. Stylistically, the church is difficult to type. It has details reminiscent of Greek Revival, Gothic Revival and mildly suggestive of Romanesque Revival. The building is large, measuring approximately 47 feet by 63 feet and is composed of a large two-story rectilinear mass and a truncated square tower located at the southwest corner. The main mass has a sheet metal clad gable roof and is reminiscent of Greek Revival in detail and proportions. The building has a full entablature with raking, molded cornice which returns at the gable ends, a wide flushboard frieze and an attenuated architrave. Corner pilasters are wide with molded capitals. The church is clapboarded with four tall windows on each side, an elaborate oculus on the front and two tall windows on the back with louvered shutters. All of the windows were stained glass with elaborate floral patterns. All of them have been destroyed, sold, or preserved in the basement and attics of local families.

The oculus on the center of the facade is large and is topped by a label-type window with cut-out tracery. The tower is two stories with an octagonal louvered belfry topped by a balustrade. Originally there was a tall, slate clad, pointed spire. The belfry's louvered openings are round topped and it sets on a hipped, slate clad platform with canted corners and round topped dormers. The base of the tower is a square mass divided into halves by a large string course. Both top and bottom have louvered, round-headed windows with label moldings on the sides; the front has a double round-arched louvered window on the second level and a frontispiece with double leaf, panelled doors with a wide round-arched label molding above.

The interior has been largely altered and most of the pews removed.

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The church derives its unusual character from the fact that the original edifice was built in 1841 and was largely Greek Revival in character. An early photograph of Benson shows the original church and it is quite similar to work done by Asabel Parsons, who built churches for Sudbury, Salisbury, the Middlebury Methodists and Middlebury College, as well as a number of fine houses in that area. Surprisingly, he lived in Benson but there is no record of his work there. In 1876, the Methodist Church was remodeled and refurnished at a cost of \$2,912.50. This included removal of the original spire and extensive interior alterations.

63. Rosie Fowler House.

This is a very fine Federal Style, pedimented, gable front side hall plan house. It has been well maintained and is an excellent example of the kind of architecture that gives the Benson Historic District its character. The main mass is 2-1/2 stories, four by three bay house with an ell built in two sections off the back. The house has a low pitched slate roof with a full raking entablature including a delicately molded cornice, a frieze and a small, flushboard architrave. In the gable end is a large semi-elliptical arch with a keystone and louvered fan. The windows have altered 1/1 sash and are surrounded by very finely molded architraves. An unusual and attractive feature of the house are the corner posts which are articulated by a panel in low relief with a profile similar to that of the window architraves. The frontispiece has a full entablature with a delicate dentil and drill hole cornice similar to that found on the Walker-Bartholemew House (#32). The frieze borders are fluted and enclose a large semi-elliptical louvered fan. The entablature appears to rest on fine paired pilasters which are delicately panelled and flank 2/3 length sidelights above panels and a six-panel door. The door and fanlight are recessed behind jambs with panels congruent with the panels of the door.

The main ell is 1-1/2 stories, clapboarded with a sheet metal clad gable roof, a plain box cornice and a later added porch on the south side. Both the main mass and the ell have chimneys. Attached to the back of the ell is a modern, one bay, shed roofed garage.

It is uncertain for whom this house was built. A man named Westbrook owned it in 1854 of whom little is known.

64. Newton-Collett House - c. 1874.

This house is not easily visible from the street. The house is built on an L-plan and has detailing suggestive of the Italianate period. The massing and plan are more akin to a vernacular house type of relatively undistinguished style that can be found in scatterings around Rutland County.

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The house has a slate clad steeply pitched gable roof with a raking box cornice and frieze. The attached period wing is two stories with a sheet metal clad gable roof. The main mass and wing are both clapboarded. The most distinctive features of the facade are the 2/2 windows and frontispiece with panelled double leaf doors. Both have step-peaked lintels. The wing has an obtrusive front porch with a shed roof that was added later. Attached to the back is a one-story gable roofed ell.

The house was built for Dr. Joseph P. Newton who received his education in Michigan, returned east and settled in Benson in March, 1872.

65. Kent-Collett House.

This may be the oldest remaining house in the Benson Historic District. It is a small 1-1/2 story braced frame house and is in a poor state of repair. Windows and doors have been altered. It has a center chimney, a sheet metal clad gable roof and a few of the original small pane windows; little of its original character is preserved. The plain box cornice has been repaired and altered and many of the unpainted clapboards are no longer securely attached to the studs.

The interior has some details which suggest its early date. The floor has been altered but the second floor retains much of its original detailing.

The house was built for Rev. Dan. Kent, who was born in Suffield, Connecticut but settled from Dorset, Vermont where his father Cephas Kent, kept a tavern and was instrumental in the Revolutionary activities of the Green Mountain Boys and the formation of an independent Vermont in 1777. (See Kent Neighborhood Historic District, Bennington County, Vermont, submitted to the National Register February 23, 1978.) Dan Kent was a volunteer during the war and fought under Seth Warner at the Battle of Bennington. Following the war, Kent studied law, but later determined to devote himself to the ministry. At the age of 34, in 1792, he settled in Benson as its first ordained minister. Loyal Kellogg writes in 1858, "to no other man is the town so much indebted for the abiding features of its religious and social character." For most of his tenure he was the only minister in town and served as such for 36 years, dying in 1835.

66. Joy-Beattie House, c. 1840.

This is a house of unusual proportion and detail. The front mass is four by two bays, two stories in height. Windows and doors, have been considerably altered. Slate clad gable roof, central chimney, molded, raking cornice, clapboarded, with 2/2 windows and a high flushboard basement story with windows.

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This house is an excellent example of the continuous style of building where ells and wings carry back from the main mass. This house has a two-section 1-1/2 story ell and an attached two-story horse barn. The first rear section has eyebrow windows with louvered shutters. It is a sitting room and kitchen. The second section is a clapboarded tool and wood shed with a central 12/12 window. The horse barn has a slate clad gable roof, sliding doors, strap-hinged hay door and board and batten siding.

The house was built for Luther Joy who was a blacksmith in town. Subsequent additions were made in 1851 when Henry and Willard Strong acquired it for use as their carriage making shop. The business was carried on for many years under the name of "Strong & Brother."

67. James Yee Horse Barn, c. 1910.

One-and-one-half level horse barn with a sheet metal clad gable roof that projects over the front of the mass. It is clapboarded and has hinged hay doors and a large sliding door with a 12-pane window.

68. James Yee House, c. 1810.

This is an important example of Federal architecture and is one of the visually outstanding landmarks in Benson Village. The house is in good repair. It is two stories, five by two bays, and has a slate clad gable roof with two end chimneys. The pedimented gable is articulated by a full entablature with a delicately molded raking cornice, a frieze and an attenuated architrave around the front and side. Windows have been altered to 2/2 and they all have louvered shutters. There are two of the original 12/12 windows on the north end. Window surrounds are relatively plain with molded caps. There are two formal entrances. The west frontispiece is more elaborate with a full molded entablature over a ten-light transom; flushboard pilasters, with molded capitals, flank the ten-light, three-quarter length sidelights, side panels and a fine six-panel door. The south frontispiece is less elaborate with a similar entablature and pilasters but no sidelights or transom. The main mass is clapboarded over a stone foundation. There is a 1-1/2 story gable roofed ell off the back with a wood shed, sitting room and open arched carriage bay. It was probably built about the same time as the house.

It is uncertain for whom this house was built. Luther Joy owned it in 1854 and Byron A. Carter in 1869. Both were local merchants in their time but neither built the house.

69. Benson Volunteer Fire Department, c. 1970.

This is a one-story, long building used to house the village fire truck. Sheet metal clad gable roof, shiplap siding, four side windows. This building intrudes on the character of the district.

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The Fire Department was built on the site of an earlier house owned by Daniel Barber, son of one of the first settlers in Benson.

70. Hollis Bowen Garage, c. 1960.

One bay, gable roof, shiplap siding. This building intrudes upon the character of the district.

71. Hollis-Bowen House.

This modest example of Gothic Revival architecture remains the only example of this style in the district. Much of its original character has been lost due to alterations. One-and-one-half stories, six by two bays, aluminum clapboard siding and a central gable wall dormer. The windows have been altered to 2/2, though one of the earlier 6/6 windows remains on the north side. The most distinctive feature of the facade is the three-bay, hipped roof, porch with chamfered posts, cusp and arch valance and molded cornice.

This house, though Gothic Revival in character, is actually an earlier house that was remodelled by Ransom H. Torry. The original house was probably built c. 1815, for a member of the Goodrich clan who were among Benson's earliest and most prominent settlers.

72. Benson Public Library, c. 1870.

This is a modest little building built in the vernacular type that bears a distinct similarity in detailing and massing to earlier post-colonial buildings. It stands with a two-bay gable front elevation, two stories tall with a sheet metal clad gable roof, a raking molded box cornice and frieze, both returning at the gable ends. The building is clapboarded with a concrete foundation and 1/1 windows which presumably are replacements. Doorway and windows are plain with no architectural treatment.

This building was erected following a fire in a tavern on this site which had been built in 1839. Originally, it was built as a general store which was operated by Mrs. Kendall Ladd.

73. Wheel Inn, c. 1880.

This is another example of a building type that retained a post-Colonial appearance long after the style had changed for domestic construction. Most such buildings, including this one, were built for commercial purposes. It is a three by four bay, 1-1/2 gable front structure with an asphalt shingle clad, steeply pitched gable roof with a plain raking box cornice and frieze which return at the gable ends. It is clapboarded and has one original 6/6 window. The building's exterior has retained much of its original character. An ell was added to the back around 1900. It has one clapboarded side, one

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shiplap side and one side sheathed with aluminum. There are also two sheds attached to the east side of the front.

Little is known of this building, except that it was used for a while as a blacksmith's shop.

74. Paul Bowen Apartments, c. 1895.

A 1-1/2, three by two bay building currently used for an apartment. Steeply pitched, sheet metal clad roof. This is a simple example of local commercial architecture. It is clapboarded and has 1/1 windows. It is plain and adds little to the character of the district.

75. Griswold-Rich House, c. 1832.

This house has been recently restored and is in a fine state of repair. It is a good example of 1-1/2 story, Federal-Greek Revival transitional cottage type. It is five by three bays, has a slate clad gable roof with a center chimney, and an elaborately molded cornice which returns at the gable ends. There is a full entablature on the front and side. The house is clapboarded, has altered 2/2 windows and a frontispiece which is not the original. The frontispiece has pilasters and an entablature that were part of the restoration and do not relate to the detailing of the house. Original are the panelled jambs and the ten-light transom and sidelights. Four minor pilasters encase the sidelights and a later altered door with a large stained glass panel. The front porch is a later addition, with a latticework foundation skirt and a balustrade.

Attached to the north side is an ell built in two parts, both with gable roofs and 1-1/2 stories high. The first section is clapboarded and has a central arched carriage bay which has been converted to a porch and kitchen. Its cornice is relatively plain and there is a panelled strap-hinged door on the east side. Attached to the back of this ell is another ell which runs perpendicular to it. This has a slate roofing, board and batten siding, a fine strap-hinged door and an attached privy.

The house was probably built for D. B. Griswold who was a descendent of Isacc Griswold who settled Benson from Norwich, Connecticut in 1797 and became one of the leading citizens in town.

76. Grayton Rich Barn, c. 1895.

One-and-one-half levels, slate clad gable roof, vertical siding.

77. Grayton Rich Tool Shed, c. 1900.

One level, sheet metal clad gable roof, clapboarded.

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78. Robert Lussier Horse Barn.

This is a building that was moved from the old Kingston Farm in Benson where it stood for some time as a skimming station and creamery. It is now used as a horse barn. Two levels; five by three bays; 6/6 windows; mixed clapboard and rolled siding; central cross gable; slate clad; steeply pitched gable roof. Early photographs show it to have been one level higher than at present.

79. Aiken-Lowell House, c. 1840.

This is one of the finest examples of Greek Revival domestic architecture in Benson. It retains much of its original character and is an important part of the village streetscape. The house is a 2-1/2 story, three by four bay gable front structure with a slate clad gable roof, molded, raking box cornice with returns at the gable ends and a plain flushboard frieze. The gable end window is triangular with a ten-light muntin interlace. The house is clapboarded and has 6/6 windows with shutters. The frontispiece is a fine example of Asher Benjamin-derived detailing with a heavy full entablature, molded cornice, flushboard frieze and a molded architrave. Wide panelled major pilasters and smaller minor pilasters frame the 2/3 length, 18-light, sidelights, a 33-light transom and an eight-panel door. The sidelight and door jambs are fluted.

Attached to the rear south gable end is a 1-1/2 story ell that was built about the same time as the house. It has, however, been modernized on the interior and altered on the exterior. The west side of the ell has a later added Colonial Revival porch with tapered columns, balustrade and a shingled foundation skirt.

The house was built for Daniel Aiken, the son of Edward Aiken who first settled Benson from Londonderry, New Hampshire around 1796. Daniel Aiken built the old "Union Store" in 1839 and was a successful merchant for some time. The house may have been built by William Cowee, Benson's talented Greek Revival housewright; see #'s 23, 81, 83.

80. Town Garage-Town Clerk's Office, c. 1850.

This is a large and considerably altered multi-function building owned by the Town. Though parts of it are 19th century, the whole of it must be considered to intrude on the character of the district. The building is shiplap sided, two stories and built in three sections. The oldest part is probably the west end which retains a molded raking cornice with gable end returns.

Though considerably altered and enlarged, this building was once the center of a thriving carriage maker's shop operated by Henry and Willard Strong.

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81. Ashton Bosworth Horse Barn, c. 1895.

This horse barn has been altered, but still retains some of its early character. It is two levels with an asphalt shingle clad gable roof, mixed clapboard and shingle siding, a second level hay door and a modernized first level with two-bay garage.

82. Barber-Bosworth House, 1829.

This is one of the more heavily altered houses in the Benson Historic District. Due to the nature of some of the remodeling, its contribution to the villagescape has been blunted. The house was built three by three bays, 1-1/2 stories tall with a later added wing on the northeast corner. It has an asphalt shingle clad gable roof with a raking cornice and gable end returns, altered 2/2 windows, asbestos shingle siding, altered fenestration, altered front door, and a recently added pedimented entry porch. The wing has a steeply pitched gable roof and is 1-1/2 stories with a single original 6/6 window.

The house was built for a descendent of the Barber family who settled in Benson in 1785.

83. Goodrich-Beavin House, c. 1844.

This is another example of Benson's fine vernacular Greek Revival house type. It is in fine repair and retains most of its original character. The plan is a three by three bay side hall house, two stories in height with an attached period wing. The house has a slate clad gable roof, and, like the others of its type, a full raking entablature and gable front plan. The entablature consists of a heavy molded cornice, flushboard frieze, and an architrave, which rests on wide panelled corner pilasters. The second story windows are 6/6. Those on the first story have been altered to 1/1 and have elaborate surrounds with molded window caps. The frontispiece has a full entablature with a heavy, molded, denticulated cornice, flush frieze, molded architrave, wide panelled pilasters with molded capitals and a six-panel door. The south wing is 1-1/2 stories tall, three by two bays, with an elaborate, period columnar porch with panelled piers similar in detail to the pilasters on the main mass. The porch has a shed roof with similar entablature. The wing is clapboarded, has sheet metal roofing, and altered windows. Attached to the back of the wing is a 1-1/2 story, clapboarded wood shed. The interior is relatively plain aside from shouldered architraves around the windows and doors.

The house was probably built for Daniel O. Goodrich, a descendent of the early Goodrich family that settled Benson in 1786.

This is another of the houses in the district attributed to William Cowee, the Greek Revival housewright. (See 3's 23, 36, 81, 83.)

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84. Mary Beavin Horse Barn, c. 1890.

This barn is 1-1/2 levels and has a sheet metal clad gable front roof which is steeply pitched with end returns. It is clapboarded and has a front double-leaf hinged door flanked by 6/6 windows with louvered shutters.

85. Harley Hasbrook Horse Barn, c. 1885.

Two levels, polychrome slate clad gable roof, clapboarded with sliding doors.

86. Cummings-Hasbrook House, c. 1880.

This is a modest example of a later 19th century building type with a very elaborate Queen Anne veranda of the type seen in several other houses in the village (#24, 33, 47). The house is clapboarded, is three by four bays, two stories in height, and has a steeply pitched, slate clad gable roof and a central chimney. The house has 1/1 windows, but the most distinctive character is its elaborate veranda which wraps around the west and south sides. The veranda has a pedimented entrance, a spindle valance with cross-panel borders, turned posts, balustrade and a latticework foundation skirt. Attached to the back is a one-story shed roofed ell which is clapboarded with a small entry porch and an attached privy. This house was built for William Cummings of whom little is known.

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The Benson Historic District became the center of a rapidly developing rural economy. This economy was fed by the system of mills along the Hubbardton River in the eastern part of the town as well as the important landing dock to the west on Lake Champlain. The most prosperous years emerged following the passage of high tariffs on foreign wool by Congress in 1824. By 1840, there were over 20,000 sheep in Benson. These, together with prodigious amounts of grain, and a horse, pig and cow or two for each family, contributed to the development of an agriculturally sufficient economy that yielded great wealth through the export of wool. This prosperity was expressed in the variety of goods and services that became available, but most clearly it is expressed in the architecture of William Cowee to whom the Congregational Church (#28) and the district's finest Greek Revival houses have been attributed. If a town's ecclesiastical architecture can be held as any measure of prosperity, then the wool trade of the 1840's brought Benson to its cultural and economic peak. The remaining decades of the 19th century witnessed a gradual decline in population and prosperity, so that there are few modern or intrusive elements to the villagescape.

Benson has always been an agricultural town, and although commercial and manufacturing interests were largely developed during the last century, these remained subordinate to, and dependent upon, agricultural activities.

The numerous 19th century buildings which rise along the tree-lined Stage Road leave a lasting and significant impression of 19th century New England life. The ideals of the Republic, the classicism of the finest buildings, and the prosperity of the times that built them have been little altered by more recent development. Increased local public awareness and appreciation of this important resource will ensure the conservation, preservation and continuing use of an attractive and vital rural village with a respect for its past.

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Amendment to Benson Village Historic District, Benson, Rutland County, VT

CONTINUATION SHEET 1

ITEM NUMBER 10

PAGE 1

Benson Historic District Boundary Description:

The boundary of the Benson Historic District is described as follows: beginning at Point A located approximately 100 feet east of the centerline of the Stage Road and 20 feet north of the northeast corner of the Ladd-Davis House (#45), proceeding in a southerly direction, parallel to the centerline of Stage Road and 100 feet east of it, crossing the so-called North Access Road and including those properties on the east side of Stage Road (#'s 46-58) to Point A<sub>1</sub>, the intersection of this line with the boundary of the village cemetery; thence proceeding generally east, south, southwest, and west, along the boundary of said cemetery, to Point A<sub>2</sub>, the intersection of said cemetery boundary with a line parallel to the centerline of Stage Road and 100 feet east of it; thence continuing generally south along said line, to include the properties east of Stage Road (#'s 60-72), to Point B, the intersection of this line with a line running generally east and west, and passing through a point 15 feet north of the northeast corner of a barn (#76) belonging to Grayton Rich; thence proceeding generally east along this line for a distance of 30 feet, to Point C; thence proceeding generally south, parallel to Stage Road and 130 feet east of it, crossing Benson Landing Road, to Point D, 40 feet south of the centerline of Benson Landing Road; thence proceeding generally west parallel to and approximately 70 feet south of said centerline to Point E, a point which is on this line and is 60 feet east of the centerline of Stage Road at the rear property line of the Barber-Bosworth House (#82) to Point F, the intersection of this line and extension with a line running generally east and west and passing through a point 15 feet south of the southeast corner of the Cummings-Hasbrook House (#86); thence generally west, along said line, crossing Stage Road, to Point G, a point located on this line and 100 feet west of the centerline of Stage Road, to the southwest of and including in the district the Kellogg cow barn (#4); thence proceeding generally north, parallel to the centerline of Stage Road, to Point H, the intersection of this line with the centerline of Benson Landing Road; thence generally east, along said centerline, to Point I, located on said centerline and 60 feet west of the centerline of Stage Road; thence generally north, parallel to the centerline of Stage Road and behind (to the west of) the properties on the west side of Stage Road (#'s 13-44), thus crossing Cheseboro Road, to Point J, a point on this line and 120 feet north of the centerline of Cheseboro Road; thence generally east, passing to the north of the Ladd-Davis House (#45) to Point A, the point of beginning.

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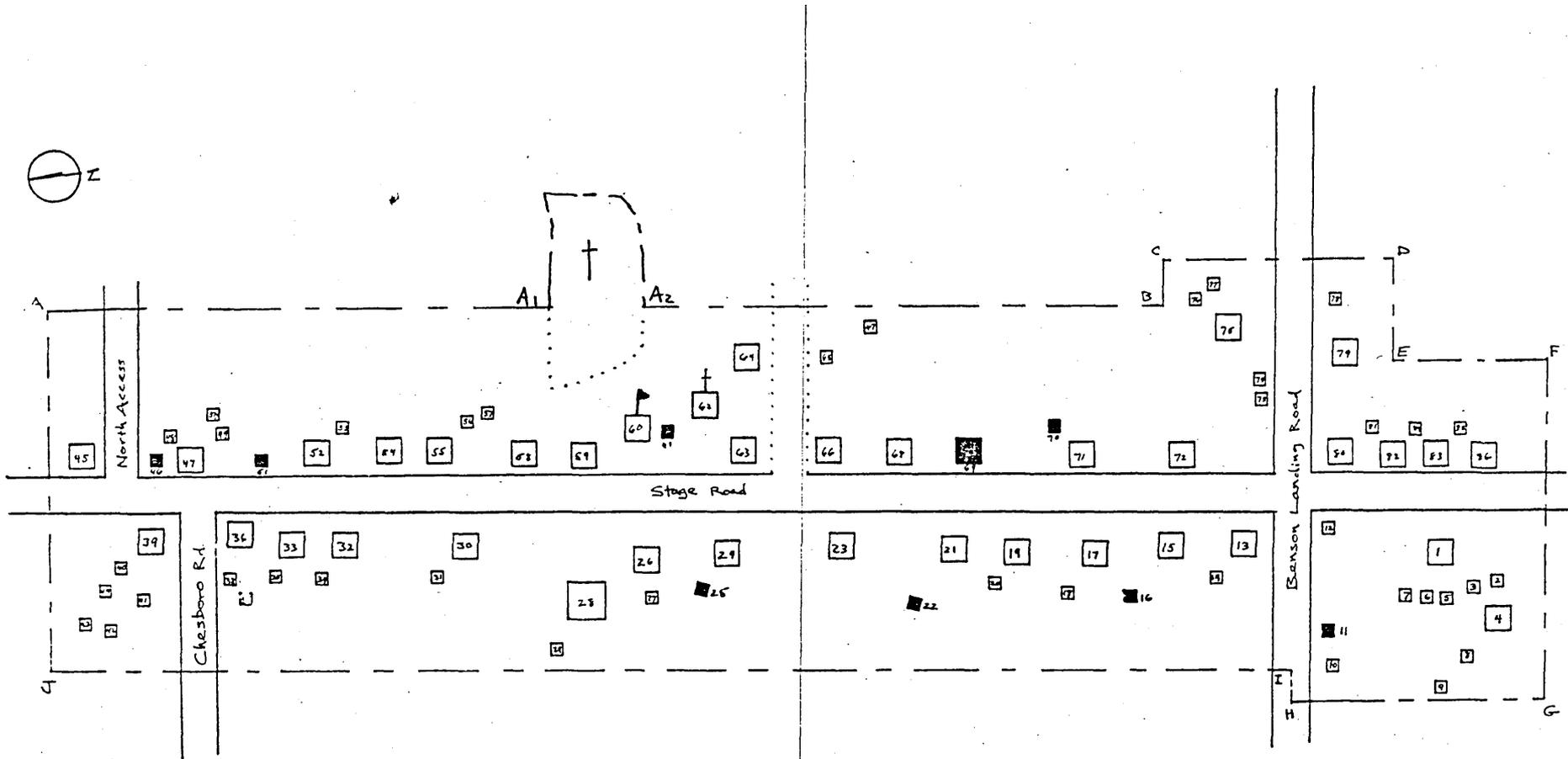
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CONTINUATION SHEET 1

ITEM NUMBER 10 PAGE 1

Benson Historic District Boundary Description:

The boundary of the Benson Historic District is described as follows: beginning at Point A located approximately 100 feet east of the centerline of the Stage Road and 20 feet north of the northeast corner of the Ladd-Davis House (#45), proceeding in a southerly direction, parallel to the centerline of Stage Road and 100 feet east of it, crossing the so-called North Access Road and including those properties on the east side of Stage Road (#'s 46-72), to Point B, the intersection of this line with a line running generally east and west, and passing through a point 15 feet north of the northeast corner of a barn (#76) belonging to Grayton Rich; thence proceeding generally east along this line for a distance of 30 feet, to Point C; thence proceeding generally south, parallel to Stage Road and 130 feet east of it, crossing Benson Landing Road, to Point D, 40 feet south of the centerline of Benson Landing Road; thence proceeding generally west parallel to and approximately 70 feet south of said centerline to Point E, a point which is on this line and is 60 feet east of the centerline of Stage Road at the rear property line of the Barber-Bosworth House (#82) to Point F, the intersection of this line and extension with a line running generally east and west and passing through a point 15 feet south of the southeast corner of the Cummings-Hasbrook House (#86); thence generally west, along said line, crossing Stage Road, to Point G, a point located on this line and 100 feet west of the centerline of Stage Road, to the southwest of and including in the district the Kellogg cow barn (#4); thence proceeding generally north, parallel to the centerline of Stage Road, to Point H, the intersection of this line with the centerline of Benson Landing Road; thence generally east, along said centerline, to Point I, located on said centerline and 60 feet west of the centerline of Stage Road; thence generally north, parallel to the centerline of Stage Road and behind (to the west of) the properties on the west side of Stage Road (#'s 13-44), thus crossing Cheseboro Road, to Point J, a point on this line and 120 feet north of the centerline of Cheseboro Road; thence generally east, passing to the north of the Ladd-Davis House (#45) to Point A, the point of beginning.



BENSON VILLAGE  
HISTORIC DISTRICT

BENSON, VT

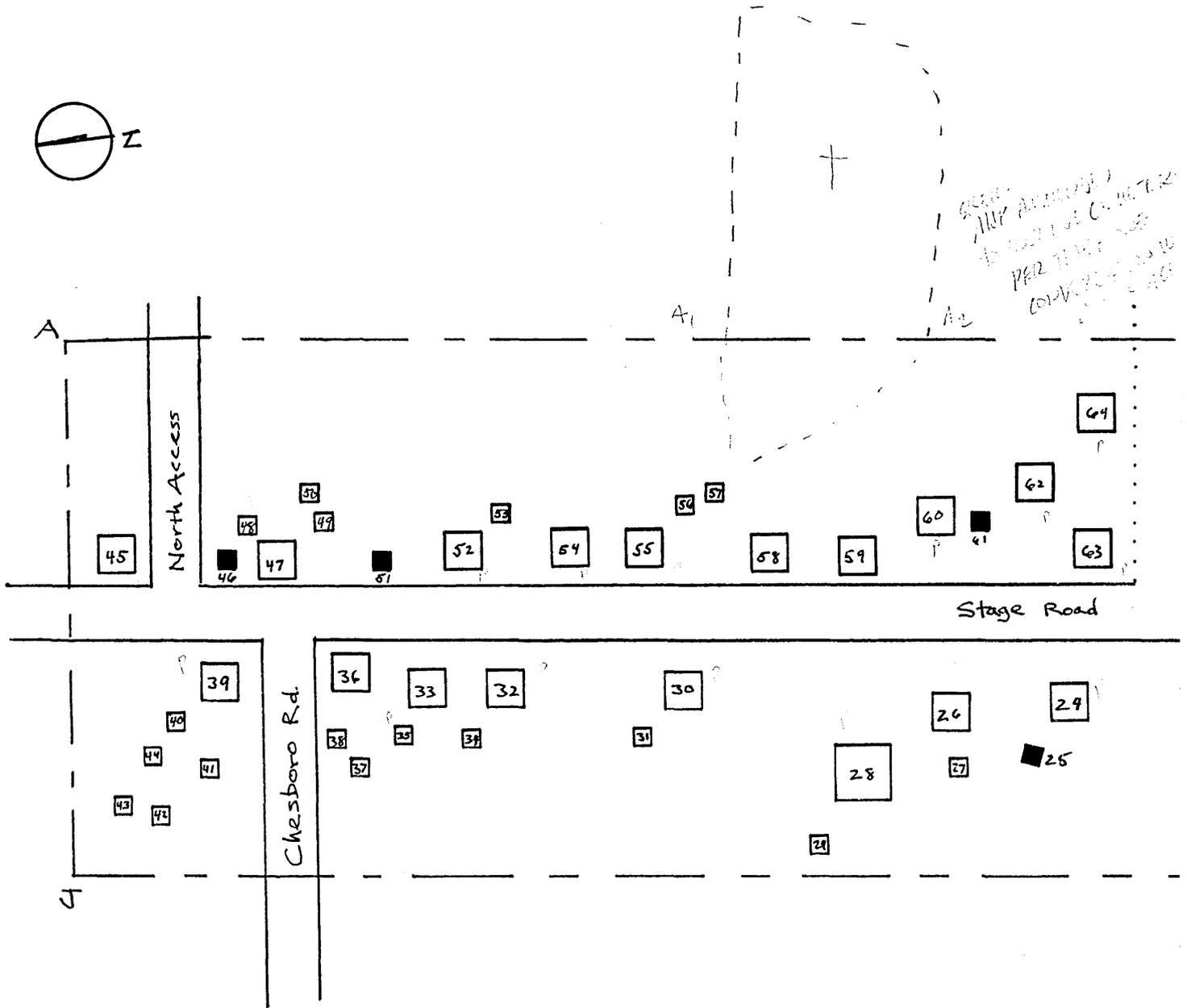
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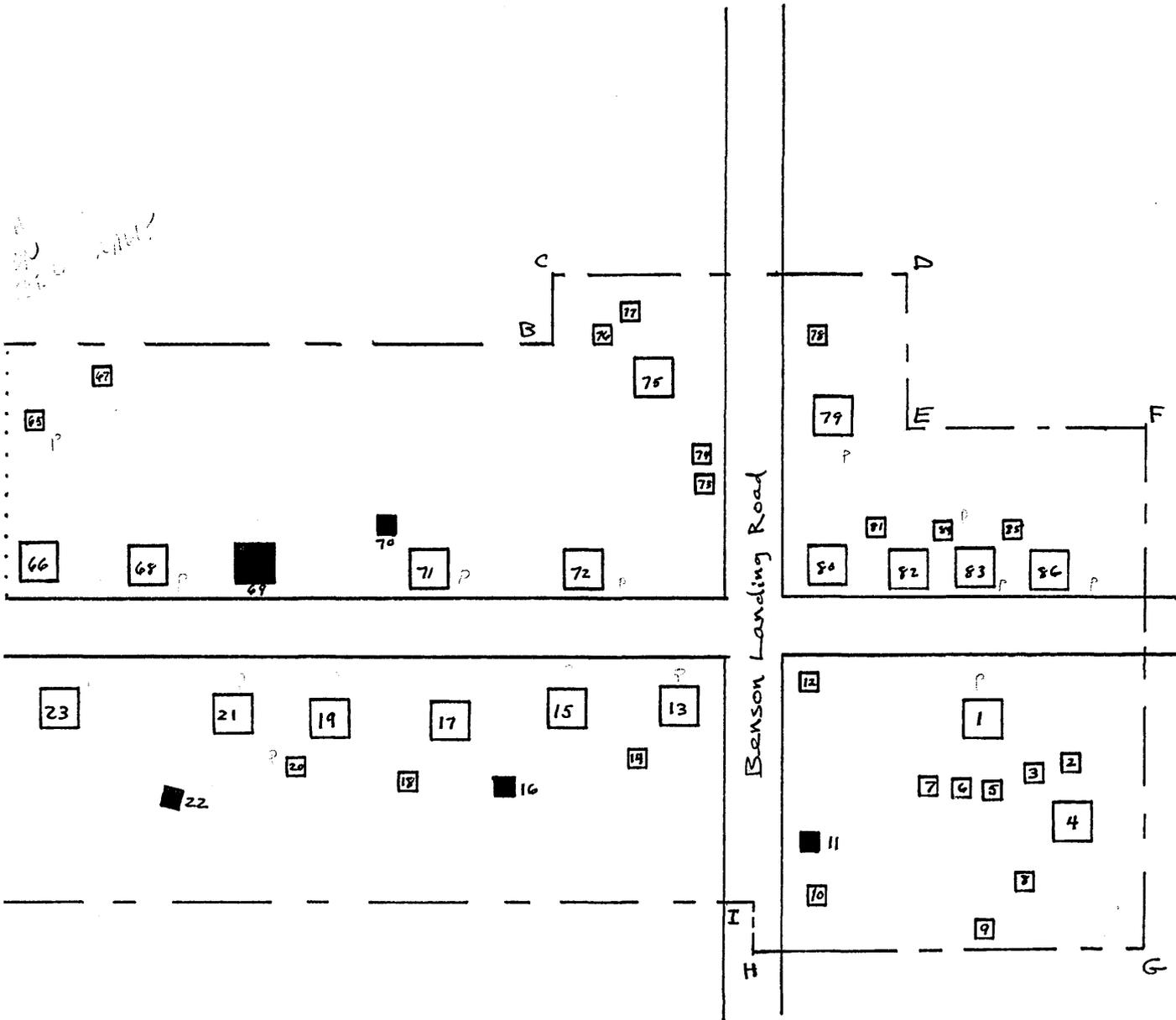
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# BENSON VILLAGE HISTORIC DISTRICT

BENSON, VT



INTRUSIONS  
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