

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

For NPS use only

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

received JUL 23 1984

date entered AUG 23 1984

**1. Name**

historic Huntington Lower Village Church

and/or common Lower Village Church or United Baptist Church

**2. Location**

street &amp; number Richmond - Huntington Road

N/A not for publication

city, town Huntington Village N/A vicinity of

state Vermont code 50 county Chittenden code 007

**3. Classification**

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

**4. Owner of Property**

name Meeting House Proprietors and their decendents. (The original 30 proprietors are listed on the deed.)

street &amp; number C/O Bertha Hanson, RD 2, Box 283

city, town Bristol N/A vicinity of state Vermont 05443

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Huntington Town Clerk's Office

street &amp; number RD 1, Box 171A

city, town Huntington state Vermont 05462

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**title Vermont Historic Sites and Structures has this property been determined eligible? yes X no  
Survey

date December 3, 1979 federal X 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 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 type="checkbox"/> moved      date _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

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

The Huntington Lower Village Church is a white, Greek Revival, gable front structure located on the main street of the quiet village of Huntington. Rectangular in shape and symmetrical in form, the wood building of post and beam construction is characterized by a central entrance, prominent pediment, and, rising from the peak of the gable roof, a three staged steeple capped by an octagonal dome. Classical details are simple and restrained and show some evidence of the emerging Italianate style.

#### Exterior

The church stands alone on its lot without the interference of outbuildings and has the same setback as the adjacent 19th century residences that line the street. Resting on a stone foundation, the one story structure measures approximately 40 by 70 feet in plan and 50 feet to the peak of its moderately pitched gable roof. Wood clapboards sheath the structure itself, while the roof is covered with the original slate laid on the diagonal on the northern side and more recently applied asphalt shingles on the southern face.

At each of the four corners of the building, pilasters support a wide entablature. The pilasters rest on a plain base and are capped with a series of simple moldings representative of a Doric capital. A full-length panel with Italianate round-headed arch decorates each of the pilasters. Horizontal flush boards fill the panels.

The entablature is carried around three sides of the building and stops below cornice returns on the back wall. An architrave, frieze and boxed cornice with fully articulated projecting eaves characterize the entablature.

The main facade of the building has an oversized central entrance with painted double-leaf doors, each detailed with six recessed vertical panels. Above the doors, to complete the configuration of the recessed entrance, are six matching panels. Pilasters that mimic those at the corners of the building flank the door and support an entablature and a denticulated cornice.

On each side of the entrance, to complete the main facade's symmetry, are tall, narrow windows with louvered blinds. Each has a cap molded lintel. The dimensions and the lintel treatment of these two windows are repeated in other windows throughout the building.

Dominating the main facade is a pedimented gable embellished with an entablature and flush board infill. The tympanum is enriched by an applied diamond form surrounding a panel of narrow clapboards and a small central applied four-sided "star". The date, 1870, is painted above this embellishment.

The two side walls of the main block of the building are identical. Each has four narrow, double-hung, rectangular windows with thirty-two panes of glass. The central twelve clear lights are surrounded by panes of rose-colored stenciled glass with a frosted overlay. The design consists of stylized flowers within a diamond pattern. The stained glass windows were installed in 1915, replacing the original clear lights.

The back of the church is devoid of openings. Cornice returns replace the pediment found on the front of the structure, although the entablature follows the raking roof line.

A brick chimney, a 20th century addition, is attached to the center of the back wall. It runs flush with the wall and pierces through the projecting cornice at the peak of the gable before rising above the roof line.

The defining architectural element of this church building is its central inset steeple which rises in three distinct stages above the main facade. The base, or first stage, is square in shape with simple pilasters supporting a more modest and scaled-down version of the entablature and projecting cornice found on the main block

**United States Department of the Interior  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

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of the building. This cube is covered with flush, horizontal boards.

The second stage is octagonal in shape. Two alternating treatments are applied to the eight faces. The north, south, east and west sides are wider than the other four and are each embellished with a blind, louvered opening. The other, narrower faces display corner pilasters separated by a narrow band of flush, horizontal boards. The entire stage is crowned by an entablature and boxed cornice similar to that of the main block of the building.

The third stage, or the bell tower, is identical to the second, only it is diminished in size and has panels of flush boards replacing the blind, louvered windows.

The tower is capped by a small, octagonal dome, sheathed in sheet metal, painted silver. It once was graced by a weathervane which was removed in 1940 for safety reasons.

**Interior**

In contrast to the Greek Revival statement of the exterior of the church, the interior details are Italianate in character. Although the interior has been altered, some notable elements remain.

A narrow entrance vestibule lit by a window at each end shields the sanctuary from the entrance. Two enclosed stairs rise along the east wall and open onto the second floor balcony. The balcony, which once housed the organ and choir, is now blocked off by wallboard and paneling and functions as a separate room. From here, stairs rise to the attic and belfry.

In the vestibule and throughout the interior, door and window moldings are grained to simulate oak and mahogany or cherry. The pews are also painted in this fashion, with top rails a darker tone.

The sanctuary itself was completely renovated in 1948. A high pulpit with flanking steps was removed as was the baptistry beneath it. Also removed were the side seats to the right of the pulpit and the railings in front of the first row of pews. The plaster and papered walls were covered with wood paneling and wallboard and the balcony was blocked off.

Today, a low step and wood paneled rail separate the pulpit area from the congregation.

The pulpit is a freestanding, carved Italianate furnishing, 3½ feet high, 4 feet wide and 2 feet deep with a raised prayerbook stand.

The ceiling is covered with pressed metal, probably not original, and the chandelier that used to suspend from the central rosette is gone. Before an oil furnace was installed in the modified crawl space below the church in 1966, two large woodstoves behind the pews with a pipe extending the length of the sanctuary were the only source of heat.

Other items of note in the sanctuary include applied brackets and raised, dark panels on the face of the balcony executed in the same dark and light graining as the rest of the original woodwork. In the center is an octagonal eight-day clock with stenciled patterns around the face.

In the attic, massive 8 and 10 inch timbers form the trusses that support the roof and the stages of the tower. The bell was cast in 1837 in West Troy, New York by Mencely & Oothout. It came from the church that originally stood on this site.

## 8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below									
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion						
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science						
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture						
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/						
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian						
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater						
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation						
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)						

Specific dates 1870

Builder/Architect unknown

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Huntington Lower Village Church, and other Greek Revival Churches found throughout the state, embody the spirit of nineteenth century Vermont and are a beloved symbol of identity and pride for Vermont and their respective towns. Relatively few, however, retain the exterior architectural integrity that the Huntington Lower Village Church displays. It is a historic landmark and visual focal point in the community.

In Vermont, the Greek Revival form for churches and other public buildings, which represented a respect for the democratic ideals of freedom of choice and religion, held on well into the last half of the nineteenth century long after popularity diminished for residential and commercial buildings. The Huntington Lower Village Church, built in 1870 and pristine in its nineteenth century appearance exemplifies this extraordinary appeal.

Variations on the pedimented gable, temple front and steeple found on this church can be found in towns and villages throughout Vermont. Construction dates range from as early as 1830 when Greek elements began to replace the more delicate Federal details on the traditional Wren-Gibbs church types, until the turn of the century. The church in the neighboring village of Huntington Center was built in 1864. Although smaller in scale, it displays similar features and the first two stages of the tower are identical.

The deed to the property for this church was granted in 1836 to the thirty-nine original subscribers and their descendants for "the express purpose of inculcating Morality, Virtue, and Religion". The original meeting house built on the lot was a one story structure with a square belfry. Methodists, Free Will Baptists and other denominations held services there until 1869 when the congregation outgrew the building. It was sold to the town for the use as a townhall and moved several rods north. Construction on the present church began soon thereafter. With the assistance of some contracted labor and much volunteer help, the building was completed in 1870 for a total cost of \$9,000.

Throughout nineteenth century Vermont, the meeting house, built in the heart of the community, was the center of social, religious and civic life. Today, the Huntington Lower Village Church rises unchanged above a scattering of nineteenth century houses surrounding it in the rural village, a visual testimony to the era in which it was built. The history of this property from 1839 on reflects the changes in the culture of this and other small Vermont communities over 150 years. Today, after a series of minor alterations, the church remains beautifully intact, but is rarely used. The effects of the gradual separation of social, religious and civic elements of our society, the changes in the religious societies that patronized the church, and the growth of surrounding towns with needs for separate, more convenient places of worship, all contributed to the abandonment of this building. It remains, however, the most prominent and symbolic landmark in the village, giving what would otherwise be a handful of houses the identity of a community.

## **9. Major Bibliographical References**

1. Hallock, Olga M., ed. Huntington, Vt. Bicentennial Committee Publication, 1976.
2. Hanson, Bertha B., "History of the Huntington Lower Village Church," Unpublished three page typewritten notes.
3. Rann, W. S., History of Chittenden County Vt. D. Mason & Co., Publishers, Syracuse, N.Y., 1886.

## **10. Geographical Data**

Acreage of nominated property 4 of an acre

Quadrangle name Huntington, Vermont

Quadrangle scale 1: 24,000

UTM References

A 

1	8	6	6	1	0	3	1	4	1	0
Zone	Easting	Northing								

B 

Zone	Easting	Northing								

C 


D 


E 


F 


G 


H 


### **Verbal boundary description and justification**

The nominated property is a square lot approximately 132 feet X 132 feet. The boundaries are contiguous with the property owned by the 39 Meeting House Proprietors found in book 7, pgs. 402-403 in the Town of Huntington Land Records. (See continuation sheet.)

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

state	N/A	code	county	code
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state		code	county	code
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## **11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Emily E. Wadhams, Historic Preservation Consultant

organization Self-employed date January 9, 1984

street & number 405 South Union Street telephone (802) 658-4243

city or town Burlington state Vermont

## **12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification**

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national  state  local

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

Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer signature Emily E. Wadhams

title Director, Vermont Division for Historic Preservation date 6/13/84

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

Entered in the  
National Register

date

8-23-84

J. Alcores Byers  
keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

**United States Department of the Interior  
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Continuation sheet   Boundary

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**Boundary Justification**

The nominated property is the original lot deeded to the proprietors of the Church, and is sufficient to convey the historic setting of the building and to protect it.