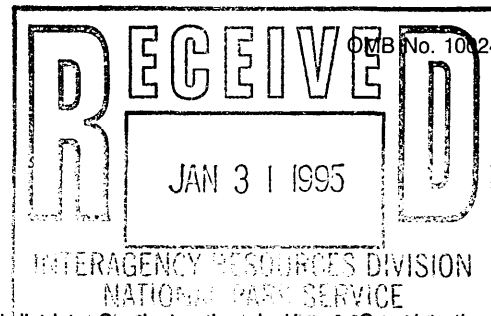


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form



185
OMB No. 1012-0018

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

1. Name of Property

historic name BEAVER MEADOW UNION CHAPEL

other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number State Route 132 (Beaver Meadow Road) N/A not for publication

city or town Norwich N/A vicinity

state Vermont code _____ county Windsor code 027 zip code 05055

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

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

[Signature] 1/26/95
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

Vermont State Historic Preservation Office
State of Federal agency and bureau

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

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

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

for
[Signature] Signature of the Keeper Entered in the Date of Action
National Register 3/9/95

Beaver Meadow Union Chapel
Name of Property

Windsor County, VT
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

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

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

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

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1		buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
1		Total

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

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

RELIGION/religious facility

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

RELIGION/religious facility

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

NO STYLE

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation concrete

walls weatherboard

roof asphalt

other brick

Narrative Description

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

See continuation sheets for narrative description.

Beaver Meadow Union Chapel
Name of Property

Windsor County, VT
County and State

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

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

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

Criteria Considerations

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

Property is:

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

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Religion

Architecture

Period of Significance

1915-1944

Significant Dates

1915

1927

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Unknown

Narrative Statement of Significance

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

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

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

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

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

Primary location of additional data:

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

Name of repository:

Personal papers - Elsie Sniffin

Beaver Meadow Union Chapel
Name of Property

Windsor County, VT
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property approximately 0.11 acre

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1

1	8	7	1	1	3	7	0	4	8	4	8	8	4	0
Zone	Easting				Northing									

3

Zone	Easting				Northing									

2

Zone	Easting				Northing									

4

Zone	Easting				Northing									

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

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

Boundary Justification

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

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Marlene Elizabeth Heck

organization Hardy Heck Moore & Assoc. date March 1994

street & number 8 Blueberry Meadow Road telephone 603/448-9791

city or town Lebanon state NH zip code 03766

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

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

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

Photographs

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

Additional items

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

Property Owner

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

name Beaver Meadow Union Chapel Association, Inc.

street & number P. O. Box 815 telephone _____

city or town Norwich state VT zip code 05055

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

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

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BEAVER MEADOW UNION CHAPEL
WEST NORWICH, WINDSOR COUNTY, VERMONT

The Beaver Meadow Union Chapel stands in picturesque isolation in the rural hamlet of Beaver Meadow, approximately 5.4 miles northwest of Norwich, VT. Constructed in 1915, the 1-1/2-story, frame chapel is free of stylistic trim and detail, yet its gable-end orientation, steeply pitched roof, and truncated bell tower recall the traditional New England ecclesiastical architectural tradition. A 1-1/2-story lateral kitchen ell added in 1936 replicates the building material, form and trim of the earlier single-room building. Beaver Meadow Union Chapel retains most of its original exterior and interior architectural fabric and details, which strengthens the integrity of setting and association. Only the chapel building and its associated lawn are included in the nominated acreage of approximately 0.11 acre.

EXTERIOR

Beaver Meadow Union Church stands on the north side of Beaver Meadow Road (State Route 132) at the foot of Howard Hill near Mitchell Brook. The Beaver Meadow Cemetery, founded in the 19th century and now closed to further burial, is located on a rise to the west of the chapel. The building is set back a short distance from the road and sits perpendicular to the paved surface. A small cleared lawn encircles the building and defines the property boundary.

The Beaver Meadow Union Chapel, which dates from 1915, does not display typical regional religious architectural elements -- found on numerous Union churches of varying styles throughout the state -- such as lancet windows, pilasters, porticos or formal porches, or entry towers. Yet the Beaver Meadow Union Chapel unambiguously discloses its

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**BEAVER MEADOW UNION CHAPEL
WEST NORWICH, WINDSOR COUNTY, VERMONT**

ecclesiastical function by its gable-end entry, the steep pitch of the roof and open bell tower, which is capped by a short pyramidal-shaped cap.

The frame, rectangularly-shaped building sits above a shallow crawl space and is underpinned by a concrete foundation that was poured in 1981. Clapboards cover the entire building, and unmolded boards serve throughout as cornerboards, bargeboards, and door and window architraves. A brick chimney (rebuilt in 1981), which ventilates the wood-burning stove, breaks the roofline on the east elevation (side). Asphalt shingles cover the roof of both the original structure and the kitchen addition.

Entry into the chapel is made at the symmetrically-organized, three-bay principal elevation (south). Single-light, double-hung sash windows flank the six-panel double-doored entry. A concrete pad with cast-iron railings is set directly in front of the doorway and functions as a porch. The half-story above the entry is opened by a single-light, double-hung sash window. Just above the entry, the short, open bell tower straddles the roof ridge. The bell, which still signals the start of services, is original to the building and was purchased from Sears, Roebuck.

On the east elevation (side) four single-light, double-hung sash windows set in the wall at regular intervals illuminate the chapel interior. One centrally-placed single-light, double-hung sash window, which provides light to the chancel, is set into the north elevation (rear) wall. West elevation (side) windows mirror those of the opposing wall, with the exception of the window that was lost in the construction of the kitchen wing.

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**BEAVER MEADOW UNION CHAPEL
WEST NORWICH, WINDSOR COUNTY, VERMONT**

The 1936 lateral kitchen addition is attached to the original building at the rear of the west elevation. Separate access directly into the kitchen is provided on the south elevation (front) by a wood, five-step stair that leads to the six-panel door. Single-light, double-hung sash windows flank this entry. Two single-light, double-hung sash windows, one placed directly above the other, open the west (side) wall of the kitchen addition. The north elevation (rear) is pierced by one single-light, double-hung sash window.

As has been the tradition with most New England religious structures since the late 19th century, the Beaver Meadow Union Chapel is painted white. (Butler, "Another City upon a Hill": 31)

INTERIOR

The chapel interior is a single, large rectangularly-shaped room. Rows of fixed pews - three rows on the east side; four rows on the west side - create a center aisle. Tradition relates that the pews, which are actually long wood benches with backs, known as settees, came from Dartmouth College. Windsor side chairs, found at the front and back of the rows of pews, provide additional seating. Varnished matchboard siding covers all walls and the ceiling. The flooring consists of yellow pine tongue-and-groove boards. Walls are decorated with various commemorative hangings.

The chancel, defined by a raised platform, runs the width of the building at its north end. The podium is faced with the same matchboard siding that sheaths the

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BEAVER MEADOW UNION CHAPEL
WEST NORWICH, WINDSOR COUNTY, VERMONT

other interior surfaces. A wood lectern obtained from the old Baptist congregation is found on the podium, as is an organ whose specific history is not known.

A wood burning stove, the chapel's only heat source, stands in front of and to the right of the sanctuary. The brick chimney flue, which was rebuilt in 1981, is enhanced by bricks set in the form of a Latin cross. The door leading into the kitchen wing is found on the opposite wall.

From the church interior one steps into the kitchen, a large single room that is covered by unpainted plasterboard. All counters, shelving and appliances are original.

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BEAVER MEADOW UNION CHAPEL
NORWICH, WINDSOR COUNTY, VERMONT

The Beaver Meadow Union Chapel qualifies for national significance under National Register of Historic Places Criteria A for its significance in religion; under National Register of Historic Places Criteria C the building qualifies for state significance as a representative example of a distinctive building type. Taking its name from the small hamlet in which it stands, the Beaver Meadow Union Chapel was organized in November 1915 through the efforts of Margaret Kerr, a New York City schoolteacher who had retired to the area some eight months before. This small chapel and its associated congregation also inspired the creation of the nationally-known Home Prayers program written and distributed by Reverend Allen W. Clark, who was affiliated with the chapel from 1926-1931. The Beaver Meadow Union Chapel possesses architectural significance as an exemplary model of a rural chapel. Built by those who would comprise the chapel's first congregation, the chapel illustrates a distillation of architectural elements derived from New England's well-established 18th- and 19th-century religious architectural traditions. The Beaver Meadow Union Chapel stands largely as it was built, with only a 1936 kitchen addition and minor alterations. The building remains in good condition with many of its original furnishings, which were donated by other area institutions, remaining intact. The structure's period of significance, 1915-1944, brackets its life as the central religious and social institution for a rural Vermont community.

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BEAVER MEADOW UNION CHAPEL
NORWICH, WINDSOR COUNTY, VERMONT

Religion

The Beaver Meadow Union Chapel stands on the north side of the Beaver Meadow Road, approximately at the mid point between Norwich and Sharon, Vermont. Prior to the construction of the chapel, the Baptist parsonage, and later, a cider mill stood on the site. The Beaver Meadow Union Chapel was the third religious structure erected in the hamlet. A Baptist congregation of approximately 125 members put up the first church in 1833. When the congregation moved to Sharon in 1871, they literally took the church with them, as materials from the building were used to construct a new parsonage in Sharon. In 1836 the Methodist congregation built a second church. A 1906 fire destroyed the building, which had stood unused for many years. With no religious structure available, worship services were held in the school house.

Margaret Kerr, a New York City boarding-school teacher who retired to the Beaver Meadow area in 1915, is recognized as the person most responsible for the organization and construction of the Beaver Meadow Union Chapel. In Kerr's recollections, written in 1938 when she was 80, she wrote of her desire to buy a farm after leaving her teaching position. Because New York state farm lands were priced beyond the reach of a retired teacher, she responded to a farm agency advertisement that listed affordable Vermont properties. Arriving in Norwich on a cold and icy day in February 1915, Kerr took lodging in an unnamed hotel, which she described as a "poor place." (Kerr:1) Within a few days, Kerr had spent a few hundred dollars of her savings for what she described as "a little house, with a long shed

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NORWICH, WINDSOR COUNTY, VERMONT

attached, a tumble down barn and several acres of the poorest land anyone ever tried to raise hay on," and enthusiastically took up the rhythms and activities of a farming life. (Kerr: 2)

According to her account, Kerr's first thoughts of building a chapel came during a visit from her sister. A "drunken brawl" on the road in front of Kerr's house caused her sister, (Elizabeth) Mary to identify the area as "a rather rough neighborhood," and to caution Kerr that she "was not safe up here all by yourself." (Kerr: 3) Concerned that her sister would leave if such altercations continued, Kerr resolved, "I decided to try and stop it." (Kerr: 3) Her first effort consisted in visiting "Jones," who along with an "Irish gentleman" named O'Rorke, were the principal participants in the extravagant drinking bouts and resultant fights. Kerr writes that as a result of her visit "Though they continued drinking they did it in their homes and there was no more quarrelling on my road." (Kerr: 4)

But the episodes caused Kerr to reflect on the nature of her neighbors' lives, which she characterized as "very poor, a good deal of drinking, and rough everywhere." "What," she pondered, "could one do to raise the standard of living?" (Kerr: 4) Kerr's reflections led her to recommend the erection of a new building to her neighbors. "This community should have a more dignified place to worship in, a Chapel, where one could sit comfortably and enjoy the service. I commend this to you to think over," she recalled proposing. (Kerr: 4) According to Kerr, her neighbors contacted her within a few days of her suggestion to respond that they were "too poor to build anything. . .none of us has any money but you." Kerr replied that her resources were limited as well, "But if you really want the Chapel I think we can do it, if you will all work for it. . .We will all work, haul lumber, build or dig." (Kerr: 5)

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Within a month the congregation raised \$200 in contributions, which was judged a suitable amount “to put up a plain building as they [the male congregants] themselves would do the work.” (Kerr: 5) The project, while headed by Kerr, was very much a communal effort. Aaron and James Edmonds donated the land on which the chapel was built. Kerr, along with other women from the community, fanned out to solicit building funds, and men from the Meadow donated their talents and time to erect the structure. In November 1915 the chapel’s overseers, the Beaver Meadow Union Chapel Association, filed their Constitution with the Vermont Secretary of State. Article I, Section 2 of the Constitution noted that “The purpose of this Association shall be to further the religious interests in the Community, and to support the Sunday School as established by the Dartmouth Christian Association [and] to build and maintain a Chapel to be known as the Beaver Meadow Union Chapel.” The inaugural service at Beaver Meadow Union Chapel was held on December 19, 1915.

Kerr’s solution — that of rectifying and reforming human behavior through religious action — falls squarely within the early 20th-century Protestant tradition of the Social Gospel movement. Growing out of the various 19th-century social reform ministries, such as the temperance, abolitionist and child welfare crusades, the Social Gospel movement stressed the social commitment of Christianity to improve the well being of all. According to historian Catherine Albanese, proponents of the Social Gospel movement envisioned “the true task of Christians as a job of rescue of the poor and renewal of the political, economic, and social order.” (Albanese, America: Religions and Religion: 106) The Social Gospel was largely an

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urban response to the appalling conditions of the underclass created by industrialization, the cruel circumstances of slum and tenement life, and the disturbing treatment of newly arrived immigrants, children and freed blacks. Perhaps Kerr, who had lived both in New York City and Denver, had imbibed the widely-published and popularly preached lessons of the Social Gospel from her years in the city. It was a religious ideal easily accepted in the isolated New England hamlet, for it could ultimately be traced to Puritanism. (Ahlstrom, A Religious History of the American People: 787).

The Beaver Meadow Union Chapel became the center of social life, as well as religious life, for the rural community. Kerr noted that "It was proposed [soon after the Chapel was completed] that one night a week we should have the Chapel open for reading and recreation. We had some magazines and picture papers." (Kerr: 6) Kerr reminisced, "Knowing the social side was often an inducement," she offered refreshments after Sunday services at her home. (Kerr: 6) Post-service refreshments expanded to church suppers that raised funds for the Chapel. The increased social use of the chapel likely accounts for the 1936 kitchen addition, which was donated by Calvin and Fanny Sawyer in honor of their son, Joseph C. Sawyer.

Beaver Meadow Union Chapel has never had a permanent minister; rather, area clergymen volunteered to hold services. During the chapel's first few decades the Rectors of St. Thomas Episcopal Church in nearby Hanover, New Hampshire served the small Beaver Meadow congregation. Reverend John Thomson Dallas, who would later be elected Bishop of the Diocese of New Hampshire, was affiliated with Beaver Meadow Chapel from 1920-1925. He was followed by Reverend Allen W. Clark, who served as Rector of St. Thomas Church from 1926 until 1931. From 1931 until 1939, Reverend John Upham Harris served the Beaver

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Meadow congregation in addition to his duties as Rector at St. Thomas. Reverend Hodder, who was the last minister to serve for an extended period at the chapel, succeeded Rev. Harris at both congregations.

Reverend Clark had a particularly significant and long-term association with the small community beyond his pastoral duties. After completing the 11 a.m. service in Hanover, he drove some seven miles over mostly narrow country roads to the Beaver Meadow Chapel, often accompanied by his wife and a few Dartmouth faculty and students. In his account of the period, Clark wrote that during the warm summer months he often would preach to some twenty to thirty worshippers, but that winter's deep snows and piercing winds often kept members of the congregation from attending Sunday services. While visiting the homes of his Beaver Meadow congregation, Clark says he noticed that each household received a copy of the Sears, Roebuck catalogue. If Sears managed to reach the homes of those who could not travel to one of its retail stores, he reasoned, why not try to reach the homes of his congregation by mail? Clark hit on the idea of a ministry-by-mail that some at first humorously referred to as the "Sears, Roebuck Religion."

The following winter Clark reduced his Beaver Meadow Chapel schedule to one service per month. For the remaining weeks he prepared a "service" consisting of an opening and closing prayer, a Bible reading and a brief sermon, or reflection, on the reading. Initially known as "Family Prayers," Clark mimeographed the service and mailed it to his Beaver Meadow congregation in hope that they would gather in each other's homes for weekly worship services. His "Sears, Roebuck Religion" worked so successfully he decided to expand its use to

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**BEAVER MEADOW UNION CHAPEL
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those, such as the elderly, ill, or imprisoned, who were unable to regularly attend Sunday services. For the next fifty years, Clark prepared the weekly services, now named "Home Prayers," for national distribution to hundreds of churches. He retired from the ministry in 1958 to dedicate his attentions full time to the preparation of the Home Prayers whose circulation had grown by that date to 16,000 subscribers representing 558 churches. Clark stepped down from editing duties in 1977 and turned the publication over to a Board of Trustees. At the time of Rev. Clark's retirement 23,000 subscribers in 850 churches received his weekly Home Prayers. (The 50th Anniversary Book of Home Prayers: 1-11) As of December 1993, Home Prayers were still prepared for weekly distribution to subscribers.

Professors and students from Dartmouth College were active members of the Beaver Meadow congregation in its first two decades. One Dartmouth faculty, Professor Louie Clark Mathewson of the mathematics department, served as the Beaver Meadow Chapel organist from 1926 until 1951. The College professors and Hanover ministers who led the Sunday afternoon services or provided music often would invite students to accompany them. Students, particularly those affiliated with the Dartmouth Christian Association, became spirited members of the congregation and often visited the Beaver Meadow school where they gave the young students Bible instruction, played games and told stories. For an "Old Home Weekend" held July 19-20, 1975, the Beaver Meadow Chapel Association contacted a number of the former students who had enthusiastically participated in the life of the congregation during their Dartmouth years. A few of the responses of those who could not attend, but who wrote of their experiences of the place, are held in the records of the Beaver Meadow Chapel

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Association. Reverend James F. McElroy, Dartmouth class of 1931, wrote that at one point over fifty Dartmouth students were involved with various programs at the chapel and school, ranging from providing the entertainment at the chicken pie suppers to helping with barn repairs to actively encouraging the Beaver Meadow students to continue their education. McElroy credited his work with the congregation under the guidance of Rev. Clark as being responsible for his decision to enter the ministry. Parker T. Hart, Dartmouth class of 1933, who was actively involved with the Beaver Meadow Union Chapel during his junior and senior years, would go on to a thirty-one year career with the Foreign Service, including an appointment as US Ambassador to Turkey. The invitation to return for Old Home Week moved Walter B. Wiley, Dartmouth class of 1918, to provide a detailed account of his affiliation with the Beaver Meadow congregation from 1916-1918. Wiley recalled his first visit to the new chapel and in a rambling narrative described the group effort to provide Sunday services for the remote community.

I conducted my first service in the new Chapel on September 23rd [1916] at 2:30. My roommate, Clayton Wallace, who later became the Director of the National Council for Temperance, helped me in that first service. Later Mason North, Harold Blanton and another freshman named Corbin made up the team, and came out in turn. Thirty-one people came out to that first service to see what the new team could do. . . People were so hospitable that we were dated ahead with dinner invitations sometimes four or five weeks in homes all over the Meadow. The service followed at 2:30, and Sunday School after that. . . It wasn't always easy to get from Hanover to the Chapel. On Dec. 2, 1916 my record says, temperatures 24 degrees in the morning, 10 degrees at night. It took us three hours to break out twelve inches of soft snow from Hanover to the Wallaces [Beaver Meadow family]. . . Eight people came out, trusting us to make it. About once in six weeks we brought out a party of students for an evening of entertainment. . . We built up quite a little library for the Chapel in those two years. My finances were getting more and more slender. In the

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fall of 1917 I decided that I would have to earn something more than I could by . . . taking in a student pastorate for the winter, as I had for the summer of 1917. One Sunday I told the folks at the Chapel good-bye and the reason why. After Sunday School several of the men called me aside. "We can't do much," they said, "but if we raise five dollars a week, would you be willing to continue to come to Beaver Meadow?"

Wiley accepted their offer and remained until he graduated.

During much of the 1940s through the 1950s the congregation was inactive and the chapel seldom was open. For a twenty-year period beginning in the late 1950s services were held sporadically, in celebration of the holidays or special occasions. The congregation has gathered regularly since the late 1970s. Services are held at 3 p.m. on the third Sunday of the month in all but January and February, when weather and snow conditions make travel and parking especially difficult. As it has from the beginning, the nondenominational congregation invites area ministers and priests to lead its monthly services. The Beaver Meadow Union Chapel Association continues to oversee the operation and maintenance of the building and congregation.

Architecture

The custom of a Union church was well established in Vermont, where the population was sparsely distributed across the largely rural state. These small communities often lacked the necessary population and resources to support a full-time minister and the expenses of parsonage and church upkeep. The solution of a Union church in which visiting clergy, principally from the Protestant denominations, held regularly scheduled services, was an

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ideal one under such conditions. The state's first Union church was established in 1783 in East Poultney by Congregationalists who had separated from a Bennington assembly and joined with the Baptists. (Vermont Division for Historic Preservation, The Historic Architecture of Rutland County: 222) Union churches varied in architectural expression from the log church erected in East Hubbardton in 1787 (Vermont Division for Historic Preservation, The Historic Architecture of Rutland County: 142) to the boxy and spare Greek Revival-style structures found in Monkton and New Haven Mills (Vermont Division for Historic Preservation, The Historic Architecture of Addison County: 172; 180).

The latter two examples illustrate the late 18th-century transformation in meetinghouse design in which the principal elevation and entry was moved from the building's long elevation to its short side. Such an alteration in orientation forced an elaboration of the facade, which frequently was enhanced with steeples, towers, pilasters and handsome pedimented doorways. Historians have seen in these architectural modifications "the final architectural conversion of the Puritan meetinghouse into a church." (Sweeney, "Meetinghouse, Town Houses, and Churches": 78) Importantly, the transformations took place at time when, increasingly, congregations moved the secular, public functions out of the meetinghouse, leaving them to develop solely as houses of worship. (Sweeney, "Meetinghouse, Town Houses, and Churches": 68)

In the Beaver Meadow Union Chapel we find the pairing of the essential formal ecclesiastical elements that defined New England's religious buildings from the late 18th century on, with a decorative sensibility derived from an earlier period of building. Perhaps

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because of limited funds, perhaps because of temperament, perhaps because of inherited architectural and religious ideals, the chapel's builders eschewed ornament and trim in favor of an "iconographically plain style" that recalled the state's earliest meetinghouse designs. (Sweeney, "Meetinghouse, Town Houses, and Churches": 61) The resultant building was a distillation of the New England ecclesiastical model to its fundamental components of short-axis entry, sharply inclined roof and belfry.

The Beaver Meadow Union Chapel's regionally evocative form and picturesque setting caught the eye of the nationally renown Regionalist artist, Paul Sample, who featured the chapel in at least two canvases. Familiar with the New England landscape and regional culture from a period of study at Dartmouth College and the many trips to Vermont to visit his wife's family, in 1938 Sample was given an opportunity for an extended study of the area in when he was named artist-in-residence at Dartmouth College. A 1939 painting titled, *Beaver Meadow* featured the chapel and its immediate landscape. Assessed by critic Robert McGrath as "arguably [one of two of] his greatest paintings and among the most enduring images produced by Regionalism," the painting is owned by the Hood Museum of Art, Dartmouth College. McGrath suggests the painting "affords a more complex, even somewhat enigmatic, image of Arcadia."

The foreground figures stare passively in opposition to one another. Their obvious alienation from the splendor of the landscape is unsettling. Intended to represent the Sabbath in rural Vermont, the canvas also juxtaposes a horse and carriage with something new and intrusive, the automobile. Sensing the collapse of 1930s ideology (redemption through community and interdependence rather than competitive individualism), Sample introduces elements of alienation and disintegration into one of his

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most profoundly evocative works. His mastery of the regionalist aesthetic, his capacity to compose and orchestrate the figural and landscape elements into a striking unity, the graphic quality of strong forms silhouetted against the starkly reductive fields, have never been more fully brought to bear.

According to one current, long-time resident and Beaver Meadow Union Chapel congregant, some of the figures Sample used to articulate his message of opposition and transformation lived in the area and were readily recognizable. The artist featured the chapel again in his *Christmas Service* painting of an unknown date. Eschewing the bold clarity of the *Beaver Meadow* canvas, *Christmas Service* demonstrated Sample's move away from Regionalism as he rendered all forms, figures and the landscape in a sharp, abstract hand.

The Beaver Meadow Chapel is in good condition and remains in near-original form, complete with its donated pews, organ and pulpit.

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Verbal Boundary Description

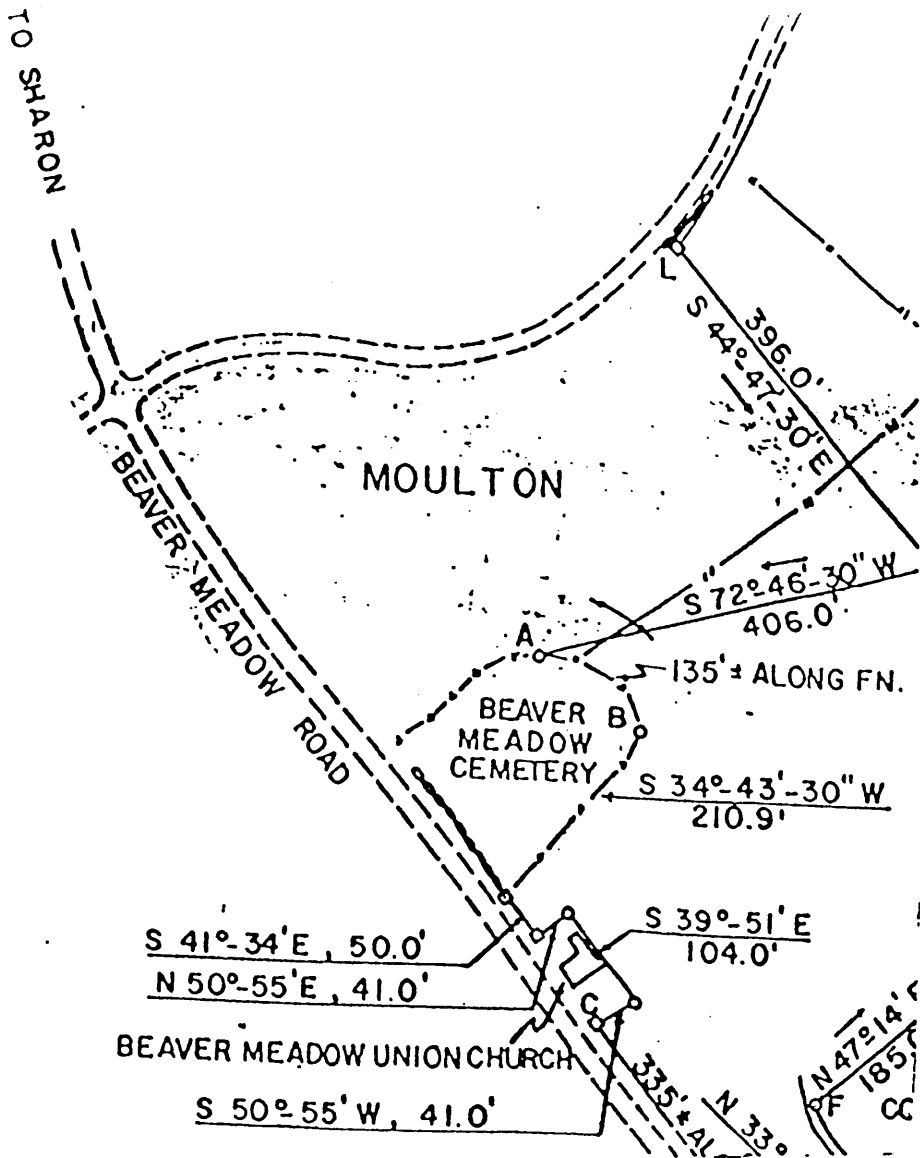
The nominated property, which includes the Beaver Meadow Union Chapel building and its associated lawn, is a rectangular-shaped parcel of approximately 0.11 acre on State Route 132.

See attached map for complete property boundaries.

Boundary Justification

The Beaver Meadow Union Chapel boundaries approximately delineate the original building site. Boundaries have been drawn to include the original chapel building and the lawn surrounding the structure.

BEAVER MEADOW UNION CHAPEL
 NORWICH, WINDSOR COUNTY, VT



LEGEND :

- EXIST I. P. ●
- SET I. P. ○
- EXIST. GRANITE BOUND ■
- SET GRANITE BOUND. □
- DRILL HOLE ●
- WIRE FENCE — — — — —
- ELECTRIC FENCE — — — — —
- STONE WALL — — — — —
- UTILITY POLE ⊗

PROPERTY OF
COLIN D. & ROSEMARY G. CAMPBELL
 NORWICH, VT.

0 200 400 600 800 1000

SCALE : 1" = 200'

DECEMBER 1978 PROJ. NO. 87478

T & M SURVEYS, INC. LEBANON, N.H.