

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

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**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

received **MAY 9 1983**

date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

**1. Name**

historic Court House Square

and/or common City Hall Park Historic District (preferred)

**2. Location**

street & number Church, College, Main and St. Paul Streets N/A not for publication

city, town Burlington N/A vicinity of

state Vermont code 50 county Chittenden code 007

**3. Classification**

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

**4. Owner of Property**

name See Continuation Sheet

street & number

city, town \_\_\_\_\_ vicinity of \_\_\_\_\_ state \_\_\_\_\_

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Office of the City Clerk, City Hall

street & number Church Street

city, town Burlington state Vermont

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**

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

date 1977-1979  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records Vermont Division for Historic Preservation

city, town Montpelier state Vermont

## 7. Description

### Condition

excellent  
 good  
 fair

deteriorated  
 ruins  
 unexposed

### Check one

unaltered  
 altered

### Check one

original site  
 moved date \_\_\_\_\_

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

The city of Burlington is situated on a height of land overlooking a broad bay on Lake Champlain, one of America's largest freshwater lakes. The City Hall Park Historic District occupies a level piece of land approximately halfway between the waterfront and the top of the hill. Comprised of two dozen buildings set around three sides of a square park and down one block of an adjoining street, it is the nucleus of a twenty square block central business district which serves a surrounding metropolitan area of more than 100,000 people. The primarily 2-1/2 to 3-1/2 story brick and usually contiguous buildings of the district date from the early 19th through early 20th centuries and range in style from the Federal to Neo-Classical with a number of outstanding Victorian era structures.

The buildings enclosing the west side of the park, along St. Paul Street, are not in the district because they are already listed on the National Register of Historic Places as part of the Wells Richardson Historic District. Adjoining to the south is the Battery Street Historic District, a mixed commercial and residential neighborhood extending up from the waterfront. To the east and north of the park lies Church Street, downtown Burlington's busiest retail and commercial street. Although it is historically an extension of City Hall Park, and possesses some outstanding 19th century architecture, it was converted to an outdoor pedestrian mall in 1981. The consequent addition of steel and glass canopies to many of the buildings and the addition to a portion of the street of unifying contemporary pedestrian landscaping elements now define it as a separate entity, the Church Street Marketplace.

The center of the City Hall Park Historic District is the park itself, a full square city block landscaped with a variety of shade and ornamental trees, a fountain and other landscape features. To the north, across College Street, and to the south, across Main Street, the park is enclosed by continuous walls of three-story brick commercial facades, punctuated in each case at the west end by large striking buildings. Along the eastern border of the park sit four buildings with formal frontal orientation on Church Street, but with fully articulated facades on the park as well. Extending to the south from the park, along the west side of Church Street, is a row of mixed commercial and residential buildings, including some of the oldest in the district.

The architecture within the district is extremely varied both in style and form. Although facades are generally rectilinear, roof profiles range from flat to gabled to mansarded, with such distinctive features as gable parapets, Flemish wall dormers, cupolas, towers and even a roof garden, all in evidence. Styles include Federal and Greek Revival from the early 19th century, as well as a broad range of Victorian commercial designs, including Italianate, Romanesque, Georgian and Second Empire; excellent examples of the Moderne and Neo-Classical movements of the 1920's are also represented.

Despite this great diversity of style, several common physical features serve to give the district a large degree of visual cohesiveness. Foremost among these is the almost uniform use of brick as a construction material, frequently with extensive stone trim and decorative detail. The only exceptions are the marble-veneered Merchant's Bank (#9) and several wood frame structures on lower Church Street. A second factor is the compactness of spacing and the relative uniformity of height of the buildings which border the park. Including the portion of the adjacent Wells-Richardson Historic District on St. Paul Street, the widest gap between any two of the score or more buildings enclosing the park is only a few feet, and all but three or four of these buildings stand between 2-1/2 and 3-1/2 stories tall.

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- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <p>1. Merchants National Bank<br/>164 College Street<br/>Burlington, Vermont 05401</p> <p>2. Merchants Properties, Inc.<br/>123 Church Street<br/>Burlington, Vermont 05401</p> <p>Burlington Savings Bank<br/>148 College Street<br/>Burlington, Vermont 05401</p> <p>3. Burlington Savings Bank<br/>148 College Street<br/>Burlington, Vermont 05401</p> <p>4. Burlington Savings Bank<br/>148 College Street<br/>Burlington, Vermont 05401</p> <p>5. Burlington Savings Bank<br/>148 College Street<br/>Burlington, Vermont 05401</p> <p>6. Burlington Savings Bank<br/>148 College Street<br/>Burlington, Vermont 05401</p> <p>7. City of Burlington<br/>c/o City Clerk<br/>City Hall<br/>Burlington, Vermont 05401</p> <p>8. Merchants Properties, Inc.<br/>123 Church Street<br/>Burlington, Vermont 05401</p> <p>9. Merchants Properties, Inc.<br/>123 Church Street<br/>Burlington, Vermont 05401</p> <p>10. City of Burlington<br/>c/o City Clerk<br/>City Hall<br/>Burlington, Vermont 05401</p> <p>11. City of Burlington<br/>c/o City Clerk<br/>City Hall<br/>Burlington, Vermont 05401</p> | <p>12. Perei-Bloom Associates<br/>129 Main Street<br/>Burlington, Vermont 05401</p> <p>13. William and Alice O'Brien<br/>56 Wildwood Drive<br/>Burlington, Vermont 05401<br/>(135-137, 143-145½ Main Street)</p> <p>Lawrence L. Rozzi<br/>54 Brewer Parkway<br/>South Burlington, Vermont 05401<br/>(139-141 Main Street)</p> <p>14. Flynn Theatre for the Performing Arts<br/>153 Main Street<br/>Burlington, Vermont 05401</p> <p>15. Phillip S. and Mary S. George<br/>P.O. Box 853<br/>Rutland, Vermont 05702</p> <p>16. Phillip S. and Mary S. George<br/>P.O. Box 853<br/>Rutland, Vermont 05702</p> <p>17. John R. Hill<br/>167 Main Street<br/>Burlington, Vermont 05401</p> <p>18. David B. and Louise K. Dubrul<br/>500 Pine Street<br/>Burlington, Vermont 05401</p> <p>19. David B. and Louise K. Dubrul<br/>500 Pine Street<br/>Burlington, Vermont 05401</p> <p>20. David B. and Louise K. Dubrul<br/>500 Pine Street<br/>Burlington, Vermont 05401</p> <p>21. David B. and Louise K. Dubrul<br/>500 Pine Street<br/>Burlington, Vermont 05401</p> <p>22. John J. Flynn Estate<br/>P.O. Box 1025<br/>Burlington, Vermont 05402</p> |
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23. Lionel Fleischer  
Wilson Hotel  
189 Church Street  
Burlington, Vermont 05401

24. Lionel Fleischer  
Wilson Hotel  
189 Church Street  
Burlington, Vermont 05401

01/18/84 12/31/84  
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Within the district there are three individual buildings which stand out as focal points, not only because they are the district's three largest structures, but also because of their visually strategic placement within the parkscape. City Hall takes full advantage of its central location and dual orientation on both the park and Church Street by presenting identical elaborately-detailed facades to both. The Burlington Savings Bank, is a high style Flemish Revival building with a prominent corner turret which emphasizes its corner location and provides a strong visual terminus to the streetscape along the north side of the park. The bright Art Deco marquee on the Flynn Theater is another of the district's distinctive architectural features.

The district has steadily evolved in appearance since the 1790's, when the town proprietors first set the park aside as a public common and erected the first county courthouse on the present site of City Hall. Known throughout the last century as Court House Square, it attracted commercial development from its earliest years, and was the core around which the city's central business district ultimately grew. Although no pre-Civil War commercial buildings survive in unaltered form, the park's general character has changed little since the 1830's, when continuous walls of three-story brick facades first enclosed it. A continual process of redevelopment, by which newer commercial blocks have gradually replaced older ones, accounts for the present diversity of styles and age of the district's architecture. The downtown area has never experienced a major fire. Most of the building facades in the district retain their original appearance above the street level; unfortunately, most of the storefronts are not original.

Descriptions of individual buildings are as follows:

1. Second Merchants Bank (164 College Street)

The complex organization of this old bank facade is typical of the late Victorian period. The extensive granite trim is carved with stylized curvilinear foliage, making this the only example of Sullivanesque architecture in the city, and perhaps in the state. Similar massing and decorative masonry facades give the building a close visual relationship with #2, with which it shares a modern storefront of grey and brown granite. It was built in 1895 to plans by Sydney Greene of Burlington, who also supervised its construction.

The facade employs a variety of masonry materials with a generally horizontal emphasis. The second story is faced with a carefully-worked veneer of Barre granite which articulates a band of windows in a rectilinear frame of mullions, sills, transoms, and lintels, enriched with dentillation and side pilasters with "woven vine" motif caps. The third and fourth stories are faced with tinted brick and framed by piers which rise through the cornice to serve as imposts for a pedimented false front with stone coping. Third story windows have carved foliate enrichment on the stone

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lintels, while five fourth story windows are banded together as one group, with attached columns in between and a carved stone surround bordering the entire opening. The tympanum of the pediment has a projecting foliate-enriched stone basin with brick segmental arch above. The overall effect is highly ornamental but retains a large degree of order and symmetry.

**2. Burlington Trust Co. Building (162 College Street)**

This narrow, four-story rectangular block has a facade of rock-faced local redstone constructed in an unusual Romanesque Revival style. It was built in 1891 for the Burlington Trust Company from plans by Clellan W. Fisher. A similarity of massing, style, and a common storefront of polished granite create a strong visual bond between this building and #1 to the east.

Fenestration is flat-headed on the second story, and round-headed with brownstone voussoirs on the third and fourth stories. Below the fourth story is an unusual checkerboard pattern frieze of inlaid red and white ashlar; a similar patterned inlay enriches a small pediment over the fourth story center bay window. The unusual cornice, constructed entirely of stone, effectively simulates dentils and brackets.

**3. Crispin Leather (160 College Street)**

This plain brick structure appears to be a remnant of the old Bank Block (c.1860), once the most prominent edifice fronting on the north side of the park. It is now two stories tall, two bays wide, with original peaked cast iron lintels, modern storefront.

**4. Burlington Savings Bank Annex (154 College Street)**

A c.1972 three-story, brick-veneered structure; eight bays wide; street level arched windows rise into corrugated concrete fascia; large segmental arch opening to left is main Savings Bank entry. Non-contributing, although it provides an important visual backdrop for the park.

**5. Burlington Savings Bank (148 College Street)**

The Savings Bank is one of the most academically sophisticated works of architecture in Burlington. The style, termed Flemish Revival by the architect, uses a brick and brownstone facade with prominent wall dormers and a corner turret to recall the Renaissance guild houses of Brussels and Antwerp. It occupies a strategic corner location on the park.

The essentially rectangular plan has 3 1/2-story facades on both College and St. Paul Streets. A prominent corner entrance tower rises to a spire-like conical cap with an iron finial, providing a pronounced exclamation point for the streetscape which encloses the park on the north. Mounted on the tower are a carved cartouche inscribed "1900" and a time/temperature clock.

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Wall surfaces are deep red "richified" brick, with brownstone used for window surrounds, string coursing, street level fascia, and other trim. The roof is flat on top, but steeply pitched over the main facades in a mansard fashion. A molded stone cornice is broken once on the south side and twice on the west side by large Flemish wall dormers, each with stone coping and a round-headed window. The south dormer also has an ornate carved apex stone.

Arcaded ground floor fenestration has freestanding Roman Ionic columns and large consoles in the keystone positions. Except for third story arcading on the west facade, all upper level fenestration is flat-headed, and articulated by quoined brownstone surrounds. The recessed corner entrance is framed by free-standing Ionic columns which support a brownstone segmental arch. A College Street side entrance, no longer functional, has a pediment on consoles overhead. The interior features a large horseshoe-shaped "general counting room" and extensive mahogany panelling throughout.

6. St. Paul Street Annex (86 St. Paul Street)

This large three-story brick block is twelve bays wide and adjoins the Savings Bank (#5) at its south end. The cornice is plainly corbelled with projecting header and stretcher courses. Evenly spaced windows have granite lintels and sills, one-over-one sash, plate glass on the first story. Granite foundation and water table; modern projecting steel and glass entry to left. Although plain in style, the substantial facade effectively extends the scale of the City Hall Park streetscape up St. Paul Street. The building was built c.1865 for an unknown industrial use. The two-story, 4-bay, brick-veneered north wing, added c.1960, has a drive-through portal on the ground floor. The main block contributes to the historic character of the district; the wing lies within the district but is non-contributing.

7. City Hall Park.

City Hall Park, known in the nineteenth century as Court House Square, is a square-shaped public common bounded on three sides by cohesive commercial streetscapes on College, St. Paul and Main Streets. The fourth (eastern) side is occupied by three large public buildings (#9-11), each of which has a fully developed facade on the park side, despite formal frontal orientation on Church Street. The park is the only large open space in the downtown area.

The focal point of landscaping completed in 1979 is a poured concrete fountain in the center of the park; sidewalks which radiate from this hub are lighted by ornate cast iron lamp posts with large double globes. Other significant structural features are two granite monuments. In the northwest corner is a 12' obelisk topped by a carved eagle. It was erected

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in 1907 as a memorial to Civil War dead. Lower panels of each face have carvings of martial artifacts enclosed in wreaths; upper panels have inscriptions. In front of City Hall is a plain 8' rectangular shaft erected by the Gold Star Mothers after World War II, "in memory of the boys who make the sacrifice."

8. McAuliffe Building (117 Church Street)

The first floor of the McAuliffe Building is the only remnant of the YMCA Block, a mammoth Romanesque Revival edifice of rock-faced brownstone which burned in 1928. The recessed corner entrance is framed by squat columns which support a lintel inscribed "McAuliffe, 1912-28," with "S. Huntington, 1837+1888" above it. Large display windows have stained glass transoms reading "stationary," "books," and "toys."

After the fire, the McAuliffe Paper Company (a lineal descendant of the Huntington Bookstore which had done business on this corner since 1837) decided to rebuild the block on a smaller scale. The present Art Moderne style facade of beige-tinted bricks is three stories tall, two by three bays, with an angled corner entrance bay. Piers define the large windows with frosted glass transoms into bays; spandrel panels of patterned brickwork are between stories. Over the cornice is a stepped parapet embellished with a soldier string course and diamond-motif brick and concrete panels over each bay. An important corner building.

9. Merchants Bank (123 Church Street)

Because it replaced (in 1931) the destroyed portion of the old YMCA Block (see #8), this building has an unusual plan which wraps around the McAuliffe Building to front on Church Street, College Street and City Hall Park. The two-story polished marble facade with carved marble trim is one of Burlington's better examples of the Neo-classical style which was popular in the 1920's and into the early years of the Great Depression. The architects were Harper and West; the original occupant was the Chittenden County Trust Company.

The main facade, fronting on Church Street, is dominated by a tall, round-arched entrance with carved surround, eagles in relief on top, and flanking pastoral-motif round medallions. A denticulated cornice with architrave and frieze inscribed "Chittenden County Trust Company" is capped by a parapet with shield-motif ornament. A flanking south wing and the park and College Street facades are in matching style, but with lower rooflines, plain cornices and parapets, and a lesser degree of classical ornament. A Church Street storefront has been altered so that only a palmette-enriched stamped metal cornice remains. Secondary entries have pedimented and denticulated cornice caps. The park facade has a pavilion-like center section with a round arch similar to the main entrance arch.



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10. Ethan Allen Engine Company #4 (135 Church Street)

A Nineteenth Century Commercial style fire station, listed on the National Register of Historic Places on December 17, 1970.

11. City Hall

Because of its great mass and highly central location, City Hall is perhaps the most visually strategic component in the district. The brick facade with extensive carved marble trim is Neo-classical in style, although the strict symmetry and multi-stage domed cupola impart definite Georgian overtones. This classical/colonial motif was intended by the architect, W.M. Kendall of McKim, Mead, and White, to be "in accordance with the same classical principles which inspired the public buildings of the colonies and the early republic."

Virtually all the finish materials - brick, marble, roofing slate, and granite - were produced in Vermont. When the building was constructed in 1928 at a cost of \$475,000, it was hailed by Mayor Beecher as "the most ambitious building project on which the city of Burlington has ever embarked." When the mayor pushed through a new fire station and civic auditorium the next year, his critics dubbed him "Beecher the Builder" and spread rumors of graft. The previous City Hall, built on this site in 1854, had grown decrepit with age, and was, in the words of the Free Press editor, "a repellent municipal liability."

The rectangular plan has virtual dual orientation, displaying identical eleven-bay, two-story facades on both Church Street and the park. Bays are defined by fluted pilasters with Corinthian caps, and twelve-over-twelve sash with gauged brick flat arches. Quoins, a denticulated cornice with carved architrave, and spandrel panels add further surface enrichment. The round-arched central entrances have panelled doors with tracery fanlights and surrounds of fluted Ionic pilasters supporting swan-neck pediments. Cupola enrichment includes clocks, balustrades with urns, columns and arches in a Palladian motif, and a gilded dome embellished with swag.

12. Hotel Vermont (129-133 Main Street)

The old Hotel Vermont, at seven stories the tallest building in the district, is a dominant presence in the streetscape surrounding City Hall Park. The style is Colonial Revival, characterized by a symmetrically organized brick facade with central pavilion, quoins, and neo-classical trim executed mostly in marble. A denticulated pressed metal cornice with brick parapet highlights the roofline. A glazed roof garden and wrought iron seventh story balconies take advantage of the building's height and provide views of the lake and the park.

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Fenestration is three by seven bays, regularly spaced; windows are all paired except on the central pavillion, where they are three-part and flanked by slit windows. Most sills and lintels are marble. The modern central entrance retains original granite Doric columns with marble bases and capitals; overhead is an iron balcony served by French doors with a segmental arch marble cornice. The entire first story is banded between a marble string course and water table. In the rear, fronting on St. Paul Street, is a three-story service wing with stone-capped battlement.

The Hotel Vermont was the last of the great hotels which once dominated life around City Hall Park. It replaced the burned-out main block of the old American House in 1910. For many years it was considered the finest non-resort hotel in the state. Converted to apartments and offices in 1970.

13. East Wing of American House (135-143 Main Street)

This brick block was originally the east wing of the American House, a landmark which burned in 1906, to be replaced four years later by the Hotel Vermont (#12). A Federal style parapetted gable is now the only stylistic clue to its c.1830 origins. In the early twentieth century the roofline was raised to accommodate a full third story; the present windows and corbelled cornice with cyma recta wood molding date from then. Modern storefronts, one faced with carrara glass. Despite alterations to the facade, the block plays an intergral part in the City Hall street-scape by spanning the wide gap between the Hotel Vermont and the Flynn Theater.

14. Flynn Theater (149-153 Main Street)

According to at least one authority, the Flynn is the finest Art Deco moviehouse in the state. As the last remaining theater in downtown Burlington, it testifies to the enduring role which film has played in American culture, particularly in the pre-television years of the depression, when Hollywood enjoyed its "golden age." It was built in 1930 for John J. Flynn, a local lawyer, banker, and real estate developer. The architects were Newell and Rand of Boston. A total restoration, including new facilities for the performing arts, is nearing completion at the time of this writing.

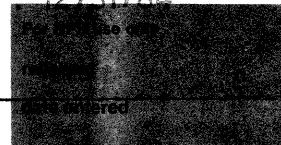
The building consists of two adjoining structures. On Main Street is a two-story, four part block which houses the theater entrance and foyer to the left, two shopfronts and a walk-up entry to the right, and offices upstairs. In the rear is a tall, rectangular structure which houses the 1800-seat theater. A short, one-story passageway links the two.

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The facade's most prominent feature is the cantilevered marquee, which has "Flynn" in red neon letters on all three sides, with borders of flashing red and yellow lights. Wall surfaces are brick and carved marble; fluted pilasters with foliate scroll-motif caps define the bays, while the upper levels are infilled with patterned brick and one-over-one windows. The theater entrance bay has three sets of double oak doors opening to a paneled ticket booth, and a stepped parapet on the roof with the name "Flynn" incised in stylized lettering. The largely intact Art Deco interior decor features stylized lighting fixtures, mosaic tile floor, and fluted pilasters.

15. Commercial Block (155-159 Main Street)

This three-story brick building is a subdued example of the Italianate commercial block which achieved popularity in Burlington after the Civil War. The only noteworthy stylistic feature is the projecting box cornice supported by paired consoles mounted on a plain wood frieze with architrave. The westerly storefront, although very plain, has typical nineteenth century construction, and may be original. The building maintains the scale and building line of the streetscape fronting on City Hall Park.

16. All-American Hero (161-163 Main Street)

A small, two-story brick structure with modern storefront and second-story windows. Old photographs show the original roof had a front gable with fan louvre, in the Federal style. Non-contributing in present form.

17. Times Building (167 Main Street)

This building testifies to the possibilities for adaptive reuse of downtown property. When built in 1845 as Burlington's first Baptist church, it had a Greek Revival style pedimented front gable surmounted by an open belfry. Of its original style, only brick pilasters and a frieze with architrave remain. In 1866, the Baptists built a larger church in a quieter location on St. Paul Street. The Burlington Times purchased the old church, removed the belfry, remodeled the interior, and moved its printing presses and publishing offices inside. Sometime in the 1870's the Times added the slate-clad mansard roof to provide a functional third floor. The roof has a band of fishscale slates, gabled wall dormers, and paired brackets under the upper cornice. Sash is six-over-one, mostly paired. Modern storefront, with carrara glass paneling and semi-octagonal metal framed plate glass windows.

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18. Stacy Livery Stable (159-163 Church Street)

O.C. Stacy erected this building c.1877 as a livery stable to serve the large hotels around Court House Square. An adjoining structure in the rear, now extensively altered, was the carriage house. In the 1920's, stucco and molded wood round-arched window heads were applied to the original facade, a "boomtown" type shaped false front with bracketed wood cornice which obscures the low gabled roof. Modern storefront

19. Stacy House (165-167 Church Street)

The Stacy House is one of the few residential building types in the district. It is a clapboard-sided, 2½-story balloon frame with fishscale shingles covering the pedimented front gable. Central chimney, one-over-one sash, imbricated roof slates. It was built c.1885 as the home of O.C. Stacy, proprietor of the livery stable next door (#18).

20. Fresh Ground Coffee House (175 Church Street)

A modern, two-story commercial block with shingle and brick-veneered facade. Non-contributing.

21. Charlie's Red Hots (177 Church Street)

A narrow, two-story, infill-type commercial building with a well-preserved c.1875 Italianate style clapboard facade. A molded box cornice is supported by paired brackets with pendants. Two-over-two sash have peaked headboards. Modern storefront and illuminated overhanging sign, both c.1955.

22. Asahel Peck House (179-181 Church Street)

The Peck House, along with the Mills House (#24), is one of two early nineteenth century houses left in the district. It was built c.1835 by Asahel Peck, a prominent lawyer who later rose to become chief justice of the state supreme court. Despite modern windows, entry, and a stucco facade, all dating from the 1920's, the broad gabled front with a central chimney, and other remnant detail identify it as a transitional Federal/Greek Revival period building. Its tall, 2½-story massing renders a degree of scale to the surrounding streetscape.

23. Wilson Block (183-185 Church Street)

The Wilson Block is a substantial three-story commercial block with a Classical Revival style facade. Corner piers support an elaborate stamped metal cornice with a floral motif and egg-and-dart frieze, architrave molding. Windows have stone sills and bonded brick flat arch lintels.

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The original three-bay storefront has a recessed entrance bay to the right, glazed transom course, plain metal cornice. Graham Wilson, who lived next door in the adjoining Mills House (#24), erected the block in 1910 to house a liquor store.

24. Mills House (187-89 Church Street)

The Mills House is one of the few purely residential structures in the district, and by far the oldest and best-preserved. It was built c.1820 by Thomas and Ephraim Mills, two brothers who published Burlington's first newspaper, the Northern Sentinel, out of a low, clapboard block on the south side of Court House Square called Mills Row. Like all newspapers of the day, the Sentinel was highly partisan in its politics, supporting Democratic causes from Jefferson to Jackson, and receiving postmasterships and other patronage in return. The editors' house was undoubtedly the site of many partisan political meetings and social events.

The building plan is the 2½-story, five-by-two bay, double pile house type commonly used from the mid-eighteenth to mid-nineteenth centuries, and particularly popular during the Federal period. The original central entrance, with sidelights, pilasters and a delicate leaded fanlight, now looks out from the second story, the curious result of the regrading of Church Street in the 1880's. The south gable has a molded cornice with gable returns and a lunette framed by paired end chimneys. In the rear is a two-story c.1885 addition with a south elevation Italianate style oriel window supported by large decorative scroll-cut brackets. Other alterations include an east elevation ground level porch with iron posts, serving the present functional entry, an iron fire escape, and a southeast corner neon sign reading "Hotel Wilson." Construction is bonded brick.

## 8. Significance

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

Specific dates N/A

Builder/Architect N/A

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The City Hall Park Historic District is significant as a well preserved collection of stylistically varied early 19th to early 20th century commercial structures unified through spacing and orientation around an open park into a cohesive historic urban district. Burlington's long role as a commercial center, dating back to the 18th century, can be seen in the great diversity of the district's architecture. From a c.1820 Federal style residence, built by the publishers of Burlington's first newspaper, to an outstanding 1930 Art Deco moviehouse, the buildings bordering City Hall Park tell the story of the city's growth from a frontier lakeport to a lumber manufacturing boomtown to a modern city which stands foremost as Vermont's industrial, commercial and educational center.

In the 1790's the proprietors of the frontier town of Burlington set aside a public common as the site of the new county courthouse. At the time, there were already two established settlements in town, one at the lake and the other around the "College Green" at the top of the hill upon which Burlington is built. The proprietors' choice of a level piece of land halfway up the hill, then occupied only by lumbermen's shanties, probably represented a political compromise between the landowners of the two established settlements, either of which would have profited considerably from the business a courthouse attracted.

The new public common was called Court House Square, a name it retained until the 1880's. Around it grew a thriving community of innkeepers, lawyers, printers, merchants, and other tradesmen. This period in Burlington's history, from 1785-1823, typified the trans-Appalachian expansion of the American frontier during the early national period, and established the young village as the trade center for the surrounding agricultural economy.

Despite its initial success, Court House Square was the smallest of Burlington's three settlements for many years. At the waterfront, the nascent lakeport known as "The Bay" bustled with activity, as shipbuilders, teamsters, merchants, bakers, and brewers cashed in on the relative ease of water transportation in an otherwise forest-bound frontier economy. At the top of the hill, on upper Pearl Street and around the College Green, was a larger settlement of perhaps sixty houses, many of them substantial brick structures built by merchants engaged in a prosperous retail and wholesale trade. Over the course of three or four decades, the three settlements gradually expanded and met, so that by mid-century there was a single village of Burlington which extended from the lake to the top of the hill.

A major shift in Burlington's economic fortunes occurred in 1823, when the Champlain Canal opened and connected the lake to the Hudson River, Erie Canal, and points south and west. Thus began the "golden age" of shipping on Lake Champlain, when the fastest steamboats in the world raced passengers

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

See Continuation Sheet.

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property Eight Acres +

Quadrangle name Burlington, Vermont

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UTM References

A 

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

B 

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

C 

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

D 

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

E 

Zone			Easting				Northing							

F 

Zone			Easting				Northing							

G 

Zone			Easting				Northing							

H 

Zone			Easting				Northing							

Verbal boundary description and justification

See Continuation Sheet.

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

state	code	county	code
N/A			
state	code	county	code

# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title John C. Page

organization Vt. Div. for Historic Preservation

date June 16, 1982

street & number Pavilion Building, State Street

telephone 802-828-3226

city or town Montpelier

state Vermont 05602

# 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national  state  local

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

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

*Eric Galtsois*

title Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

date 4/18/83

For NPS use only

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

**Entered in the  
National Register**

date 6/9/83

for *Deborah Byers*  
Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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and goods from New York to Quebec. This period, from 1823-1850, paralleled the growth of a national mercantile economy which exploited waterways, canals, turnpikes and world sea-trading routes to move consumer goods to the hinterland and agricultural produce to burgeoning urban areas. With access to New York and western markets, Burlington merchants established the village as the busiest port on the lake, and cornered the wholesale and forwarding trade for most of northern Vermont. The waterfront boomed, and the various mercantile houses erected wharves, a breakwater, and substantial stores to handle their expanding trade. Much of this growth was at the expense of the old Pearl Street merchants on the hill, who either moved to the waterfront or went out of business.

Court House Square also prospered during the mercantile boom. From a large brick block on the north side of the square, the family of Dr. John Peck operated the largest wholesaling and forwarding house in the state. Their great "land-ships," hauled by eight and ten-horse teams, rumbled as far east as St. Johnsbury to supply storekeepers and return with the produce of the interior. Burlington became a major transportation center, where stagelines from the north, east, and south converged to meet the village's steamboat fleet. This traffic spurred the construction of numerous hotels at Court House Square, the last of which was the Hotel Vermont (#12), erected in 1910. These "palaces of the people" served not only large numbers of travellers, but also provided semi-permanent homes for itinerent tradesmen, salesmen, and "gentlemen of leisure." Public meetings, private gatherings, and much of the community's day-to-day social intercourse occurred in the public rooms of the Howard House, the American House (of which #13 is a remnant), Thomas's Tavern and the opulent Van Ness House.

By the 1840's, continuous walls of brick and clapboard commercial facades had enclosed the square and were beginning to spread out to surrounding streets; many of these buildings sported the parapetted gables with end chimneys which typified the Federal style in Burlington. Tradition states that Jacksonite Democrats patronized only businesses on the south side of the square, while Whig partisans could only be seen on the north side, where a branch of the controversial U.S. Bank stood. The courthouse, a clapboard structure with a monumental portico, stood facing the square on the present site of City Hall (#11). On the hillside above the square, the stylish homes of the merchant class commanded vistas of the lake and Adirondack Mountains.

Few of the buildings erected around Court House Square during this period survive, and none retain their original appearance. Perhaps the most significant early nineteenth century structure in the district is the Mills House (#24) on the corner of Church and King Streets. This Federal style residence features a finely-detailed fanlight entrance and much other original detail, although the entrance now looks out from the second story as a result of the regrading of the street. The house was built c.1820 by two brothers who published Burlington's first newspaper from a low wooden commercial block on Court House Square.



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Other significant pre-Civil War buildings include the east wing of the old American House, built in 1830 and still displaying a Federal style parapeted gable with paired chimneys despite a major facade alteration c.1910; the Times Building (#17), a Greek Revival church built in 1845 and converted in the 1870's to an office building with a mansard roof; the Asahel Peck House (#20) is a large c.1835 residence with Federal and Greek Revival detail, but with a substantially altered facade; and two small brick commercial blocks (#3 & 16), both substantially altered from their original appearance.

The prosperous mercantile economy virtually collapsed in 1850. As abruptly as the opening of the canal had put Burlington in a geographic middleman position, the coming of the railroad took away those markets by putting the village at the end of the supply line from Boston. A national depression and the closing of Burlington's only factory, a glassworks, compounded the problem. The waterfront was particularly hard hit, and all but died as a commercial district. There was widespread bankruptcy, panic, and general despair about the village's future. By 1860, though, local capitalists had reworked the old middleman trade with a new twist, and Burlington's fortunes rose, phoenix-like, to unprecedented levels of prosperity.

The new scheme was to import raw timber from the Ontario peninsula and tow it in rafts down the St. Lawrence and then up the lake to Burlington, where steam-powered planing mills turned it into dressed lumber, doors, window sash, cottage furniture and other basic wood products. The finished goods were then shipped by rail to Boston and other metropolitan areas. The volume of lumber manufactured in Burlington grew annually, interrupted only by the severe depression of 1873-78, until in 1883 it was the third largest port of entry for lumber in the country, behind Albany and Portland. The waterfront became a sea of stacked lumber which stretched out over nearly a mile. Great fortunes were amassed in this trade, which worked largely by the labor of thousands of French-Canadian immigrants.

The lumber boom had tremendous impact on Court House Square. The increased demand for retail business resulted in many large new commercial blocks, not only at the square, but all along the adjoining streets. Church Street became a favorite location for new development, and soon rivaled the square for the size and quality of its buildings. The universal style for new commercial buildings in this period was a vernacular variation of the Italianate Revival, characterized chiefly by rectangular brick facades with elaborate bracketed cornices and the extensive use of cast iron window and storefront treatments. Although many such buildings survive in the downtown area, only the commercial block at 155-159 Main Street (#15), a very subdued example of the style, remains in unaltered condition within the district. Stacy's Livery Stable (#18) and Charlie's Red Hots (#21) are excellent examples of vernacular adaptations of the style to smaller clapboard facades.

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The lumber trade peaked in the 1880's and died in the 1890's when lumber tariffs changed. By then, though, enough wealth had accumulated in Burlington to diversify the industrial base, so that refrigerators, patent medicines, textiles, brush fibers, and pottery replaced lumber as the chief manufacturing products. Capitalists like William Van Patten, Urban Woodbury, Joel Gates and C.R. Hayward were highly individualistic entrepreneurs who reaped great profits from one main business (usually lumber) and then reinvested in a broad range of new ventures, especially real estate and manufacturing. At the turn of the century, Burlington had more than doubled its population since the Civil War, and the downtown had expanded accordingly. It became the major center in the state for banking, insurance and general commerce.

If the Italianate period gave the historic district its basic form, it was the years 1885-1910 which gave it its most vibrant stylistic themes. The buildings erected in those years typify the Victorian period's craving for character, style, and rugged individualism, as well as its less-admirable ostentation and glib love of fashion. In general, the rectangular, frontally-oriented commercial block of the post-war years was still used, but with a variety of new styles, sometimes combined on the same facade. Romanesque Revival was the most popular (#'s 2,8,10), but Colonial Revival (#12), Classical Revival (#23), Flemish Revival, a variation of the Chateausque style (#5), and even some Sullivanesque (carved stone ornament on #1) all survive.

In the 1920's, Burlington experienced another boom period which was based largely on its diversified industrial base and a prosperous national economy. New construction in the downtown area tended to employ either a Moderne/Art Deco or Neo-classical style. Some of the city's best examples of these styles lie within the district. Foremost is the Flynn Theater (#14), a lavish Art Deco moviehouse built in 1930 and recently restored to full splendor as a performing arts theater. Its brightly-colored marquee is a downtown landmark. The McAuliffe Building (#8), built in 1928, has a less sophisticated Style Moderne facade of patterned brickwork. City Hall (#11) and the Merchants Bank (#9), built in 1928 and 1931 respectively, are two outstanding Neo-classical style buildings. The former is a somewhat whimsical McKim, Mead and White adaptation of classical/colonial motifs, while the latter displays a more formal and elegant facade of polished marble.

One reason for the high quality of Burlington's Victorian architecture was the ready availability of local building materials and skilled labor. After the Civil War, industries on the waterfront produced not only lumber, but also wood building ornament, dressed and carved stone trim, and cast iron building materials. Furthermore, the large force of highly skilled craftsmen associated with these industries undoubtedly had an impact on the local construction market. With materials and workmanship so accessible and relatively inexpensive, builders could often afford to bestow ornamentation and stylistic detailing on their creations.

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Burlington was also blessed for most of the 19th century with talented local builders and architects. Commercial structures in the early and middle decades were essentially vernacular in character, following traditional forms and plans, and the men who built them were, for the most part, more accurately termed "master builders" than architects. The first true architect to practice extensively in Burlington was A. B. Fisher, whose work over the years 1875-1895 established him as the premier Victorian architect in northwestern Vermont. His best work appears on scores of high-style residences in the city's fashionable Hill Section, but he also influenced the city's commercial architecture, chiefly through his son Clellan, who joined Fisher's firm in the 1880's and immediately specialized in commercial designs. Of the dozen or more buildings in the downtown area attributed to him, the most impressive are the Ethan Allen Engine Company #4 (#10) and the first Burlington Trust Company Building (#2).

In 1898, a struggling young architect named Walter R. B. Willcox received the first important commission of his career: to produce a design for the new Burlington Savings Bank. The stylish Flemish Revival building which he produced is probably the most academic work of architecture in downtown Burlington. After designing another score of buildings in the city over the next decade, Willcox moved west and became the most influential educator of architects on the Pacific coast.

The significance of the City Hall Park Historic District goes far beyond the relative architectural merits of its various components. The district should be viewed as a coherent whole, in which individual buildings contribute their own unique qualities to the integrity of a broader streetscape. Within the district there are five distinct streetscapes which must be addressed in this context; any change to an individual building within one of these streetscapes will affect the appearance of the whole street and, to a degree, the whole district. These streetscapes are: #1-5, looking north from the park; #9-11, looking east from the park; #12-17, looking south from the park; #8-11, looking west from Church Street; and #17-24, looking west from Church Street.

Further historical background on individual buildings can be found within the Description section.

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The boundary of the City Hall Park Historic District begins at a Point A, located at the northeast corner of the second Merchants Bank property (#1). The boundary thence runs south along the east property of said property and a southerly extension thereof, crossing College Street, to a Point B, located on the south curb of College Street. Thence the boundary runs east along said curb to Point C, located at the intersection of the south curb of College Street and the west curb of Church Street. The boundary thence runs south along the west curb of Church Street, crossing Main Street, and continuing along said curb to a Point D, located at the intersection of the west curb of Church Street and the north curb of King Street. From Point D, the district boundary runs west along the north curb of King Street to a Point E, located at the intersection of the north curb of King Street and a southerly extension of the west property line of the Mills House property (#24). The boundary thence runs north along said southerly extension and along the rear (west) property lines of properties #24, 23 and 22, to a Point F, located at the intersection with the rear (south) property line of the Flynn Theatre property (#14). The boundary thence proceeds in a westerly direction along the rear (south) property line of said property to Point G, located at the intersection of the west property line of the Flynn Theatre property (#14). The boundary thence proceeds in a northerly direction along the west property line of said property to a Point H, located at an interior 90 degree angle in the rear property line of said property where the property line changes direction from north/south to east/west. Thence the boundary proceeds in a westerly direction along the rear (south) property line of the Flynn Theatre property (#14) to Point I, located at the intersection of the eastern property line of the Hotel Vermont property (#12). The boundary thence runs south along said east property line to a Point J, located at the intersection of the south property line of the Hotel Vermont property (#12). Thence the boundary proceeds in a westerly direction along the rear (south) property line of the Hotel Vermont property (#12) and a westerly extension thereof to Point K, located at the intersection of the eastern curb of St. Paul Street. The boundary thence proceeds in a northerly direction along the east curb of St. Paul Street, crossing Main Street, continuing along said east curb line, crossing College Street, and continuing north along said curb line to Point L, located at the intersection of a westerly extension of the north property line of the Burlington Savings Bank's St. Paul Street annex property (#6). Thence the boundary runs easterly along said extension and said north property line to Point M, located at the intersection of the eastern property line of the Burlington Savings Bank's St. Paul Street annex property (#6). Thence the boundary proceeds in a southerly direction along the east property line of said property to a Point N, located at the intersection of the north property line of the old Burlington Trust Company building property (#2). Thence the boundary runs easterly along said north property line and the north property line of the second Merchants Bank property (#1), to Point A, the point of beginning.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The boundary of the City Hall Park Historic District is justified as follows: to the west the boundary coincides with the eastern boundary of the Wells-Richardson Historic

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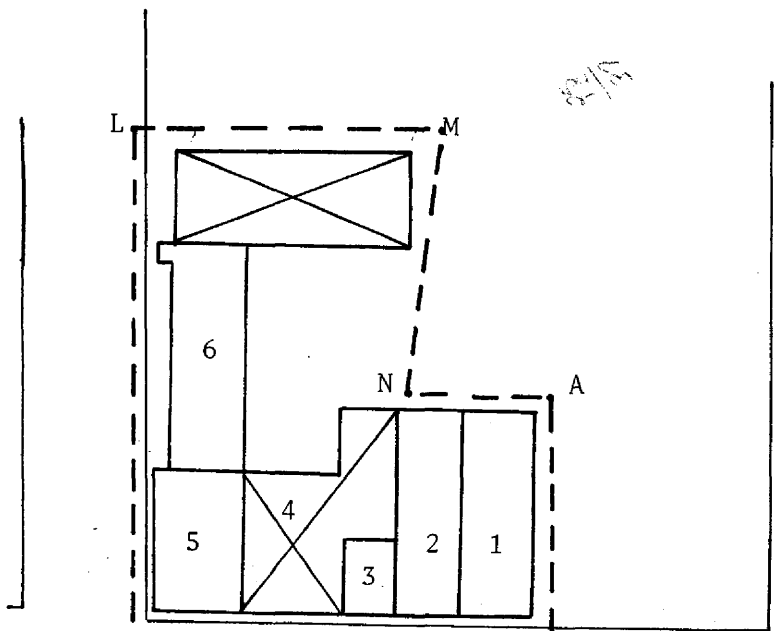
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District (NR); to the southwest and south it coincides with the northeast corner of the Battery Street Historic District (NR); and to the southeast it borders on two individual National Register properties (the Chittenden ~~DEMOLISHED~~ Warehouse and the U.S. Customs House and Post Office), so that over half the district borders directly on properties already listed on the National Register.

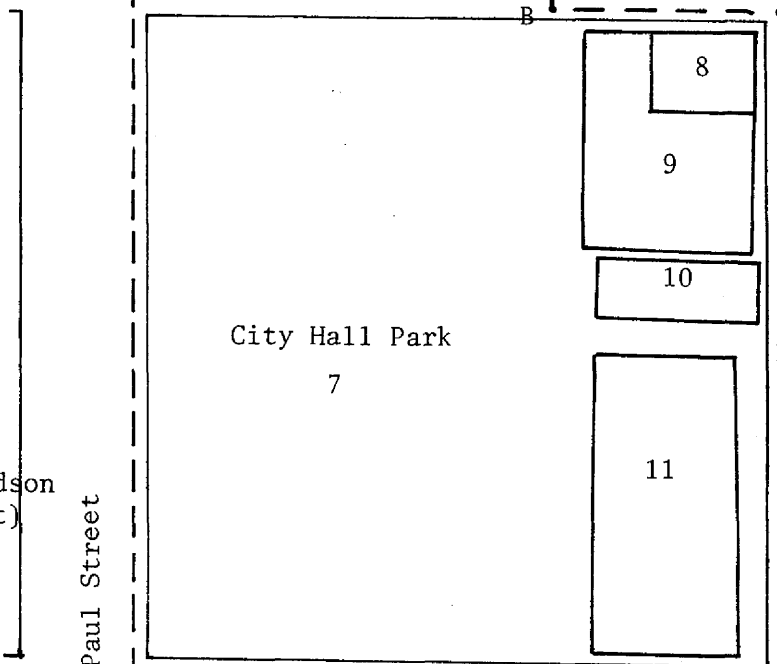
The remaining boundary, to the east and northeast, borders almost completely on the Church Street Marketplace, an outdoor pedestrian mall completed in 1981. Although much of the Marketplace consists of historically significant commercial architecture, the addition of large steel and glass canopies and other contemporary pedestrian landscaping elements have affected its historic character and now define the area as a separate entity. The only part of the City Hall Park Historic District not bordered directly by either National Register properties or the Church Street Marketplace is to the northwest, where modern buildings create a natural visual border for the district.



City Hall Park  
Historic District  
Burlington, VT.

District Boundary  
-----

College Street



Non-contributing Structure



Approximate Scale  
1 inch=100 feet

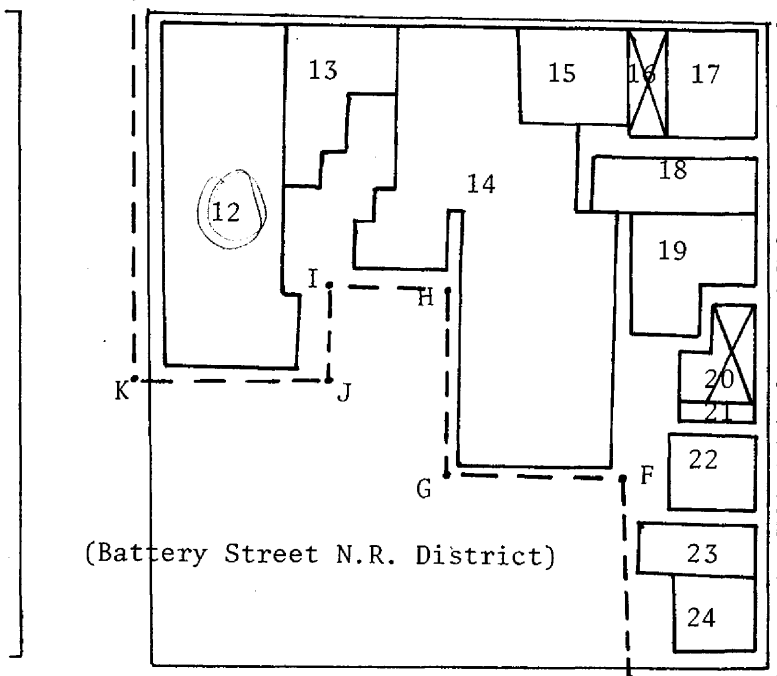


(Wells-Richardson  
N.R. District)

St Paul Street

Church Street Marketplace

Main Street



(Battery Street N.R. District)

Church Street

King Street