#### National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

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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 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. N	ame of Property	
histor	c name First Congregational Church	
other	names/site number _ N/A	
<u>2. l</u>	ocation	
city o	town Orwell	MA not for publication 제집 vicinity
state	<u>Vermont</u> code <u>VT</u> county <u>Addison</u> code <u>001</u>	zip code <u>05760</u>
3. S	tate/Federal Agency Certification	
	As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this I request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the N Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion meets	ational Register of ion, the property inificant
	State or Federal agency and bureau	
	/	
	See continuation sheet  determined eligible for the National Register  See continuation sheet  determined not eligible for the National Register  removed from the National Register	Date of Action  3 2 01

<u>First</u>	Congregational	Church
Name of	Property	

Addison	County.	Vermont	
County and	State		

other Marble

5. Classification			
Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)	Category of Property (Check only one box)	Number of Resources within Proposition of Include previously listed resources in the control of	erty ount )
private public-local public-State public-Federal  Name of related multiple Enter "N/A" if property is not pa	art of a multiple property listing.)	Contributing  Noncontributing  O  O  O  O  O  O  Number of contributing resources listed in the National Register  O	sites structures objects Total
6. Function or Use			
Historic Functions (Enter Categories from instruction		Current Functions (Enter Categories from instructions)	<del></del>
Religion / Religious Fa	acility	Religion / Religious Facility	
Government / City Hall			
7. Description  Architectural Classification Enter Categories from instruction		Materials (Enter categories from instructions)	
cinoi Categories nom manacilo	110 )	( Liner categories from mondetions)	
Greek Revival		foundation Stone	<del></del>
	· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·	walls Brick	
		Wood	
		roofSlate	

#### Narrative Description

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

See Continuation Sheet.

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

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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The First Congregational Church, located on a commanding height at the northwest corner of the town green in the historic center of Orwell, Vermont, is approximately 100 feet north of Vermont Route 73. The building is one of the most outstanding examples of Greek Revival style ecclesiastical architecture in Vermont. It is a monumentally-scaled, gabled-roofed, rectangular four-by-three bay brick church. Built in 1842, the building features a distyle in antis front facade with fluted Doric columns, a large pediment, full Tuscan entablature, prominent pilasters on the front and sides and a richly decorated belfry. The interior of the church features a large floral plaster medallion on the ceiling, from which an elaborately decorated metal chandelier is suspended, as well as a particularly well-preserved organ from 1865. The church is an exceptionally fine example of the implementation of Asher Benjamin's 1839 church design. It has been in continuous use since its construction and retains its integrity of design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association.

The Orwell Congregational Church is a high style Greek Revival brick building with white painted wood and gray marble detailing. Built in 1842, the church is a four bay rectangle with marble capped wall and corner pilasters on all sides save the back, with a basement level, main floor and belfry. The distyle in antis front facade is dominated by two monumental Doric, fluted wooden columns without plinths. The whole is topped by a pediment with full Tuscan entablature, that is both raked and carried, and an unornamented brick tympanum. The slate covered roof is low pitched and gabled. The brick walls use an extended American common bond with seven courses of stretchers to one header course. The church faces south toward the Orwell village green and is approached via a broad concrete walkway. The building rests on a high rubble stone foundation.

The front entrance is composed of six-paneled, oversized, white painted wooden double doors. There is a white painted rectangular overdoor. There is a four-paneled blind transom set beneath the door frame and recessed so that it is in the same plane as the doors. The transom panels are symmetrical with both the doors and the door pilasters. The doors are surrounded by a simple rectangular wooden frame with a full entablature on pilasters painted white. The faces of the pilasters are decorated with a single panel, while the interior sides are paneled and symmetrical with the paneling of the overdoor and door. These doors rest on a gray marble sill.

Two subsidiary doors face each other and are set into the brick walls that flank the entrance. These doors are single, white painted, four paneled, wooden doors with a simple frame and white painted stone lintels. Like the front door, they have gray marble sills.

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Poured concrete stairs extend almost the entire width of the front facade at the base and taper to the width of the entrance portico at the top. A pair of modern, black painted, iron balustrades bracket the center of the stairs and lead to the front door.

The building is sited on ground that slopes gradually to the north. The basement level walls are single-faced finished gray stone. Three brick courses above the stone, there is a water table of gray marble one brick in width, which projects slightly from the wall and extends the full length of the east, south and west sides of the building. The exposed basement is pierced by two double hung two-over-two windows on the rear half of the east and west walls. Two entrances are placed near the front, or southern end, of the east wall. The southern door, a simple wooden double door composed of vertical planks with tying stringers, gives access to the oil tank and furnace. The other door is a double door with windows in the upper portions, giving access to the main hall in the basement.

Four, tall rectangular stained glass windows dominate the east and west walls. The windows, which have rectangular, gray marble lintels and white marble sills, were installed in the original recessed window wells in 1891. They portray biblical events and were paid for by popular subscriptions. The back wall is an unadorned brick wall pierced only by two windows at the basement level in the same style as the other windows at this level.

The belfry rises in two stages and is set a short distance from the gable end over the portico. The first stage is a one story square composed of white painted, flush planked, wooden clapboard set off by single panel corner pilasters. A large black clock face fills the center of the south, east and west faces of this stage. The second stage is also a square of the same height. At the corners pairs of obliquely set, fluted Ionic columns project outward on rectangular bases at a forty-five degree angle to the facades. This stage is capped by a denticulated full entablature. Rectangular louvered openings fill the facades between the columns. The third and final stage of the belfry is a half story tall. The projecting tops of the Ionic columns serve as a base for paired decorative consoles which slope in and up to form the octagonal base of a low copper sheathed dome. The panels between the inverted "brackets" are filled by a rinceau composed of a stylized anthemion motif. Set on a metal pole on top of the dome sits a wide arrow shaped weather vane. It is mounted a third of the way back from its tip and rests upon a metal sphere. The tip and tail are gilded. The arrow is composed of three parallel shafts and the fletching is an elaborate pattern of flowing lines.

The roof is pierced by four chimneys, placed near the corners of the building. The chimneys are brick with very simple caps.

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#### **INTERIOR:**

On entering the building through the south facing main door, one passes into a east-west running hall with stairs at each end leading south to the balcony and belfry. Just to the west and on the north side of the hall is a door to the stairs to the basement. Farther west and also on the north side of the hall is the door to the audience hall. There is also a matching door to the east.

The audience hall is floored with narrow, dark brown painted planks oriented east-west, except in the aisles between the pews where they are north-south. The pews are white painted wood with rails of unpainted varnished trim. The pew doors have been removed. In the chancel the altar is on a raised semicircular area set against the north wall. The altar is framed by two half-height pilasters joined by an arch with a decorative keystone, all of which are covered in plaster. Where the wall meets the ceiling there is a simple, white painted, wooden cornice running the entire circumference of the room.

The flat ceiling is plaster with a large, decorative oval floral medallion in the center. From the center of the medallion, an elaborate baroque metal chandelier is suspended. Formerly a kerosene fired chandelier, it now uses electricity to illuminate the large glass globes. The style of the chandelier is repeated in paired lights mounted half way up the north side of each of the stained glass windows.

The basement level can be reached either through the door in the east wall or from the stairs leading to the main floor. The northwest corner is devoted to a carpeted classroom and can be entered either from the east west hall which bisects this floor, or through the large double sliding wooden doors, which give access to the northwest room. This room is currently a day care facility. A small kitchen has been placed at the west end of the main entrance hall. The stair on the south side of this hall near the kitchen gives access to the main floor of the church. To reach the furnace, one must exit the building and enter through the exterior door.

The balcony is reached by stairs at each end of the entrance hall. The stairs have an unpainted wood balustrade with cylindrical balusters. The newels are elaborately turned with wide, flat, circular newel caps, which have a raised dome shaped center. The stairs make two right angle turns and one enters the balcony facing the altar. The balcony has only two stages and row of pews on each stage. It has a solid wood railing with a slightly sloped surface. There is a slight projection to the balcony in the center section to make space for the organist and to cover the stairway to the basement.

#### National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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The center of the balcony is dominated by a very well preserved Hook tracker pipe organ, which was installed in 1865. The organ pipes are elaborately painted with a decorative band across the center of each pipe. The old pump handle for forcing air through the pipes is still in place although the organ now uses electricity.

The corners of the projecting area of the balcony are flanked by wooden sheathed steel pillars, which were installed in 1985 to support the belfry.

Much of the church appears to be taken directly from Asher Benjamin's 1839 The Builder's Guide. Particular attention should be paid to plates LVIII, LIX and LX.

#### SUBSURFACE:

Archival and photographic evidence place substantial structures on the north and west sides of the current property boundaries (see section 8, page 7). These structures were horse sheds providing carriage and stabling facilities for the parishioners. These buildings were torn down in 1928. A considerable portion of the foundation stones of these structures is still visible on the surface. There is a high potential for significant subsurface remains. Archaeological investigations, combined with archival research, would likely provide considerable amounts of data about this type of structure which was once common in Vermont but is now extremely rare.

		Congregational Church Property	Addison County, Vermont County and State			
8. S	ta	tement of Significance				
(Mai	rk "	able National Register Criterla x* in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the y for the National Register listing.)	Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions) Architecture			
	A	Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.				
	В	Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.				
X (	С	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	Period of Significance			
		distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.	1843			
		Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.				
	-	a Considerations x* in all the boxes that apply.)	Significant Dates			
•		ty is:	1843			
		owned by a religious institution or used for				
، نما	^	religious purposes.				
_	В	removed from its original location.	Significant Person (Complete If Criterion B is marked above)			
Ц (	C	a birthplace or grave.	N/A			
	D	a cemetery.	Cultural Affiliation			
	Ε	a reconstructed building, object, or structure.	N/A			
	F	a commemorative property.				
	G	less than 50 years of age or achieved significance	Architect/Builder			
		within the past 50 years.	Bostwick, Frederick and Fobes			
Narrative Statement of Significance ( Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets. )						
		or Bibliographical References				
Bib (Cite	liO the	<b>g raphy</b> books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or n	nore continuation sheets.			
Prev	vio	us documentation on file (NPS):	Primary location of additional data:			
	p	reliminary determination of individual listing (36 FR 67) has been requested	<ul><li>State Historic Preservation Office</li><li>Other State agency</li></ul>			
	•	reviously listed in the National Register	Federal agency			
		reviously determined eligible by the National egister	<ul><li>Local government</li><li>University</li></ul>			
	d	esignated a National Historic Landmark	☑ Other			
X	re #	ecorded by Historic American Buildings Survey	Name of repository:			

☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering

Record # \_\_\_\_\_

First National Bank of Orwell

Name of Property	County and State
10. Geographical Data	
creage of Property 1.07	
TM references Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)	
1 118 6 36 6 9 0 48 5 1 3 d 5 Zone Easting Northing	Zone Easting Northing  4
Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet	.)
Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation she	pet.)
11. Form Prepared By	
name / title Todd Hannahs	
organization University of Vermont, H.P. Prog	ram date April 28, 1997
street & number Wheeler House, 442 Main Street	telephone <u>802 656–3180</u>
city or town <u>Burlington</u>	state <u>Vermont</u> zip code <u>05405-0164</u>
Additional Documentation	
Submit the following items with the completed form:	
Continuation Sheets	
Maps	
A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating	g the property's location.
A Sketch map for historic districts and propertie	s having large acreage or numerous resources.
Photographs	
Representative black and white photograph	s 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 First Congregational Church Board of	Trustees
street & number <u>8 Church Street</u>	
city or town Orwell	state <u>Vermont</u> zip code <u>05760</u>

First Congregational Church

Addison County, Vermont

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

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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The First Congregational Church of Orwell, built in 1842 by Frederick Bostwick and Fobes, is one of the finest ecclesiastical examples of the Greek Revival style in Vermont. It is a large two story three-by-four-bay building with an imposing distyle in antis front facade with fluted Doric columns. A magnificent belfry displays anthemion motif panels, a denticulated entablature, Ionic columns and corner pilasters. The structure possesses a large pediment, pilasters and a full Tuscan entablature. The monumental style of its construction was a result of the great prosperity enjoyed by Orwell due to the great financial rewards of sheep farming at the time the church was constructed. The church has served the community throughout its history. It contains a notable Hook tracker organ purchased by subscription to honor returning Civil War veterans. Since 1882 the church has housed the town clock. There is a high potential for significant subsurface remains of horse sheds that provided carriage and stabling facilities within the current property boundaries. A considerable portion of the foundation stones of these structures is still visible on the surface. These structures, which were once common in Vermont, are now extremely rare. The church continues to the present day as an active Congregational church. Although it is a religious property, the First Congregational Church derives its primary significance from its architectural importance. This building is eligible under criterion C, consideration A of the National Register of Historic Places because it embodies the distinctive characteristics of type, period and method of construction. This property also meets the requirements for the church property type in the Multiple Property Listing for "Religious Buildings, Sites and Structures in Vermont."

On August 18th of 1763 sixty-four men obtained control of the land that is now Orwell, Vermont. The "plantation" was named in honor of Lord Orwell, a minister of the board of Trade and Plantations. It was not until 1771 that settlement of Orwell was begun. The Charter was issued by Benning Wentworth, then Governor of New Hampshire. Of the original sixty-four proprietors only three are mentioned as ever having come to Orwell. The three, Benjamin Underhill, Reed Ferris and Benjamin Ferris, were New York Quakers from Duchess County. They did not reside in Orwell but only made yearly visits to collect their rent in cattle. The original charter still hangs in the town clerk's office in Orwell, Vermont.

The original grant encompassed approximately 27,640 acres in a roughly oblong six-by-seven mile square. Originally included within the bounds of Rutland County, the area was slightly increased and the township was annexed to Addison County in 1847.

The first major habitation within the bounds of Orwell was a result of the Revolutionary War. Mount Independence received its name on July 18th of 1776 when word was received of the signing of the Declaration of Independence. The Mount was the scene of

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considerable military activity until July of 1777 when it was determined that the Mount could not be held in the face of Burgoyne's advancing army. Some of the soldiers who served there returned after the war to settle in Orwell. Among them were John Pepper, Lieutenant Jonas Rice, Colonel Azel Abell and Ephraim Blood.

Some seventy to eighty dwellings had been built by the time the town of Orwell was formally organized on December 12,1787. Seventy-one men took the Freeman's Oath and the Oath of Allegiance. By 1790 the population of Orwell was listed as 778 in the census of that year.

In 1789 the motion was made by some of the townspeople to establish a church in the center of town. A new church was organized whose charter members were Mr. and Mrs. Ebenezer Hulburd, Mr. and Mrs. Stephen Spaulding, David Leonard, James Benedict and Shadrach Hathaway. In 1795 the first church was built. Rev. Sylvanus Chapin was its pastor throughout its existence. It was shaped like a barn and had simple slab seats. It was located near the front of the former Methodist church which is now the Community Hall.

Ten years later a second larger structure was built. This one was located to the southeast of the previous one and lasted forty years. Four pastors served it: Rev. Mason Knapen (1808-1819), Rev. Ira Ingraham (1820-1822), Rev. Sherman Kellogg (1826-1832) and Rev. Henry Morris (1834-1832). When the second church had become too dilapidated for further use, the establishment of a third church was undertaken. The construction of this church caused considerable local friction and represented a break with the past tradition of one meeting house for all denominations.

The 1830s and 1840s were a time of considerable religious ferment. Wilbur Miller who was from Poultney, Vermont, had achieved national fame. Millerism was at the height of its popularity just as the movement to build a new church in Orwell got under way. The Congregationalists proposed to pay for the new church but felt that they should have control over who would preach there. This led to a schism. There began a building race and the ousted Methodists were the first to erect a new church on the village green. This led to the establishment of two rival churches on the town green where previously one church had served the entire community.

The Orwell Congregational Church is an exceptionally fine example of Greek Revival church architecture. Built in 1842 by Frederick Bostwick of Orwell and a Mr. Fobes of Crown Point, New York, at a cost of \$6,418.96, the Church was dedicated in January of 1843. The design of the building is drawn from the work of Asher Benjamin. In the minutes of the

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church building committee, dated March 30, 1842, reference is made to plan "L9." In Benjamin's The Builder's Guide of 1839 Plan LIX is that of a Greek Revival church which is clearly the archetype of the First Congregational Church.

While several sources state that the building is believed to be the work of James Lamb, the only evidence to support this supposition is circumstantial. Although Lamb worked in Orwell in 1842 and 1843, there is no evidence of his involvement with the First Congregational Church. The records of the building committee are fairly extensive and Bostwick and Fobes are mentioned by name both in construction and financial discussions. Lamb's name does not appear anywhere in the church records or in the other contemporary sources. Lamb is known to have been responsible for two prominent Greek Revival style structures in Orwell in 1842 and 1843 and may have been too busy to undertake a work of this scope. There appears little deviation from Asher Benjamin's plans and little evidence to cause this building to be ascribed to Lamb's body of work save that is an imposing edifice in the Greek Revival style.

Shortly after the church was built carriage barns were added for the convenience of the parishioners (see section 8 page 7). These structures appear in a painting dating from 1860 which currently hangs in the Orwell town library. The barns were demolished in 1929. A significant quantity of the foundation material is still visible on the surface within the property boundaries. There is high potential for archaeologically significant subsurface deposits.

The grandness of the First Congregational Church of Orwell is a direct result of the economic climate of Addison County, Vermont in the first half of the nineteenth century. A monumental brick church with fluted wooden Doric columns in antis, the building is an expression of the economic prosperity of the community of Orwell and the religious trends active at the time of its construction. Built in 1842 the Church was particularly imposing because many of the parishioners were profiting from the boom in merino sheep raising. Merino sheep were introduced in Vermont in 1809 and quickly became a major factor in the agricultural economy of the state. In Addison county sheep raising was especially popular and successful. Merino sheep arrived in Orwell in 1815 and by the 1840s virtually every farm of substance had a flock. In 1840 Addison County produced more wool and had a greater number of sheep than any other county in the United States, in proportion to either territory or population. Sheep raising brought considerable wealth. In one instance the proceeds from the sale of one breeding ram were enough to pay for the construction of an entire barn.

At the close of the Civil War the citizens of Orwell chose to honor the returning veterans by installing a Hook tracker action organ in the upper balcony. This organ is listed

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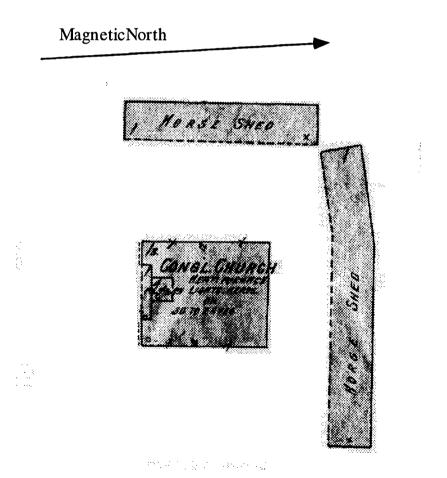
0 6	0 Dane	Da	First Congregational Church
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in the register of historic organs and is still in use. Recent concerts featuring this instrument have had audiences of over a thousand. In 1882 a Clock, that is still in operation, was added. Orwell was connected by rail in 1880 to Albany and Boston, and exact time keeping was becoming a community concern. The modern desire for accurate time keeping was reflected in the most prominent religious building in the community. In 1891 six large stained glass windows were installed.

The town of Orwell is located on the east side of the south end of Lake Champlain. The opening of the Champlain Canal in 1823 inaugurated a period of intense growth. The town experienced a economic boom from sheep farming in the 1830s and 1840s. This boom is represented in the large number of imposing Greek Revival dwellings and religious structures still to be found in Orwell. The town has always relied largely on agriculture and has thrived or declined as a result of market forces. With the collapse of the sheep ranching market, Orwell went into decline until the advent of the railroads combined with the dairy industry brought economic prosperity to Orwell once again.

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	name of property Orwell, Addison County, Vermont	
	Town, county and State	



Sanborn Fire Insurance Map 1885

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Benjamin, Asher. The Country Builder's Assistant. Greenfield, MA. 1797.

Benjamin, Asher. The American Builder's Companion. R. P. & C. Williams, 1827.

Benjamin, Asher. Practice of Architecture. Greenfield, MA. 1833.

Benjamin, Asher. The Builder's Guide. Boston, MA., Perkins & Marvin, 1839.

Bottum, Roswell. History of the Town of Orwell, Vermont from 1763 to 1851. Rutland, VT., Tuttle & Co. 1881

Fuller, Edmund. Vermont A History of the Green Mountain State. Brattleboro, VT., 1952

Goodhue, Josiah F. History of the Town of Shoreham, Vermont. Middlebury, VT., A. H. Copeland, 1861.

Swift, Samuel., Statistical and Historical Account of the County of Addison, Vermont. Middlebury, VT., A. H. Copeland, 1859.

Orwell Historical Society. A History of the Town of Orwell, Vermont Past & Present, Orwell, VT: 1988.

Orwell Church Record Books, Minutes of the Building Committee 3/7/1842 to 1/7/1901. On file at the First National Bank of Orwell, Vermont.

Vermont Division For Historic Preservation, "Historic Sites and Structures Survey, Orwell.", typescript. On file at the VDHP, Montpelier, VT.

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#### **SECTION 10 GEOGRAPHY**

#### VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION:

Commencing at a point at the northerly edge of Vermont Route 73, which said point is 8.8 feet south 07 degrees 46 minutes west of a marble monument; thence running north 07 degrees 46 minutes east through the center of said marble monument a distance of 277 feet to a marble monument; thence running south 82 degrees 14 minutes east a distance of 184.85 feet to a point marked by a steel post in the ground and continuing in the said same course north 82 degrees 14 minutes west a distance of 94.5 feet to a marble monument; thence running south 07 degrees 46 minutes west 112.0 feet to a marble monument; thence running south 66 degrees 28 minutes west a distance of 93.5 feet to a marble monument; thence running south 51 degrees 01 minutes west a distance of 152.5 feet to a marble monument a distance continuing in the same course through the center of said marble monument a distance of 12.0 feet to a point at the northerly edge of Vermont Route 73; thence running along the northerly edge of said highway north82 degrees 14 minutes west a distance of 10.5 feet to the point or place of beginning. The total amount of land contained is 1.07 acres. (see map, Section 10 page 2)

#### **BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION:**

This property description is based on the 1939 and 1961 maps of the Orwell School property maps on file at the town hall. The boundary description is taken from Deed record Book 29 page 109, dated May 16th, 1962. The church property was surveyed and clearly defined in 1961 as part of the re-adjustment of the Orwell public school property boundary. The property boundaries include all land currently owned by the First Congregational Church in Orwell which includes the church and those areas with a high potential for archaeologically significant remains associated with the structure.

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name of property
Orwell, Addison County, Vermont
Town, county and State

Copy of map on file with the Orwell town clerk

