



United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM

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 any 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 School Street Duplexes

other names/site number n/a

2. Location

street & number 343-345 and 347-349 School Street

not for publication n/a

city or town Bennington vicinity n/a

state Vermont code VT county Bennington code 003

zip code 05201

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this X 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 X meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide X locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Stephanne C. Gemelle National Register Specialist 1-25-07
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

Vermont State Historic Preservation Office
State or 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 commenting or other official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this 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):

Edson H. Beall 3-13-07

Edson H. Beall

Signature of Keeper

Date of Action

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

| Contributing | Noncontributing | |
|--------------|-----------------|------------|
| 2 | | buildings |
| | | sites |
| | | structures |
| | | objects |
| 2 | 0 | Total |

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

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

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

| | |
|---------------|------------------------|
| Cat: DOMESTIC | Sub: Multiple dwelling |
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: DOMESTIC Sub: Multiple dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

Queen Anne

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation STONE
 roof STONE: slate
 walls WOOD: weatherboard
 other Porches WOOD
Windows LEADED GLASS

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

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 a grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Less than one acre (0.20)

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

| | Zone | Easting | Northing | Zone | Easting | Northing |
|---|------|---------|----------|------|---------|----------|
| 1 | 18 | 647445 | 4749498 | 3 | | |
| 2 | | | | 4 | | |

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 Jean InnamoratiOrganization _____ date 8/15/2006street & number P.O. Box 3476 telephone 802 253 4323city or town Stowe state VT zip code 05672-3476

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 the SHPO or FPO.)

name Regional Affordable Housing Corporationstreet & number P.O. Box 1247 telephone 802 442 8139city or town Bennington state VT zip code 05201

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 the 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

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National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 1

School Street Duplexes
Bennington, Bennington County, VT

Description

The two duplexes at 343-345 and 347-349 School Street in Bennington, Vermont, occupy a corner lot along School and County Streets, one block east of North Street (Vermont Route 7). The site is prominent, since School Street ends at this intersection, and an old industrial complex, including a grain elevator, coal and wood storage sheds, offices and outbuildings are located directly across County Street. Tracks of the Rutland Railroad Company used to run parallel to County Street, diverging behind the former feed, coal and wood yard (now Bennington Potters). The neighborhood marks a transitional area between the commercial and industrial center of Bennington and the quieter residential zones surrounding it. Nearly identical to each other, the circa 1916 duplexes are rectangular in plan and built of wood, with platform framing, in a simple vernacular Queen Anne style typical of working class residences constructed in New England mill towns during the early decades of the twentieth century. Four bays wide across the front (west) and three bays deep, the two and one-half story structures have clapboard siding and moderately pitched gable roofs. Distinctive features of 343-345 and 347-349 School Street include hipped roof porches spanning the width of the eaves' front facades, wide one-over-one windows with leaded transom panels next to the central bay entryways, coursed fieldstone foundations, slate roofs and rear porches. Both structures on the property retain their integrity of location, setting, design, workmanship, materials, feeling and association.

The duplexes are set back from the sidewalk. The small front and side yards have a slight slope from the buildings down to the street. They are nearly square in plan, measuring 39 feet along School Street and 35 feet in depth, not including dimensions of the front or back porches. The coursed fieldstone foundations have been parged with concrete on the front (west) and side (north and south) elevations, but are exposed on the rear (east) elevations. Wood siding, original to the buildings, consists of equally spaced clapboards. Windows and doors have simple wood surrounds with small protruding cornices. There are narrow corner boards and minimal molding articulation in the roof's cornices and eaves, which have narrow overhangs. The slate roof is polychromatic, with grays and red predominating, and three bands of fishscale tiles at mid slope. Both buildings have central brick chimneys on the east slope of the roof.

In addition to being nearly identical to each other, the front (west) elevations of the duplexes are also perfectly symmetrical in fenestration and trim detailing. The front

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porches are raised on piers covered by wood lattice skirts. Each porch has five turned posts supporting a hip roof. Railings along the front of the porches have spindle balusters and square newel posts crowned with balls, while the side railings have simple stick balusters. Porch roofs have front gutters, asphalt shingles, and bead board paneling underneath on the porch ceilings.

There are paired entries centered in the facades of the two duplexes, with one door for each unit accessed from a shared wide cement stairway with a simple iron rail leading up to the front porch. The two entryways of each building are separated by the central porch post and a railing. All four units have original four-paneled wood doors with large glass lights in the upper panels; some have original brass fittings. Under the porch roofs in front of the entryways, three of the units have what appear to be original lighting fixtures consisting of molded glass globes with copper fittings.

Flanking each of the central entryways are wide one-over-one windows with diamond-paned, leaded glass transom panels. Fenestration on the second story of the facades reflects the pattern of the openings on the first story in a one, two, one rhythm. These windows are standard size one-over-ones with lintels placed just below the narrow friezeboard, neatly tucked under the slightly overhanging eaves.

On the gable ends (north and south elevations), the fenestration pattern is similar on both sides of both buildings. All are similar sized, one-over-one sash windows. There are three on the first and second stories, irregularly spaced, and paired windows in the attic story, with louvered vents below the gable peaks. Windows in the bay closest to the front elevations (west sides) of the duplexes are aligned one over the other, thereby giving a sense of prominence to the front corners of the buildings.

The back sides of the two duplexes are also identical to each other in fenestration. On the first story, secondary (kitchen) entryways are flanked by one-over-one windows on both sides. Kitchen doors are similar to the front doors: four-paneled with upper lights. Second story windows are aligned above the first story windows; the two central windows are smaller than the two in the ends. There are rear porches on both buildings. However, the duplex on the south side of the property (343-345 School Street) has a hipped-roof porch that extends the width of the first story, while on the north building (347-349 School Street), there are two smaller, shed roof porches sheltering only the rear entryways.

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The layout of each interior follows a similar sidehall-type plan. Beyond the front entry is a small foyer, with a flight of stairs to the upper floors. On the first floor, the living room lies to the side of the foyer and leads through a wide opening into the dining room, which occupies the central area and has a doorway opening into the foyer as well. The kitchen and laundry room are located in the back. A stairway from the kitchen gives access to the full-height basement with a packed dirt floor. Significant features of the first floor interiors include the large living room window looking onto the porch, paired windows in the dining room, period door moldings with corner medallions, hard wood floors, and high, beaded board chair railings with wainscoting in the kitchen. On the second floor, three bedrooms with built-in closets and a bath are arranged around a corridor and small hall. A stairway leads up to one large room with paired windows in the attic.

The property is in good condition and the duplexes have had very little alteration since their construction. Trim and finishings from the circa 1916 construction date are largely intact. Aluminum storm windows and doors have been installed. The concrete stairways with iron rails leading to the front porches and the principal entries likely replaced earlier wood stairs. At least two of the rear porches have been rebuilt, the others have been repaired and partially replaced with new wood flooring and rails. Air conditioning units have been installed in several window openings. Inside, hardwood floors and stairs are in generally good condition. Wood paneling covers the living room and dining room walls in at least two of the units, while original plaster over wood lath is present in the kitchens and upper stories. There is an original pressed metal ceiling in the dining room of 349 School Street. Floor plans have not been changed from their original layouts. The two School Street duplexes are remarkably intact, early twentieth century examples of working class housing in a mixed use neighborhood of a prosperous New England mill town.

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Continuation SheetSection number 8 Page 1School Street Duplexes
Bennington, Bennington County, VTStatement of Significance

The vernacular style duplex residences at 343-345 and 347-349 School Street in Bennington, Vermont, are exceptionally intact examples of working class housing stock typical of New England mill towns during the 1910s and 1920s. They are located one block east of North Street (Vermont Route 7), one of the two main Bennington thoroughfares, and within walking distance of the town's principal textile factories along the Walloomsac River. The property occupies a corner lot at the junction of School and County Streets and is directly opposite a locally significant historic industrial site which includes a grain elevator, saw mill, and coal and wood yard. The property changed ownership only a few times between 1916 and 1990, when the Regional Affordable Housing Corporation first acquired it. Built as a speculative venture during the economically prosperous years around the time of the First Great War, the duplexes provided rental housing for four working class families. Although modest in design and materials, the buildings were built solidly and incorporated several embellishments such as wide front and rear porches, large one-over-one windows with leaded glass panels, and decorative interior moldings and paneling, desirable features in new homes during these years. The duplexes, finely conserved, embody distinctive characteristics of style and method of construction typical of their period. The duplexes are eligible for National Register listing under Criteria A and C.

Working class housing stock constructed in New England's industrial towns during the early decades of the twentieth century generally consisted of multi-family units of modest size built with readily available materials. While most working class housing can be classed as vernacular in idiom because of the simple massing and plain form of the dwellings, many also had decorative elements such as porches, entryways and window and door surrounds in conservative styles popular at the time. The duplexes on School Street in Bennington reflect these trends, built as they are of wood platform framing in rectangular box massing, with Queen Anne embellishments such as the wood trim of the porches and leaded glass front windows.

Rental housing, provided either by mill owners or private landlords and available to mill workers in this period, consisted of a variety of forms, ranging from single detached and semi-detached houses to row and apartment houses and single or double duplexes. When they were built, around 1916, the School Street duplexes would have been classified as two semi-detached houses, since duplexes were considered two apartments, one above the other, under one roof. The School Street dwellings would have been considered attractive rental properties since each unit had its own yard and separate entry.

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In his book, Industrial Housing (1920), M. Knowles wrote that the average size house for industrial workers in the United States contained between five and six rooms, including separate living and dining areas and a kitchen large enough to accommodate a small table in addition to fixtures and appliances. Knowles listed features such as enough land for privacy, sufficiently soundproof floors, walls and roof, running water with waste connection to sewers, bathtubs, lavatories and water closets, and "uninterrupted daylight and ventilation, for windows in every room" as essential to any new dwellings. Desirable features included hot and cold water supply, clothes closets, porches and verandas, cellars, furnaces and electric lighting. Both because of the size and number of rooms, as well as the inclusion of attractive features and finishes, the duplexes on School Street were most likely built as rental housing for the families of skilled and thus more highly paid than average workmen.

The exact date of construction of the duplexes is not known but can be isolated between the years of 1916 and 1921, based on land records and Sanborn insurance maps. The 1912 Sanborn map shows a parcel of land, approximately 180 x 145 feet, at the corner of School and County Streets, with one dwelling located at 333 School Street and a small outbuilding. In 1913, Edward Hawkins and Grant Bronson from nearby Shaftsbury, Vermont, entered into an agreement with Mary J. and John Campbell and in February, 1916, they paid \$600 for the parcel, while allowing the Campbells to remain in the existing house. By 1921, the year of the next Sanborn map, three duplexes had been built on the land parcel: two along School Street (the two School Street duplexes, shown as nos. 335-337 and 339-341 on the 1921 map) and one along County Street (no. 323-325). Hawkins and Bronson thus developed the parcel previously owned by the Campbells, transforming it from a large lot with a single family dwelling into a property containing seven housing units: three duplexes with identical footprints and the Campbell house. The duplex fronting County Street, similar to the School Street duplexes in all but a few trim details, is presently a separate property, and the Campbell house was either moved or demolished after 1921. All three duplexes are recorded in the Vermont Historic Sites and Structures Survey, and listed on the State Register of Historic Places, with the notation that they are similar in design. The Survey provides contexts for the development of County and School Streets.

Between 1916 and 1921, School Street was a moderately prosperous neighborhood of mostly single family dwellings on long, narrow lots. The Elementary School was located two blocks south of the duplexes and a few businesses also occupied structures along the street, such as a large greenhouse owned by L.C. Holton, Florist, and flour and other storage sheds. The largest commercial activity in the immediate neighborhood was H.W.

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School Street Duplexes
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Myer's and Son Coal and Wood Yard, located directly across County Street from the School Street duplexes. This complex was the site of a saw mill, coal shed, storage offices and warehouses in 1912. By 1921, a grist mill and grain elevator had replaced the coal shed as the Myer's company shifted its emphasis from coal and wood to feed, builders' supplies and oil. Bennington Potters currently occupies this site.

A line of the Rutland Railroad ran parallel to County Street during the 1910s and 20s, diverging just to the east of the duplexes to form a rail yard for private storage at the Myer's property. Indeed, these were the boom years of rail transport in Bennington, and doubtless Hawkins and Bronson were attracted to developing the School Street site because of its proximity to the train line. At the time, it was considered desirable to live close to the rails, not only because of the industry that was likely to flourish nearby, but also because the passing trains represented modernism and progress in contemporary minds.

During the later years of the nineteenth century, Bennington had missed out on the advantages gained by having a main rail line run through it. The first rail system in southern Vermont followed the Connecticut River Valley, through Brattleboro and Bellows Falls, therefore bypassing Bennington. By the 1890s, the once flourishing textile mills were working only part-time, if at all, due in great part to Bennington's isolation from the main transportation route. After the Rutland Railroad Company built a line through Bennington at the turn of the century, however, industry once again prospered, and continued to flourish through the 1920s. Two knitting factories, the Cooper Plant and the E-Z Waist Company, employed approximately 1500 workers in 1910. The Cooper company specialized in circular elastic cloth woven using sophisticated knitting machines, while the E-Z Waist plant mass-produced underwear, especially 'union suits' for men and boys. Besides the knitting mills, employment in Bennington could also be obtained at foundry and machine works, paper mills, brush works and a mirror factory during the decades from 1900 to 1929.

Construction of the duplexes was thus a speculative venture by Hawkins and Bronson. They took advantage of the town's renewed prosperity after several decades of economic decline, and added six family dwellings, in three duplexes, to the town's existing housing stock, in a neighborhood along the rail line and close to the textile mills located near the Walloomsac River and its canals. Hawkins and Bronson, who likely also designed the duplexes at School Street, chose to build them in a modest vernacular style, but with high quality materials and superior workmanship which have allowed them to remain intact in an exceptional state of conservation nearly a century later. Many of the materials used in

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the structures, such as the fieldstone foundation walls, leaded-glass windows and slate roof tiles, were produced locally, while other building elements such as the standardized windows, cedar clapboards, turned porch posts and spindle balustrades were very probably transported to Bennington by rail.

In March, 1922, Hawkins and Bronson sold the land and premises along School and County Streets to Rollin Turner, whom the town land records describe as 'a single man from Bennington.' Turner agreed to pay Hawkins and Bronson \$7,000 for the property, in fourteen promissory notes of \$500 each. Rollin Turner owned the property until 1938 when the deed passed to Clifford and Inez Turner, likely his brother and sister-in-law. During the 1950s, the Turners sold the 323-325 County Street duplex and surrounding land and removed the former Campbell house from their property

The two School Street duplexes remained in the Turner family for four decades. In 1968, the Turners retained one unit (no. 343) for themselves and sold off the other three units to Philip and Isabelle Lawless, Kurt and Elizabeth Kloefer, and Robert and Tamara DeLong. The Regional Affordable Housing Corporation (RAHC) of Vermont, a non-profit organization, acquired the two duplexes and surrounding land from these four individual owners in 1990 and converted the property into condominiums. In January, 2003, the RAHC once again bought the property from the condominium owners.

Traditional materials and conventional construction methods present in the two duplexes include the wood frames and clapboards, tile roofs, stone foundations and plaster and lath interior walls. The Queen Anne style porch railings and posts, as well as the leaded glass windows that flank the central bay entries and the interior molding and finishes, are decorative embellishments that reflect stylistic tastes popular in Bennington in the period when the duplexes were built. The symmetry of their design, both in the arrangement of space and in the elevations, especially the facades, points perhaps most markedly to the speculative nature of the property owners' building venture. Hawkins and Bronson, the owners and very probably also the designers and contractors for the project, were able to economize costs by purchasing materials in bulk and also expedite the speed of construction by making the structures symmetrical and mirror images of one another.

The duplexes on School Street in Bennington are in an excellent state of conservation and intrinsically represent vernacular design and building practices from the first decades of the twentieth century. In these years around 1910-1920, the process of design and construction was undergoing a transformation as builders adjusted to the new and increasingly diverse array of technology, materials and styles made available to them through standardization, mass production, and the rail transport network. The duplexes combine elements of the local, traditional building practices of workmanship with new products and styles.

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School Street Duplexes
Bennington, Bennington County, VT

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School Street Duplexes
Bennington, Bennington County, VT

Geographical data

Verbal boundary description

The property at 343-345 and 347-349 School Street, Bennington, Bennington County, Vermont, is the town lot associated with the buildings. The lot is recorded on the Grand List of the Assessor of the Town of Bennington as Parcel ID Number 50-52-61-00.

Verbal boundary justification

The boundary includes the land historically associated with the buildings.

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Section number Photograph Labels Page 1 School Street Duplexes
Bennington, Bennington County, VT

Photograph Labels

The following information is the same for all photographs: School Street Duplexes, Bennington, Bennington County, VT. Digital images on CR-R are filed at Vermont Division for Historic Preservation. Credit: Jean Innamorati, 7/31/2006

Photo. No.

Description

| | |
|--------------|--|
| <u> 1 </u> | <u>Context shot looking north on School St.</u> |
| <u> 2 </u> | <u>View looking south on School St.</u> |
| <u> 3 </u> | <u>View looking east of 347-349 School St.</u> |
| <u> 4 </u> | <u>View looking east of 343-345 School St.</u> |
| <u> 5 </u> | <u>View looking northwest of 343-345 School St.</u> |
| <u> 6 </u> | <u>View looking south from County Street of 347-349 School St.</u> |
| <u> 7 </u> | <u>View looking west from back of property of 343-345 School St.</u> |
| <u> 8 </u> | <u>Detail of entryways, 347-349 School St.</u> |
| <u> 9 </u> | <u>Detail of front door, 343 School St.</u> |
| <u> 10 </u> | <u>Detail of leaded glass transom panel from living room, 345 School St.</u> |
| <u> 11 </u> | <u>Dining room and living room looking west, 343 School St.</u> |
| <u> 12 </u> | <u>Kitchen with wainscoting, 343 School St.</u> |

Paper used for the photographs is HP Premium Plus High Gloss and inks are HP Vivera #s 95 and 99. The printer is an HP Photosmart 8050.