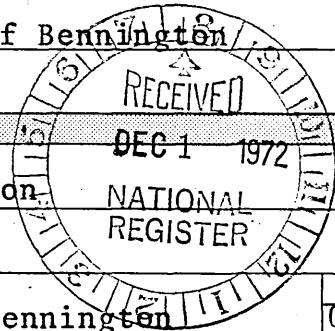


NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: Vermont	
COUNTY: Bennington	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
	APR 24 1973



1. NAME

COMMON:
First Congregational Church of Bennington

AND/OR HISTORIC:

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:
Monument Avenue, Old Bennington

CITY OR TOWN:
Bennington

STATE: **Vermont** CODE: **50** COUNTY: **Bennington** CODE: **003**

3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Park <input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify)
Yes: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Restricted * <input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/> No			

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:
First Congregational Church of Bennington

STREET AND NUMBER:
Monument Avenue

CITY OR TOWN: **Bennington** STATE: **Vermont** CODE: **50**

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:
Town Clerk's Office

STREET AND NUMBER:
205 South Street

CITY OR TOWN: **Bennington** STATE: **Vermont** CODE: **50**

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:
Historic American Buildings Survey

DATE OF SURVEY: **1937** Federal State County Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:
Library of Congress

STREET AND NUMBER:
Washington

CITY OR TOWN: **Washington** STATE: **D.C.** CODE: **11**

STATE: **Vermont**

COUNTY: **Bennington**

ENTRY NUMBER: **APR 24 1973**

DATE: **APR 24 1973**

FOR NPS USE ONLY

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

* Open to the public during specified hours.

7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)				
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins
	(Check One)		(Check One)		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input type="checkbox"/> Unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site	

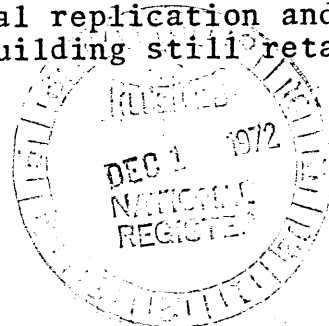
DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The First Congregational Church in Bennington is a large rectangular-shaped two-story frame structure with a projecting and pedimented vestibule and a three-stage tower and cupola rising from the gable roof. The walls are covered by white-painted clapboards and the corners and angles are marked by wood quoins. The two-story entrance porch, or vestibule, containing three round-headed doors and crowned by a pediment, projects from the main structure. In the center of this porch, above the main and pedimented entranceway, is a large Palladian window, and the center of the tympanum of the pediment above is a small semi-circular window. The square tower, rising from the roof of the main structure, also contains a smaller Palladian window in each face, and the top of this stage is enclosed by a balustrade. Above this is a graceful open belfry comprised of eight columns, surmounted by an octagonal cupola or "lantern" with oval windows and pilasters at the angles. The tower is topped by a dome and weathervane. The windows in the main structure are arranged in two tiers; those in the lower level have flat arches and those in the upper story are topped by round-headed arches.

Within, the ceiling is vaulted and groined and supported by six tall Ionic columns. Each column is comprised of a single white pine, shaped and carved to include pedestals and capitals, and extends from the cellar to the roof timbers. The ceiling is in the form of a great cross, with a shallow dome situated at the intersection of its arms. Interior columns and vaulting are arranged to emphasize the cruciform design of the ceiling. Galleries extend around the north, west, and south sides of the rectangular-shaped audience room. The projecting apse at the east end was added in 1864. The large central Palladian window in the east wall and the present pulpit were carefully reconstructed, following the details of Asher Benjamin's Plate 33, in the 1935-37 reconstruction. The existing 48 box pews on the main floor and the seats in the galleries were also rebuilt at this time, based on the scars found in the old under-floor, which outlined the shape and size of the original pews.

Although having been subjected to partial replication and reconstruction, the greater part of the building still retains its historic fabric.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS



NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

STATE Vermont	
COUNTY Bennington	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
	APR 24 1973

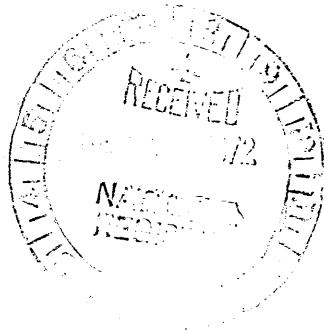
9.

(Continuation Sheet)

(Number all entries)

- Aymar Embury, II, Early American Churches (New York, 1914), 129-131.
- Elise Lathrop, Old New England Churches (Rutland, Vt., 1938), 156-57.
- George Marlowe, Church of Old New England (New York, 1947), 174-77.
- Edward F. Rines, Old Historic Churches of America (New York, 1936), 91-93.
- Vermont, A Guide to the Green Mountain State (American Guide Series) (Boston, 1966), 172.
- Herbert W. Congdon, Old Vermont Houses (New York, 1946), 174-77.
- Alan Gowans, Images of American Living (Philadelphia & New York, 1964), 218, 220.
- Edmund W. Sinnott, Meeting House & Church in Early New England (New York, Toronto, and London, 1963), 84.
- Dr. Vincent Ravi Booth, editor, Concerning the Old First Church of Bennington, A Vermont Shrine (New York, 1933).

*This submission is substantially based on a National Register form prepared for the National Historic Landmarks Survey of 1970 by Charles W. Snell, Survey Historian, Division of History, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation, National Park Service.



8. SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- Pre-Columbian | 16th Century | 18th Century | 20th Century
 15th Century | 17th Century | 19th Century

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known)

1804-05

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|--|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal | <input type="checkbox"/> Education | <input type="checkbox"/> Political | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry | <input type="checkbox"/> Science | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture | _____ |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce | <input type="checkbox"/> Military | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications | <input type="checkbox"/> Music | | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation | | | _____ |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

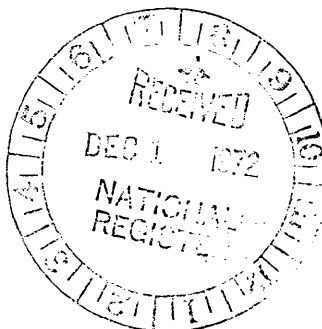
History

By 1800 the original meeting house, built in 1766, had become too small for the congregation and plans were underway to erect a new and larger church. Funds for the new structure, designed to seat about 650 people, were raised one-quarter from taxes and three-quarters from the sale of the pews. Lavius Fillmore, employed as the architect and builder, drew very heavily on Plate 33 of Asher Benjamin's The Country Builder's Assistant (first published at Greenfield, Massachusetts in 1797) as the source of his plan. The only changes Fillmore introduced in the Benjamin plan were the Palladian windows in the first stage of the tower, the round top of the doors, and the round-headed windows in the upper tier of the main structure. Construction began on June 25, 1804 and the first service in the new church was held on January 1, 1806. The carving was done by Asa Hyde, a skilled craftsman brought from Connecticut for this purpose. Total cost of construction was \$7793.20.

Significance

The First Congregational Church of Bennington is probably Vermont's finest example of a frame church designed in the late Georgian or Federal-Adamesque style. The structure is located at the western approach to the village and serves as the visual nucleus of the architecturally rich district of Old Bennington.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS



9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

The First Congregational Church of Bennington, Old Bennington Vermont (Booklet published by the Church, River Road Press, North Bennington, Vt., n.d.).

Talbot Hamlin, Greek Revival Architecture in America (New York, 1944), 96.

Fiske Kimball, American Architecture (Indiannapolis, 1928), 75.

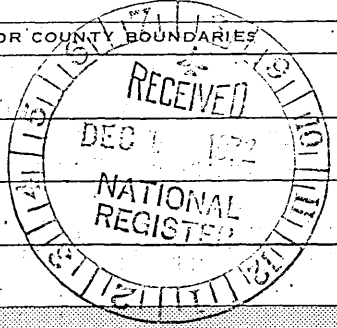
10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY				OR	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES				
CORNER	LATITUDE		LONGITUDE		LATITUDE		LONGITUDE		
	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds
NW	0	'	"	0	'	"	42	53	00
NE	0	'	"	0	'	"	73	12	48
SE	0	'	"	0	'	"			
SW	0	'	"	0	'	"			

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: 1 1/2 acres

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE



11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE: Chester H. Liebs, Supervisor

ORGANIZATION: Vermont Division of Historic Sites DATE: 11/27/72

STREET AND NUMBER: Pavilion Building

CITY OR TOWN: Montpelier STATE: Vermont CODE: 50

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison 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. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National State Local

Name William B. Pinney

Title Director of Historic Sites State Liaison Officer

Date 11/27/72

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

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

Robert M. Utley
Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date 4/24/73

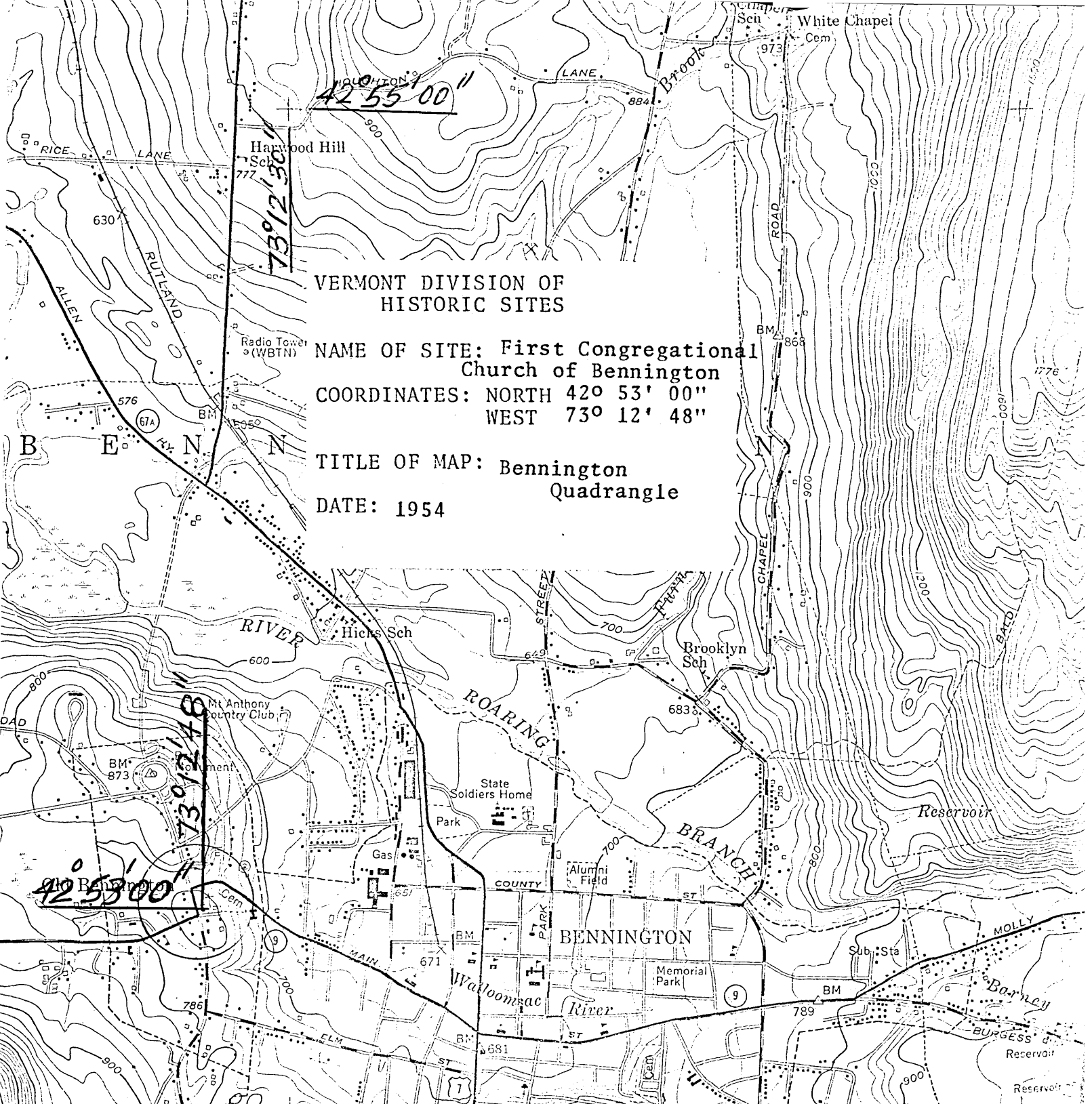
ATTEST:

[Signature]
Keeper of The National Register

Date 4/26/73

18/645930/4749196
DTM:RET
WAC 9-30-75

SEE INSTRUCTIONS



VERMONT DIVISION OF
HISTORIC SITES

NAME OF SITE: First Congregational
Church of Bennington

COORDINATES: NORTH 42° 53' 00"
WEST 73° 12' 48"

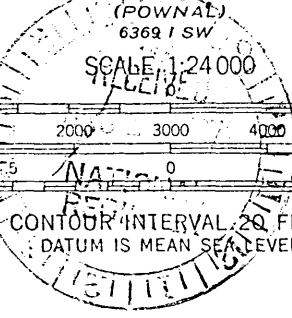
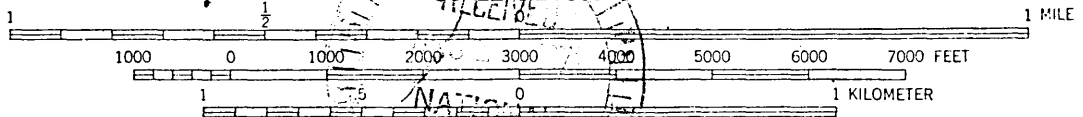
TITLE OF MAP: Bennington
Quadrangle

DATE: 1954

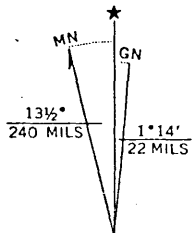
42° 53' 00"
73° 12' 48"

12'30" POWNAL U.S. MI.
WILLIAMSTOWN, MASS. 14 MI.

(POWNAI)
6369 1 SW



CONTOUR INTERVAL 20 FEET
DATUM IS MEAN SEA LEVEL



UTM GRID AND 1954 MAGNETIC NORTH
DECLINATION AT CENTER OF SHEET

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS
FOR SALE BY U. S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST