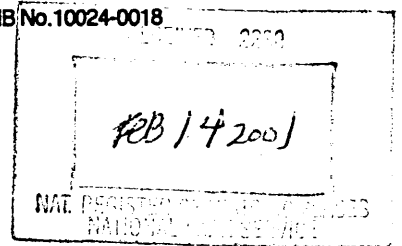


United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service



### 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 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.

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#### 1. Name of Property

historic name Richmond Congregational Church

other names/site number N/A

#### 2. Location

street & number Corner of Bridge Street and Church Street  a not for publication  
city or town Richmond  a vicinity  
state Vermont code 51 county Chittenden code 007 zip code 05477

#### 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

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

Elsa Gilbertson NR Specialist 1/24/2001  
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 certifying official/Title Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

#### 4. National Park Service Certification

- I hereby certify that the property is:
- entered in the National Register
    - See continuation sheet
  - determined eligible for the National Register
    - See continuation sheet
  - determined not eligible for the National Register
  - removed from the National Register
  - other, (explain): \_\_\_\_\_

for  
Signature of the Keeper Elsa H. Beall Date of Action 3/29/01

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

5. Classification

Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)

Category of Property (Check only one box)

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

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

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

Contributing Noncontributing buildings sites structures objects Total

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

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

Religious Buildings, Sites and Structures in Vermont

0

6. Function or Use

Current Functions

Historic Functions (Enter Categories from instructions)

(Enter Categories from instructions)

Religion: Religious Facility

Religion: Religious Facility

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter Categories from instructions)

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

Colonial Revival

foundation Stone

walls Shingle

Vinyl

roof Asphalt

other Wood

Narrative Description

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

Richmond Congregational Church  
Name of Property

Chittenden County, VT  
County and State

**8. Statement of Significance**

**Applicable National Register Criteria**

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

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

**Criteria Considerations**

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

Property is:

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

**Areas of Significance**

( Enter categories from instructions )

Architecture

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Period of Significance**

1903

1911

**Significant Dates**

1903

1911

**Significant Person**

( Complete If Criterion B is marked above )

N/A

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

**Architect/Builder**

Willcox, Walter R. B.

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

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

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

**Bibliography**

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

**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

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

**Primary location of additional data:**

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

Name of repository:

Richmond Town Clerk's Office

Richmond Congregational Church

Name of Property

Chittenden County, VT

County and State

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreage of Property Less Than One

**UTM references**

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	<u>1</u>   <u>8</u>	<u>6</u>   <u>5</u>   <u>9</u>   <u>5</u>   <u>8</u>   <u>0</u>	<u>4</u>   <u>9</u>   <u>1</u>   <u>8</u>   <u>4</u>   <u>6</u>   <u>0</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing
2			

3			
	Zone	Easting	Northing
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 James M. Moran/Graduate Student

organization University of Vermont, H.P. Program date April 29, 1997

street & number Wheeler House telephone 802 656-4006

city or town Burlington state Vermont zip code 05405

**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

**Continuation Sheets**

**Maps**

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

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

**Photographs**

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

**Additional items**

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

**Property Owner**

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

name Richmond Congregational Church

street & number P. O. Box 302 telephone 802 434-2053

city or town Richmond state Vermont zip code 05477

**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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National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 1 Richmond Congregational Church  
Richmond, Chittenden County, VT

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**Description**

The Richmond Congregational Church is a Colonial Revival style structure located on the corner of Bridge Street and Church Street in Richmond, Vermont. Designed by the prominent Burlington architect Walter R. B. Willcox and completed in 1903, the church is situated on a small rise, with its east facade "front" looking down a gently sloping, modestly landscaped lawn toward Bridge Street in the commercial and municipal center of Richmond village (an area which is listed in the State Register of Historic Places as part of the Bridge Street Historic District). The church is a wooden, two story structure, with an exposed basement level, a fieldstone foundation, cream colored vinyl siding imitating wooden clapboards, and green wooden shingles. It is roughly cruciform in design, and is built generally along a north to south axis, with a four bay, two section office extension (constructed in 1984, in the same Colonial Revival style) projecting westward from the original structure. Original features include a three-story open bell tower cradled between the choir and the east transept, numerous triple sets of double sash windows, an irregular hipped roof, stained glass windows in the gable ends of both transepts, and green shingles which cover the second story of the church. Historic interior features include wooden wainscotting, pews, and the original wooden trusses supporting the ceiling in the narthex. Although not pristine, the property nevertheless retains its integrity of design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.

*Exterior:*

Looking at the church from its Bridge Street front, right to left, one is immediately struck by the stained glass windows in the facade of the east transept. A single large stained glass window which resembles the central arched sash of a Palladian window dominates this facade. This window is flanked by two smaller, narrower stained glass windows, which are rectangular in shape, and which resemble the smaller side lights of a Palladian window. These flanking "sidelights" are located several feet from the central sash, and all three windows are set approximately five feet above the level of the ground. The arch of the central window springs upwards about five feet into the gable, while several feet above it, just below the apex of the gable, there are three slot-like windows of clear glass.

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Section number 7 Page 2 Richmond Congregational Church  
Richmond, Chittenden County, VT

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**Description (continued)**

To the immediate left of the east transept is the bell tower. Set back from the facade of the transept by a few inches, the bell tower has a stained glass window in its first story similar in size and design to the flanking windows in the east transept. Slot-like windows similar to those in the east transept's gable adorn the upper portion of the second story of the tower (there are three windows in each of its four sides), while green shingles cover the second story wall (the first floor has vinyl clapboards). The open third story has twelve Colonial Revival style posts (three at a corner) supporting the roof, and this roof in turn is crowned by a multi-ball finial.

The main entrance to the church is reached by way of a pedimented Colonial Revival porch (constructed prior to 1911), located in the angle between the bell tower and the apse. The entry porch has a slightly projecting pediment supported by six posts, three at a corner. It also has a cornice with dentils. Directly across from the top of the porch steps, in the east wall of the choir, there is a triple set of double sash windows, with transoms. Entrance to the church is to the right, through a set of wood paneled double doors located in the south wall of the bell tower.

The apse is a three-sided projecting bay, just to the left of the porch. It points south down Bridge Street. It has one triple set of windows on the main floor of its south facade (the side facing Church Street). There is also one double set of windows on each of the two angled sides of the apse, both of these on the main floor. The exposed basement level of the apse has single windows that correspond to the windows of the main level. These windows are located in the fieldstone foundation.

Attached to the west wall of the choir is a square projecting wing, one bay wide, with a hipped roof. The western roof surface has a single brick chimney. The southern facade of this wing has one triple set of windows on the main floor, while below it on the basement level are smaller, single windows, each one aligned with a window above. These basement windows are located in the stone wall of the foundation. The office extension runs south from the west wall of this wing. It runs parallel to Church Street, and is four bays long and two stories high on its south side. The fenestration on the entire south side of the building is all single pane, double sash windows. The windows on the main level have transoms, while the windows on the exposed

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Section number 7 Page 3 Richmond Congregational Church  
Richmond, Chittenden County, VT

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**Description (continued)**

basement level do not.

When viewed from Church Street, the office extension appears to consist of two separate sections. The first section of the extension, adjacent to the above-mentioned west wing, is two bays wide. It has two sets of double windows on its first floor (this first floor corresponds to the basement level of the west wing). This section is set back from the facade line of the west wing and second section, and has a connecting bridge, with a balustrade, running across its face. This bridge connects the second floor of the west wing to the second floor of the second section. Below the bridge, single windows frame a simple glass and panel door. These first floor features are situated in a green-shingled wooden wall, while the rest of the facade above the first floor is covered by cream colored vinyl siding. The second section of the office extension is two bays wide. It has two sets of double windows on each floor. The first floor of this section also has green shingles, with cream colored vinyl siding covering the second floor. A cutaway corner, facing west, ties this section to its western facade. It has single sets of double windows on each floor.

The west side, or "back" of the church, is four bays wide, with four sets of windows on the main level, and two on the basement level. The windows are all single pane, double sash windows. Looking left to right, the basement level windows lie underneath the main level windows of the second and fourth bays. There is also a wooden door (with a single, nearly full-length glass sash) on the first floor of the southernmost bay, to the left of the window. Projecting up out of the western surface of the roof, one third of the distance from the Church Street side, a narrow metal pipe serves as a small chimney. This pipe extends just above the roof line of the church.

The extension's opposite side, facing north, differs markedly from the south side in its appearance. It is four bays long, with its two eastern bays located in a section of the extension which appears to project west out of the choir from a line flush with the gable end of the west transept. These four bays are all one story in height, and the two western bays lie within a gable wing, which projects north from the rest of the extension (its western wall constitutes part of the above-mentioned "back" wall of the church) by a depth of two bays.

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Section number 7 Page 4 Richmond Congregational Church  
Richmond, Chittenden County, VT

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**Description (continued)**

Fenestration on the entire northern side of the church is extremely limited. The north-projecting gable wing of the office extension has only two double sets of double sash windows on its eastern side, and only a small wooden door (with two large glass panels) in the center of its gable end facade. The north wall of the narthex likewise has no windows, nor does the eastern section of the extension between the choir and the north-facing gable wing (which indeed has only one small wooden door with a double glass window at its extreme eastern end). The western facade of the west transept is the mirror image of the east transept, complete with stained glass windows.

There is a small, shed-like structure attached to the north side of the church. It is cradled in the northwest angle between the narthex and the west transept. This structure has a roof which slopes downward from the west wall of the transept (from a point approximately one foot below the level of the eaves) and two wooden doors. These doors are located in the structure's north and west walls. Above the shed-like structure, projecting up out of the eastern roof surface of the hipped roof of the narthex, there is a second brick chimney. In height and design, this chimney closely resembles the chimney on the south side of the church.

*Interior:*

Inside, the church offers a surprise. What had appeared to be the apse is in reality a parlor, while the chancel lies at the north end of the nave, within what had appeared to be a narthex (albeit without any actual portal). The light from the stained-glass windows washes a wooden wainscotting which rises to the level of the windows, and this light partially illuminates a complicated series of trusses and cross-beams in the ceiling (which since 1971 have been reinforced by two steel pillars and a steel cross-beam, encased in wood). The floor is made of wood, but in the parlor this has been covered by what looks like indoor-outdoor carpeting. The nave itself can be separated from the parlor by two large wooden overhead doors, which also leave a passage from the front door to the office wing.

The wooden pews in the church are divided into four sections by three aisles which run the length of the nave. Looking toward the chancel, left to right, one sees the



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Richmond, Chittenden County, VT

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**Description (continued)**

following arrangement: eight pews (flush with the west wall), an aisle, another nine pews, an aisle, nine more pews, an aisle, and seven pews (flush with the east wall). The pews all curve in order to create a semicircle, with the concave side of the semicircle facing the chancel. The ends of the pews all have sloping armrests which rise several inches above the rest of the pew and which resemble scrolls. The two middle sections of nine pews each also have scroll-like dividers at their mid-points. Currently, all pews have cloth cushions, and each pew is identified by a brass number plate.

Artificial lighting is provided by three light fixtures, suspended several feet from the ceiling. Each fixture features a single glass globe. These are arranged along an axis which runs from the center of the east transept to the center of the west transept. In 1979, the middle glass globe was repaired in such a way as to appear identical with the two original globes. All other light is natural, the main source of illumination being the stained glass windows. These windows, donated through the years by a number of different individuals and groups (including the now disbanded Richmond King's Daughters), feature motifs which range from a lyre (in the central arched sash of the western Palladian window) to a Maltese cross (in the central arched sash of the eastern Palladian window). The rostrum is a semicircular, raised platform (its convex side faces the nave), which is located several feet above the floor of the nave. Here the altar is located, set back inside a niche in the rear wall.

The interior of the office extension is modern in style, but designed in such a way as to blend in with the Colonial Revival style of the church. Besides providing room for administrative offices and the pastor's office, this section has a kitchen, dining room, and a day care center (on the basement level). Space in this section lends itself to a variety of uses, and this fact allows the church to serve a number of different community needs within the same space.

**Statement of Significance**

The Richmond Congregational Church, built in 1903, is significant as an example of how the Colonial Revival style came to be applied to church architecture in

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Richmond, Chittenden County, VT

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**Statement of Significance (continued)**

Vermont. Designed by the prominent Vermont architect Walter R. B. Willcox, this wooden church provides an intriguing example of that architect's eclectic and innovative approach to working with the Colonial Revival style. Because of this association with Willcox, who was one of the few professionally trained architects working in northern Vermont at the turn of the century, and because of its unusual design, this church satisfies eligibility requirements set forth for religious properties under Criteria Consideration A. At the same time, this church meets National Register Criterion C in the area of Architecture, being a singular example of this kind of structure in Vermont, and being one of the few Vermont churches designed by Walter Willcox. It is being nominated under the Multiple Property Submission for "Religious Sites, Buildings, and Structures."

Congregationalism has long had an important impact on the Richmond community. The First Congregational Church was organized on September 24, 1801, by two Connecticut missionaries, Rev. Jeremiah Hallock and Rev. Jedediah Bushnell. At first consisting of only thirteen members, the Congregational community grew slowly, and eventually twenty nine Congregationalists joined with a number of Baptists, Universalists, "Christians," and Methodists as proprietors of the Richmond Meeting House ( this National Historic Landmark, constructed in 1813, is now known as the Old Round Church). During the 1820s the congregation languished, but in 1833 a ten day revival meeting, presided over by Rev. Elihu B. Baxter, reinvigorated religious life throughout the region. In 1836 the First Congregational Society of Richmond was formed in order to support preaching activities. It was this organization, together with the First Congregational Church of Richmond, which in 1850 sponsored the building of the first separate house of worship for Congregationalists on the present church site.

By 1903, the costs associated with repairing the old church made its replacement seem desirable to many church members. It was decided therefore that a new, larger structure should be built to take the place of the 1850 structure. Plans were made to hire an architect and builders, as well as to sell off some church land between the church and the parsonage in order to help pay for it (eventually this land was to become Church Street). The result was the construction of the present church, which

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Section number 8 Page 7 Richmond Congregational Church  
Richmond, Chittenden County, VT

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**Statement of Significance (continued)**

was designed by Walter Willcox and built by Nichols and Parker of Essex Junction, Vermont. The church was officially dedicated on September 14, 1904.

Significantly, the building of this structure corresponded with a period of prosperity for Richmond, generated in large part by the advent of the Richmond Underwear Company in 1900. The Richmond Underwear Company had come to Richmond at the behest of local officials and business leaders, who provided the company with financial incentives in the hope of fostering economic opportunity. The resulting industrial expansion brought about by the new factory (which itself is listed on the National Register of Historic Places) in turn generated other forms of construction, as the company built a variety of dwellings (including a forty person boarding house) in order to accommodate its work force. By 1904, over 20% of the buildings located in Richmond's downtown business district were of recent construction, having been constructed only within the last five years.

The Richmond Congregational Church was designed by one of the few professionally-trained architects working in Vermont at the turn of the century. Walter R. B. Willcox (1869-1947) was a Burlington, Vermont, native who was trained at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and the University of Pennsylvania. A great admirer of the so-called Jacobethan style, Willcox was also interested in the Beaux Arts and Colonial Revival styles. During a twelve year period (1895-1907), Willcox came to design some of the most significant architecture in the city of Burlington. Despite the fact that he enjoyed success in Vermont, in 1907 Willcox moved to Seattle, where he established a successful firm, and became active in municipal affairs and city planning. In 1922, he was appointed chairman of the Department of Architecture at the University of Oregon in Eugene, Oregon, where (ironically) he developed an architectural philosophy which in many ways rejected the formalism inherent in the traditional Beaux-Arts educational philosophy that he had been trained in.

Willcox designed a number of residences and commercial structures in Burlington, including the Edmunds High School (1899), the Fletcher Free (Carnegie) Library (1902), John Dewey Hall (1902) at the University of Vermont, and the H. O. Wheeler School (1904-05). The Fletcher Free Library is constructed in the Beaux Arts

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Richmond, Chittenden County, VT

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**Statement of Significance (continued)**

style, while the Edmunds High School, the H. O. Wheeler School, and John Dewey Hall are all Colonial Revival in style. Although Colonial Revival in inspiration, the Richmond Congregational Church is not a straightforward example of the style. Despite its Palladian windows, rectangular, double hung sashes, and a cornice decorated with dentils, the irregular cruciform design of the church, its use of shingles and clapboards, and the unusual placing of its bell tower long resulted in the building being misclassified as Queen Anne.

The church has seen a number of additions and alterations throughout the twentieth century. By 1911 a Colonial Revival style porch had been added to the original structure, adjacent to the bell tower. In 1940 the dining room was enlarged, while major renovations to the downstairs area occurred from 1956 to 1958. The greatest change to the original structure came in 1984, with the construction of a new addition. This addition, designed by Donald Albertson of Burlington, is a two section office extension, and is four bays long and two stories high (its first story corresponding to the exposed basement level of the church proper). This addition was designed to match the architectural style of the church, and in fact does so successfully. It provides space for a number of activities, including a day care center.

Despite alterations, the church remains a noteworthy example of the Colonial Revival Style. The cross-shaped religious core of the church is largely untouched, and the stained glass windows of the transepts are intact. The original clapboards have been covered by cream colored vinyl siding, but the green shingles of the upper story remain. Inside the nave, the original trusses have been reinforced by a metal cross beam and supporting pillars (1971). These are encased in wood and were designed to blend in as much as possible with the original work. While not pristine, the Richmond Congregational Church still retains in large part the appearance of the original structure. It provides an interesting example of how the Colonial Revival style could be applied to an unusual way, while providing a rare look at how Walter Willcox designed for church architecture.

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**Bibliography**

Hemenway, Abby Maria. *The Vermont Historical Gazetteer*. Vol. 1. Burlington, Vermont: A. M. Hemenway, 1867.

National Park Service. "H. O. Wheeler School (Burlington, Vermont)." National Register of Historic Places. On file, VDHP office, Montpelier, Vermont.

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Riggs, Harriet. "Significant Events in the Life of Richmond Congregational Church, UCC." Richmond (Vermont) Congregational Church, 1996.

Riggs, Harriet. Interview by author in Richmond, Vermont. April 10, 1997.

Shoettle, Clark. "Deceased Architects and Builders Who Have Worked in Burlington, Vermont." Unpublished manuscript, n. d. Special Collections. University of Vermont.

Vermont Division for Historic Preservation. "Vermont Historic Sites and Structures Survey, Burlington" On file, VDHP office, Montpelier, Vermont.

**Verbal Boundary Description**

The boundaries of the nominated property follow the lot lines of the entire 0.5 acre parcel occupied by the Richmond Congregational Church. Beginning at the corner of Bridge Street and Church Street, the boundary runs 179.77 feet northwest along the northeasterly side of Church Street. The boundary then deflects to the right, and runs 2.25 feet. It deflects slightly to the right again, running 121.48 feet, before deflecting slightly right again 1.28 feet. This point marks the northernmost corner of the parcel. From this point, the boundary deflects right, running southeast 177.63 feet to a point on the northwestern side of Bridge Street. The boundary deflects right again, and runs southeast along Bridge Street to its point of origin.

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Richmond, Chittenden County, VT

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**Verbal Boundary Justification**

The nominated property includes the property historically associated with the Richmond Congregational Church.