

Benoit Apartment House (74 Pearl St.)
Name of Property

Caledonia County, Vermont
County and State

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

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1		buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
1		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

The Historic and Architectural Resources of
St. Johnsbury, Vermont

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

Domestic/multiple dwelling

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

Domestic/multiple dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

Queen Anne

Colonial Revival

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation brick

walls weatherboard

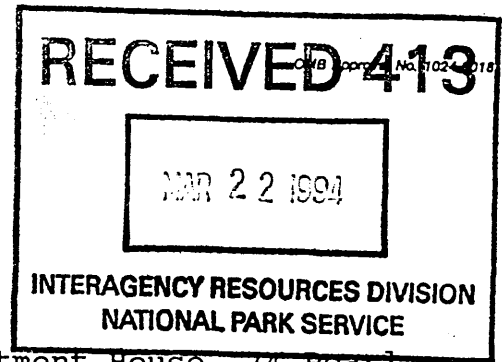
roof asphalt

other wood

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

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The southern Benoit Apartment House at 74 Pearl Street is being nominated under the multiple property submission, "The Historic and Architectural Resources of St. Johnsbury, Vermont," as an example of the "multi-family housing" property type. Built c.1894, this is the first of two similar houses standing side by side on Pearl Street to have been constructed. The 2 1/2 story eaves front house in the Queen Anne/Colonial Revival style has a 2 1/2 story side wing. The house contains three apartments and is located in a residential area of St. Johnsbury adjacent to the central business district as well as in close proximity to the Maple Street/Clarks Avenue Historic District, with which it shares a similar history. The building retains its integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.

The 2-1/2 story main block rests on a brick foundation and has clapboard siding and an asphalt shingle roof with an interior ridge chimney. It is simply articulated with plain cornerboards and a simple complete entablature with returns on the gable ends. Sash is generally 2/2 with simple cap moldings. A Queen Anne style gable wall dormer on the front facade features a lattice apex screen and is typical of similar dormers in other areas of town. The principal entrance hall on the right flank of the 5 bay, front facade is sheltered by a Colonial Revival style porch featuring tuscan colonnettes on a shingled half wall; a complete eaves entablature; and beaded, tongue and groove sheathing with natural finish on the ceiling. The porch wraps around the north side facade and the east facade of the wing. The porch may have been added c. 1920: Sanborn maps reveal a small, 1 story entrance porch in 1912 with a separate 2 story porch on the wing. Early 20th century exterior doors have large square lights, varied panelling patterns and are set in plain trim with cornice cap moldings. The wing is articulated in the same manner and has a shed dormer and an interior ridge chimney. The porch shelters a secondary entrance to the kitchen and rear stairhall.

Interior trim is symmetrical, with cornerblocks with patera in principal areas; plain trim and similar cornerblocks distinguish secondary access halls. Typical entry doors have 5 raised panels: twin vertical panels over a cross panel and 2 smaller panels. The principal staircase runs up in 2 flights at right angles around an open well with an intermediate landing at each story, forming a

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rectangular stairwell. The outstanding newel on the main floor features a square plan post with twin triglyphs running the length of each face of the shaft; the corners feature a torus molding, becoming part of an anthemion and palmette motif in the capital of the newel which terminates in a pyramidal cap. Balusters are turned. Ball pendants mark the lower part of the simple intermediate newels which have glyphs in the shafts and patera in the capital, with a ball cap at the top. The rear stairhall features a square newel with a pyramidal cap and turned balusters in an open staircase similar in plan to that in the principal entry hall.

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 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

c.1894

Significant Dates

c.1894

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

unknown

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:

Benoit Apartment House (74 Pearl St.)
Name of Property

Caledonia County, Vermont
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property .06 acre

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1

1	8
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7	3	7	4	6	0
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4	9	2	2	6	0	0
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Zone Easting Northing

3

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--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Zone Easting Northing

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 Deborah Noble, Principal
organization Deborah Noble Associates date January 18, 1992; January 1994
street & number P. O. Box 106 telephone (802) 695-2507
city or town Concord state Vermont zip code 05824

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 St. Johnsbury Housing Partnership
street & number 20 Main Street telephone (802) 748-5101
city or town St. Johnsbury state Vermont zip code 05819

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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The Benoit Apartment House at 74 Pearl Street, built c. 1894, is a significant representative of the structural/cultural evolution of multi-family housing in St. Johnsbury and, through its history and proximity, is closely related to the social characteristics of the Maple Street/Clarks Avenue district. A concentration first of Irish, then of French Canadian immigrant families, the district was associated with Catholic churches and parochial schools in close vicinity to the Benoit Apartment House on the south side of Maple Street. The outstanding Queen Anne/Colonial Revival style architectural elements of the building are well articulated and preserved. Closely related to the adjacent apartment house at 76 Pearl Street, the French Canadian heritage of both the original owner of the buildings, Virginia Benoit, and the later owners, the Roy family, represents a significant social trend in the town, which is developed further in the multiple property submission, The Historic and Architectural Resources of St. Johnsbury, Vermont. Earlier immigrants eventually acquired the means to become developers of multi-family housing, serving as landlords for later immigrants who were drawn to the town due mainly to the employment opportunities at the Fairbanks Scale Factory. The house is a good example of multi-family housing, and meets the registration requirements for this property type.

The lot (and that adjoining) was sold in 1892 to Loren Miller for \$1500 by the Caledonia County Court as the eastern part of the jail lot on Cherry Street.¹ Virginia Benoit (widow of Jerry Benoit, a barber who had a shop on nearby Eastern Avenue²) purchased the two lots in 1893³, with Sanborn maps of the era showing this southernmost apartment house as the first to be constructed. The town directory of 1904-05 shows that George E. Benoit, an employee at Fairbanks, lived at this address with a wife and 1 child. This

¹ St. Johnsbury Land Records, Book 33, pages 331-332.

² Hamilton Child, Gazetteer of Caledonia and Essex Counties, VT, 1764-1887. (Syracuse, N. Y.: The Syracuse Journal Co., 1887).

³ Op Cit., St. Johnsbury Land Records, Book 36, page 251.

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listing of residents is incomplete and may have included additional persons. The house was sold in 1912 to Edgar Roy⁴ (who also bought 76 Pearl Street), with the French Canadian Roy family owning both of the houses until the 1980's. It is interesting to note that the Sanborn maps at the beginning of the early 20th century show these 2 buildings as single dwellings ("D"). Multi-family dwellings are usually distinguished on these maps as "flats" or "tenements" or "double houses" (D/D). This may indicate that a conversion to the present apartment plan occurred during the Roy family ownership c. 1912. The Directory of 1919 indicates that there may have been as many as four apartments at 74 Pearl Street occupied by persons of French Canadian descent. The number of persons listed at this address relate to social characteristics typical of the French Canadian immigrants and are described in more detail in the multiple property listing of which this is a part. Pierre Roy, a clerk at Roy and Roy Meat Market at nearby 9 Eastern Avenue, lived at 74 Pearl Street with his wife, Julie, and Bertha Roy, a tailoress. Also at this address in 1919 were Dell L. Dubuc, who had a wife and 3 children, Joseph Morin, a carpenter with 3 children, and the family of Laurant Turgeon, an employee at Fairbanks with his wife and 3 children. The houses at 74 and 76 Pearl Street continue to be in common ownership and retain a high degree of historic integrity due to the virtual absence of additions or alterations of any large scale. The present owners, the St. Johnsbury Housing Partnership, are sensitively rehabilitating the apartment house.

⁴ Ibid., Book 48, page 312.

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MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Child, Hamilton. Gazetteer of Caledonia and Essex Counties, Vt., 1764-1887. Syracuse, N.Y.: The Syracuse Journal Co., 1887.

Fairbanks, Edward T. The Town of St. Johnsbury, Vt. St. Johnsbury: The Cowles Press, 1914.

Grand Lists, St. Johnsbury. Various Years.

Hodgdon, Allen. Historic Sites and Structures Survey. Montpelier, Vt.: Division for Historic Preservation, 1978.

Johnson, Claire Dunn. "I See By The Paper": An Informal History of St. Johnsbury, St. Johnsbury: Cowles Press, Vol.I, 1987, Vol. II, 1989.

St. Johnsbury Directories, St. Johnsbury, Vt. Various Years.

St. Johnsbury Land Records, St. Johnsbury, Vt. Various Books.

MAPS

Beers, F.W. County Atlas of Caledonia Vermont. New York: F.W. Beers and Co., 1875.

Presdee and Edwards. Map of St. Johnsbury, Caledonia County, Vt. New York: Presdee and Edwards, 1853.

Sanborn Maps, St. Johnsbury, Vt. 1884-1920.

Wallings, H.F. Map of Caledonia County, Vermont. New York: Baker and Tilden, 1858.

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10. Geographical Data

Verbal Boundary Description: The boundary is the city lot associated with the building (in common ownership with 76 Pearl Street). The northern boundary runs from the east lot line to the west lot line midway between the foundation walls of 74 and 76 Pearl Street, thereby splitting the legal lot roughly in half. The property is described in St. Johnsbury Land Records, book 206, page 311. It is recorded, along with 76 Pearl Street, as the tax lot--tax map 23, block 5, lot 56.

Boundary Justification: The boundary includes the land historically associated with the building. The northern boundary separates that portion of the historic lot on which stands the building known as 76 Pearl Street. The house at 76 Pearl Street is nominated separately.