United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form

This form is used for documenting property groups relating to one or several historic contexts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin *How to Complete the Multiple Property Documentation Form* (formerly 16B). Complete each item by entering the requested information.

___X___ New Submission _____ Amended Submission

A. Name of Multiple Property Listing

Village Greens of Vermont

B. Associated Historic Contexts

(Name each associated historic context, identifying theme, geographical area, and chronological period for each.)

Vermont Village Greens, 1777-1976

C. Form Prepared by:

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D. Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this documentation form meets the National Register documentation standards and sets forth requirements for the listing of related properties consistent with the National Register criteria. This submission meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR 60 and the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Archeology and Historic Preservation.

_____ _____ _____
Signature of certifying official Title Date

_____
State or Federal Agency or Tribal government

I hereby certify that this multiple property documentation form has been approved by the National Register as a basis for evaluating related properties for listing in the National Register.

_____ _____
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

United States Department of the Interior
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Table of Contents for Written Narrative

Create a Table of Contents and list the page numbers for each of these sections in the space below.
Provide narrative explanations for each of these sections on continuation sheets. In the header of each section, cite the letter, page number, and name of the multiple property listing. Refer to *How to Complete the Multiple Property Documentation Form* for additional guidance.

E. STATEMENT OF HISTORIC CONTEXT

Introduction and definition of village green:
Village greens, or commons, are a character-defining feature of many Vermont town and village centers. Often referred to as the "front lawn" of a community, village greens provide a space for congregation, recreation, and public discourse. Although most village greens existing today stem from a number of different historic uses, their purposes and functions have adapted over time to serve the needs of the communities around them.[1]
Throughout New England, the terms "green" and "common" are used depending on regional or local distinctions, and sometimes interchangeably. In Vermont, "village green" is the more frequently found terminology, although there does not seem to be a discernable trend in the usage of one term versus the other besides its historical nomenclature as such. A village green may take on either of two definitions: a *space set aside in a central location during a town's inception for a public purpose*; ***or*** *a space that developed into a public multi-use purpose through donation, community coalition, or necessity*. In addition, the idea of a publicly owned common resource implies "responsible use."[2] (Historically, the communal function of greens allowed that the resource be available to everyone as long as it was maintained in a sustainable way. A village green is accessible for a variety of community uses, from farmers' markets and fairgrounds to political rallies and public demonstrations. Yet without the provision for continued maintenance, the green's service to a community is significantly diminished.

In conjunction with a green's intended purpose based on the settlement patterns of a village or its community development, the location and size of a green may lend some insight into its history. Most colloquial understandings of a common or green refer to its centralized use as a pasturing area. However, greens were rarely used for pasturing, but often served as a corral to hold animals until they were taken to or returned from a larger area. Consequently, the majority of greens are five acres or less in size, with many averaging less than one and half acres.[3] As Vermont was settled within a short time span in its relative history, land speculation and proprietary claims contributed to the size and allocation of greens. Village greens today look very different from their original appearance, and their transformation over time is attributable to both the positive forces of community interest and the threats to the integrity of greens by urban development. The development of a village green from a swampy area covered in tree stumps to the flat, grassy expanse reflects the town's involvement, sometimes over the course of centuries. Despite cycles of maintenance and neglect, the green has served as the "focal point" of a town, both in form and function.[4]

Vermont's village greens demonstrate local significance as part of the town's development, which was often fragmented and fraught with contention over ownership. Whether or not the village-like character of Vermont towns today was established when they were settled, the village ideal remains an emblematic feature of Vermont's small-town feel, adding to the statewide significance of this property type. Village greens are an emblematic characteristic of Vermont towns, by providing a central and public gathering space usually surrounded by a concentrated grouping of municipal, commercial, residential, and civic buildings. As a historic property type, many village greens depict points in history that help interpret settlement patterns and town development. The shape, size, and placement of a green can inform the timing and conditions of a town's settlement. Finally, village greens have provided and continue to provide an important public resource, one that has existed in various forms and continues to exist today. Preserving a town's village green is tantamount to preserving a town's identity,

and preserving the pattern of village greens throughout Vermont maintains the state's unique character and sense of place.

Origin of common land

The feudal system in Europe influenced the colonial practices of town planning.[5] The origin of the town commons--insofar as it relates to New English settlement--stems from English common law. In these days land was either owned privately by nobility, or it belonged to the king. There were several types of "common" uses for land, ranging from fishing to lumber to collecting peat. Initially, these areas were not heavily regulated, but there was a general understanding of their use. Rising populations led to disputes over usage of common land, and eventually prompted many to leave the country for promises of the "common ideal"--both in physical land and governorship--in the New World. The threat to the common became one of the driving forces for emigration to America.[6]

Although the town commons of the 17th-century settlers were not a direct transplant of something originating in England, it was certainly the manifestation of an ideal held by those who came to the New World seeking religious and political freedoms. In essence, the town green or commons has existed more strongly in its ideological form than in its manifestation, but this ideal strongly influenced the way that proprietors and other immigrants planned their new towns.[7]

The New England town common

Village greens exist as a landscape feature throughout the northeastern part of the United States, and greens with New England origins are documented in various other parts of the nation.[8] The concept of a shared open space is not unique to New England (the central plazas that form the basis of Spanish settlements are a similar landscape feature), but the geography of New England and the diversity of purposes served by the town common distinguish it as a regional element.

Many greens in New England were established following the settlement patterns of proprietors who carried with them the "town common ideal" from their home country of England. Early settlement in southern New England followed a standard procedure: groups of interested settlers requested the right to a charter from the English Crown, and, after their expressed intent to settle was reviewed, were granted a portion of land held initially in common with the intent to apportion individual lots.[9] Early proprietors often made up the majority of the town's population, and therefore devised the settings for community resources and personal property plots. The central village green was not the only common resource that was allotted; generally, it was accompanied by a cemetery, meetinghouse, and a larger grazing area farther from the locus of the town.[10]

Greens were a reflection of a particular American society in a chapter of the New England's development.[11] The idealization of this society often misconstrues New England villages as neatly planned community utopias. In reality, the development of the New England commons was characterized by much more of a survivalist mentality. Greens, blacksmith shops, and gristmills were a staple of New England towns. Most developments grew out of sheer necessity, and in the order they were needed. Much as a blacksmith shop or a gristmill contributed to communal survival in most New England villages, the creation of greens was a corporate enterprise.[12] Although there was no fixed criteria for the use of the green or commons, most were established for, or developed into, a structured set of uses: meetinghouse green, militia training, market, and grazing/pound common, among others.

Towns would feature only one type of common space, or frequently have a mixed set of these common spaces. Over time, the usage of the common land changed as settlement increased, and plots were apportioned off or sold to newcomers to fund town institutional or infrastructural improvements. [13] Often the land retained for public use was of little value for anything else.

Particularly in the Puritan settlements of Massachusetts and Connecticut, greens were set aside when the meetinghouse was established, and the area served as a multi-purpose common area for public use. Some of the earliest structures on this type of common were warming houses for "nooning" during the long Sunday services. Sometimes settlements, such as Bradford, Vermont, received a town green with each church or meetinghouse established. The meetinghouse green usually reflects prior nucleated settlement or an imitation thereof, while greens that were developed later tended to have more organic shapes. For example, the location of a green in a central, protected area served as a place to corral livestock in the event of outside invasion by Native Americans or European enemies.[14] The linear commons found along main streets may reflect later settlements that were less concerned by the threat of intruders.[15]

The organization of local government contributes to the development of village greens as a New England entity. As evidenced by town meeting day, still observed in many New England towns and recognized as a public holiday in Vermont, political and community decisions take place on a local level throughout the region. New England local government centers around the town; whereas throughout most of the rest of the nation, the county provides most of the services that New England towns take on. Consequently, villages and towns have developed strong identities despite their small size and plurality throughout New England. The municipal organization harkens back to how most areas were initially developed--in small pacts with common resources surrounding a central area. As towns exceeded their size, the pattern was repeated in a nearby vicinity. Early town records note the existence of "common and undivided lands" available to the community, ranging from pasturing to timber use.[16]

The New England village green has attained a status of symbolism throughout its long history. Timothy Dwight's early 19th century travels to the region have noted the existence of the green as a staple feature in many of the towns he visited.[17] Yet the development of the green as an emblematic landscape feature has occurred in the more recent past:

> "There are also landscape depictions which may be powerfully evocative because they are understood as being a particular kind of place rather than a precise building or locality. Among the most famous in America is the scene of a village embowered in great elms and maples, its location marked by a slender steeple rising gracefully above a white wooden church which faces on a village green around which are arrayed large white clapboard houses which, like the church, show a simple elegance in form and trim. These few phrases are sufficient to conjure an instant mental image of a special kind of place in a very famous region."[18]

From an outsider's perspective, the quintessential New England village has a distinctive look, regardless of whether this conjured-up image is based in fact.[19] The ideological form of the village green surrounded by a cluster of historic buildings in a bustling, quaint commercial center continually

draws tourists to the area. The village green landscape is central to perpetuating this image, linking aspects of town planning with cultural history as an ideal that is valued and preserved in communities throughout the region. The fact that later non-New England locations strove to emulate this design attests to its significance.[20]

The Settlement of Vermont and Development of the Village Green

In most early southern New England towns, the village center preceded the establishment of farmsteads, but Vermont's settlement took place following a different pattern. Vermont's earliest permanent English settlement of Fort Dummer took place in 1724, over a century after the arrival of the Mayflower. Many of the English settlers that came to Vermont came from Massachusetts, Connecticut, and New Hampshire, after these territories had been sufficiently populated. Although the English settlers of Vermont brought the "commons ideal" of their forebears to the rugged territory, they approached town planning and settlement from a desire to manage and regulate their own farmsteads, breaking away from the "nucleated village" concept that characterizes much of Massachusetts and Connecticut. Although Vermont was not settled contemporaneous to the settlements of southern New England, its towns have acquired similar forms over time.[21] In part this is attributable to settlers from surrounding states who planned their towns based (often quite directly) on the plans of the towns they had just forsaken.[22] However, the settlement patterns of Vermont were much storied than a mere copy and paste approach.

Prior to the migration of New Englanders to Vermont, the French had already made inroads to the territory, and interacted more with the native population than many settlers of English origin. Although the French were instrumental in creating a more navigable landscape and allaying many of the tenuous relations between Native Americans and Europeans, the English took a much more high-handed approach to possessing property. French settlement did not capitalize on agricultural exploitation as the English would, and by the 1740s, the French had lost many of their claims to the land.[23] The Treaty of Paris in 1763 solidified the English's claim to North America, including the region that is now Vermont. Remnants of the French settlement exist today at Chimney Point in Addison County and Alburgh in Grand Isle County.[24]

The mid-17th century in early New England settlement already demonstrated that land was a coveted commodity, and as populations increased, small towns began to feel crowded. Those who desired more "elbow room" were often thought of as departing from the Puritan ideals of a community center clustered around a meetinghouse.[25] Connecticut likely provided the largest number of settlers to Vermont, many of which planned their town communities and held town meetings prior to emigrating.[26] As the farmstead seekers from Massachusetts and Connecticut made their way into Vermont, the landscape began to reflect these patterns of settlement. The territory was approached from a general south to north trajectory, owing to the accessibility to valleys and proximity to river transport. Approaching southern Vermont from east and west and forging into the Champlain Valley, settlers than expanded in waves, venturing farther and farther into the north. Eventually the Northeast Kingdom experience some settlement, but its climate and mountainous terrain made it one of the final frontiers of the territory.[27]

Although (New) English settlers now saw the French as less of a threat to settlement, the territory was no less riddled with dispute over what land claims were valid. For a period of nearly 30 years prior to

the American Revolution, the Vermont territory had competing claims from New York and New Hampshire. Benning Wentworth, then governor of New Hampshire, was responsible for granting many of the early charters in the contested territory, most of which retained legitimacy following the conflict over New York patents.[28] Ethan Allen and the Green Mountain Boys took matters into their own hands, combatting the claims of New York on Vermont territories, and ultimately establishing an independent republic in 1777. Until the dispute of New York patents and New Hampshire territories was settled, there was a large element of uncertainty for those who established independent farms; more often than not they were unsure whether the right to grant the territory belonged to New York or New Hampshire.[29]

Continuing after the establishment of the Republic of Vermont, land speculation of Vermont territory proceeded rampantly. Prospectors such as Ira Allen used the opportunity to try to turn a quick profit. Vermont's settlement tended to be more secular in nature, not to the extent of the Puritan enclaves of Massachusetts. Oftentimes Vermont towns were settled with greater priority given to milling lumber and grain than to areas of public use.[30] Settlement did not occur in quite the "nucleated" fashion; also by the time Vermont was settled, the ideology had changed. Farmers preferred to use their own lands for grazing, and the terrain was often not amenable to a tidy village with shared amenities. Proprietors sought out settlers to buy land and establish roots, however there were instances where settlers operated independently from a proprietary settlement, making claims to the land simply by showing up and staking out a homestead.[31]

Much like the chartered colonies of southern New England, Vermont proprietary towns received permission from the governor to settle surveyed tracts of land. However, unlike the prior system, the land was divided individually within the bounds of the charter, rather than being held in common. The phenomena of absentee proprietors—wealthy individuals who invested in many towns and then did not reside there—was fairly prevalent across the state. Owing to this pattern, there was often discrepancy between original town plats and eventual town features. Charters stipulated many of the components that formed the nucleated villages of southern New England; however, these structures (schools, churches, and the like) were not always constructed immediately.[32] The founding of the town of Craftsbury was one example of a proprietary development. As described by Louise Kent in her book *Village Greens in New England*, Colonel Ebenezer Crafts had been a prominent citizen and inn owner in Sturbridge, Massachusetts, who, looking to seek a better fortune, convinced several of his comrades to travel to Vermont and settle there. After receiving a grant from Governor Chittenden, Crafts and his settlers founded the town of Craftsbury in 1788, modeling it after their home village. Their grant allowed for the division of private land and several public lots, including a village green:

> The charter divided the proposed township into one hundred and forty-four lots, each half a mile square. Two lots were to be held by each of sixty-five proprietors on condition that five acres of land must be cleared and a house built within three years. The remaining lots were to be the property of the town. One of these lots, the proprietors agreed with the pattern of Sturbridge in mind, would be for a meetinghouse and a common, which was to be as near the center of the town as possible.[33]

It often took a town several years to decide on a meetinghouse denomination and appropriate space for an accompanying minister. In this way, village greens and other common areas trickled in, contributing to the town form as it evolved. Greens often developed when the town was becoming a commercial center, long after a threat of invasion by French or Native American forces. If one studies the shapes

and locations of village greens, taking into account that many have decreased in size over the centuries, it is apparent that the greens are a reflection of town planning in a holistic sense, rather than the greens themselves functioning as a designed landscape feature.[34]

Evolution of the Vermont village green over time

The development of villages in Vermont and how they merged and dissolved over time makes it difficult to systematically pinpoint village greens, and explains why many villages have more than one common area, and some have none at all. There is a much larger variance in the creation of greens in Vermont compared to other New England states. Some greens were formed upon the town's initial settlement; others developed as the need arose. That need might have varied from a school yard to a railroad depot, and sometimes as an express wish of a wealthy citizen for the creation of green space in perpetuity. Generally, a town center--including a meetinghouse or other town office and village green--took several years to materialize following the town's date of founding. However, the formation of a green was highly dependent upon the wishes of a town's settlers and the form and function of green was reflective of what was occurring in the village at the time.[35] The following presents an approximate timeline of how village greens in Vermont evolved.

17th and 18th centuries

There is little to be said about village greens in Vermont prior to the 18th century. The majority of Vermont's village greens appeared after the Treaty of Paris, and many much later than that. Unlike other parts of New England, Vermont does not have any incorporated towns established prior to 1735, when Westminster was incorporated. Many of Vermont's early village greens were proprietary--planned out by a few wealthy men who had staked claim to an area. Individual town records shed light on whether the initial town plot accounted for a green (Shoreham, for example) or whether it was the result of later planning (Danville's green was formed this way). Because the Puritanism of lower New England states did not dominate Vermont, the establishment of meetinghouse greens often posed a conflict. Religion was not absent from the lives of the initial settlers; rather contention arose over what *kind* of church would overlook the central green.[36] Owing to this, village greens tended to reflect the commercial nature of towns rather than institutional.

An aerial view of Vermont's landscape towards the end of the 1700s would have revealed a selection of small villages dotting rivers and valleys with larger amounts of farmland radiating out from these centers.[37] Rather than providing a shared community resource, village centers were a reflection of a means to profit from land speculation. During the latter half of the 18th century, Vermont experienced a boom in population that took it from a rugged and unchartered territory to (somewhat more) hospitable environment for community development. Land speculation also contributed to the creation of greens during this time. Particularly in many of the towns settled earlier, proprietors were enabled, if not obligated, by their grants to set aside certain community plots for schools, churches, and public gathering areas. However, unlike Vermont's southern neighbors, villages saw little agricultural use of the common area. Those that resided in the lands outlying villages had their own farms, making it superfluous to try to pool agricultural resources. Toward the end of the 18th century, the uses of village greens began to diversify. As Vermont towns developed and grew infrastructure, the green became the central community gathering place.[38]

19th century-commercialization, romanticism, and memorialization
Commercialization of villages and towns led to greater development of town centers. Changes in the agricultural market made farmers more dependent on village services, while during the first half of the 1800s it was the reverse. Greens that came about in the 19th century were developed around the roadways linking towns--town centers, and thereby commons, developed around roadways.[39] (The development of an economy based on the exchange of cash rather than bartered goods contributed to the distinction of commerce and countryside. While the 18th century had seen more subsistence farming, villages in the following century were able to support the needs of the agricultural developments around them. This in turn led to more diverse means of commerce, where some people began to seek out town centers as places to work and reside, therefore paying more attention to the appearance and upkeep of the town.

By this 1830s, Romanticism was also beginning to take hold in academic thought and literature. In other parts of New England, the use and even existence of town greens waned during various parts of the 19th century, as the practices of agriculture and commerce began to diverge.[40] However, the movement spurred by Romanticism invented a sort of nostalgia for the quaint New England town with a common area surrounded by a meetinghouse and town commerce. Subsequently, the muddy public area littered with tree stumps and wagon wheel ruts became the subject of efforts to beautify the center of town. In addition, separation of church and state had caused many of the previously Puritan town greens to become detached from their association with the meetinghouse, and thus fall under the regulation of the town. In Vermont during this time, many village greens were born as a result of the changing ideology toward village centers, but to some extent, Vermont was merely catching up to its New England neighbors.[41]

Towards the middle of the 19th century, legislation began to reflect town maintenance. In 1845, the Vermont legislature passed a bill pertaining to the treatment of village greens entitled “An Act Relating to Public Squares and Commons.” The law enabled towns to collect taxes to maintain public spaces and take legal action against those who caused damages to them.[42]) Yet, while towns often struggled to find support for collecting taxes to maintain public squares and commons, civic engagement aided the cause of beautification.

The Civil War had a substantial impact on the perception and appearance of village greens. Vermont’s participation in the war was large in scale compared to the population of the state. Legislative money appropriated to the war effort surpassed that of any other state per capita, and one in ten of Vermont’s male population joined the service.[43] The village green, which was often the place from which soldiers were dispatched to war, became the logical site for memorializing the fallen. Vermont suffered the largest proportion of deaths in action comparative to other states.[44] The movement to create public monuments to victims of war thus began with this conflict, and in a way, it legitimized the village green as a memorial focal point.[45]

Aside from the involvement of the war, Vermont underwent a shift in population during the latter half of the 19th century. The agricultural activities that had so heavily characterized the region for the past century began to reach a breaking point, and as farming industries began to lose economic vitality, many of the state’s farming population left the area for better opportunity further west, or moved to town to attempt new ways to make a living.[46] Manufacturing, lumber production, stone quarrying, and even tourism supplemented a struggling agrarian economy, which in turn stimulated town commerce. As this

dynamic developed into the 20th century, village greens began to reflect more and more the vitality of a town's community.

20th Century
The 1900s ushered in a series of movements that sometimes blurred the lines between park and village green. In addition, new threats to village greens began to surface. The arrival of the automobile and the changing road infrastructure that followed compromised the integrity of many village greens, and subsequent road improvements continue to encroach upon these areas. In addition, the noise associated with automobile traffic changed the character of the greens, making for a less pleasant place to congregate and repose.[47]

The Village Improvement Movement spread the ideology that public spaces were to be kept up and valued, and perhaps most importantly, utilized by members of the community. Stemming from the City Beautiful Movement and its influence on urban planning, the Village Improvement Movement manifested in many more rural areas in the form of societies who strove to improve the appearance and rapport of their towns. Greens, and other public resources such as libraries and railroad stations, were promoted as a visible manifestation of a town's prosperity. Not only was there an ideological shift in how these spaces should be maintained, the formation of committees and improvement societies helped to implement this. In Vermont, the movement led to the beautification of many village greens, and even to the establishment of at least one--Lincoln Park in Enosburg Falls.[48]

Although Civil War monuments were already commonly placed on village greens, in the mid-1900s the central public space became a kind of repository for war monuments. Many greens feature monuments commemorating those who fought in World Wars I and II, Korean War, and Vietnam War; some monuments simply encapsulate all fallen soldiers by commemorating veterans of all wars. The installation statues, flagpoles, and cannons also followed along the trend of using the village green to revere and memorialize the victims of war. Bandstands had been constructed on village greens as early as the late 1800s, but during the mid-20th century there was a resurgence of this feature. In the 1970s, public funding was provided for several towns to refurbish an existing bandstand or reconstruct a new one. America's bicentennial was celebrated on village greens throughout Vermont, a logical and fitting place to congregate and reflect on the country's 200-year history.

Notes

[1] Chick 2009, 37; Walter Cudnohufsky Associates, Inc. 2002, 3.
[2] Tebbs 2005, 2.
[3] Meyer 1974, 164 (Table).
[4] Fleming and Halderman, *On Common Ground* 1987, xv.
[5] Reps 1965, 121.
[6] Stilgoe, "Town Common and Village Green in New England: 1620 to 1981" 1987, 7, 9.
[7] Wood 1997, 13.
[8] Stilgoe, "Town Common," 7
[9] Woodard 1936, 13-14.
[10] McCullough 1995, 15.
[11] Meinig 1979, 165.
[12] Stilgoe, *Common Landscape of America, 1580 to 1845* 1982, 48.
[13] Stilgoe, "Town Common," 13.
[14] Reps, 124.
[15] Todd 1950, 5.
[16] McCullough, 16.
[17] Dwight 1823.
[18] Meinig 1979, 165.
[19] Albers 2002, 135.
[20] Chick, 37-38; Meinig, 166-167.
[21] Albers 2002, 86.
[22] Meyer, 18.
[23] Ibid., 74.
[24] Ibid.
[25] Stilgoe, *Common Landscape of America*, 45.
[26] Morrow 1936, 14.
[27] Albers., 83.
[28] Bogart 1950, 2-3.
[29] Albers, 91.
[30] Ibid., 116.
[31] Ibid., 93.
[32] Ibid., 87.
[33] Kent, 219.
[34] Meyer, 57.
[35] Ibid., 29.
[36] Albers, 114.
[37] Ibid., 177.
[38] Stilgoe, "Town Common," 20.
[39] Walter Cudnohufsky Associates, Inc. 2002, 14.
[40] Stilgoe, "Town Common," 24-25.
[41] Walter Cudnohufsky Associates, Inc., 18; Stilgoe, "Town Common," 26; Chick, 40-41.
[42] Vermont 1845, 15-16.
[43] Collins 1903, 239 & 253.
[44] Ibid., 252.
[45] Meyer, 86.
[46] Albers, 203.

[47] Stilgoe, "Town Common," 33.
[48] Farwell 1913, 37.

F. Associated Property Types

I. Name of Property Type: Village Green

II. Description:

Overview

Although village greens vary significantly in form, size, and features, the identifying characteristic of many is setting. Observing and interpreting the history of the surrounding architecture is a key element to identifying an area of open space as a village green. Most likely, one or several certain buildings will be visible from the open space that comprises the village green: post office, library, courthouse, town offices, church, inn, or general store. The line between a village green and a park is blurred; parks tend to be established to accommodate a recreational goal, and yet, may towns classify their village greens as a recreational resource in municipal planning documents. However, unlike parks, greens are generally associated with a civic center, rather than a strictly residential one. An assortment of residential and institutional structures, as well as commercial and public buildings, is commonly found surrounding greens.

Aside from setting, categories to consider include topography, vegetation, buildings and structures, circulation methods, smaller features (such as flower beds and flagpoles), peripheral uses, and historic information for the green. In general, the village green is defined by open space, for the most part uninterrupted by large features. A green will usually be a flat, grassy area, with few exceptions (Sharon has a fairly sloped green). Dating from the City Beautiful Movement and village improvement era, one character-defining feature of greens is the existence of mature deciduous trees, historically elm, and more recently, maple. Small planter boxes and flower beds are common, while large gardens that require more active cyclical maintenance are rarer (Taylor Park in St. Albans is an exception). The existence of one or two buildings upon the green is not uncommon; often a bandstand, gazebo, or maintenance shed will be present. Pathways and methods of circulation are an important feature of village greens--although there may be no paved walkways provided at all, natural sightlines often dictate pathways after years of repeated use.

Furthermore, a green may not have been a designed space so much as an evolved space. Apportioning of lots and encroachment of highways can affect the shape of greens over time, so it is important to investigate each town's subdivision history and make use of historic maps to determine how the space may have changed. Even with the organic development of most village greens, a common trend should consider an aspect of planning in some form.

Property Subtypes

Village greens fall into a number of subtypes based on a town's settlement history, commercial

development, and landscape design.

Proprietary Greens

Proprietary Greens refer to greens allotted for in the original town plot. Proprietary greens harken back to the town's original prospectors and are directly related to a town or village's inception. Shoreham and Craftsbury are examples of proprietary greens. Many town plots denote an unmarked area of open space, or a plot specified for glebe or school. School plots often later developed greens, as was the case with Bakersfield.

Meetinghouse Greens

Meetinghouse Greens should have a meetinghouse or historic evidence of one directly abutting the green (Waitsfield's green bears historic evidence of a meetinghouse though it is no longer extant). Meetinghouse greens are distinguishable because they provided the lawn for the original religious building in the town center. A green may fall into this category by being modeled after a meetinghouse common in a southern New England state. For example, Killington (formerly Sherburne) borrowed its plan directly from a town in Massachusetts.[1] Jericho Center, Strafford and Essex Center are also good examples of the meetinghouse green subtype.

Courthouse Greens

Courthouse greens develop around a centralized municipal/civic building, and are generally located in shire seat towns, such as Danville (historically a shire seat) and Burlington. Although all greens provide a space for civic and political engagement, courthouse green tend to display this characteristic most strongly. Montpelier's State House green would be included in this subtype.

Linear Greens

Linear greens developed along roadways and reflect a linear settlement pattern in a town. Due to their proximity to main throughways, linear greens tend to be threatened by ownership conflicts and encroachment of widening roadways for modern traffic needs. (examples: Cambridge, Chester, Rutland's Main Street Park)

Railroad Greens

This property subtype emerged along significant railroad depots, such as the green in Waterbury. A green must be concurrent with the establishment of the railroad depot to fall under this subtype. Brighton's green is another example.

Memorial Greens

Memorial greens refer to greens created specifically for memorializing an event or military sacrifice. They are characterized by the existence of one or more memorial structures (monuments, statues, etc.)

[1] Albers, 2002, 112.

and are often smaller than one acre in size, and usually triangular in shape. Particularly following the Civil War, greens developed into spaces to honor the fallen of wars. Although most towns utilized their existing spaces to erect monuments and memorials in honor of such events, some created new spaces for the purpose of recognition and reflection. (examples: Passumpsic, Swanton's Flat Iron Park)

Village Improvement and post-20th century greens

A number of greens were established during the 20th century following village improvement efforts. Although most village improvement societies focused on improving their existing village green space, some societies found no such space in their town and therefore created one. (Examples of this include Weston and Enosburg Falls)

III. Statement of Significance

Village Greens listed individually in the National Register will likely meet eligibility under Criterion A for their contributions to the broad patterns of history related to village green development in Vermont. Important activities and events that have transpired on greens may aid in contributing to eligibility under this criterion. Criterion B may be considered if the green relates to a person of local importance and is directly related to that person's influence; however this has not been documented in any existing greens. Although intentional design--apart from design as a carefully defined open space--does not characterize many village greens, some have strong elements of design that would augment significance under Criterion C (Taylor Park in St. Albans, for example). Also, many greens are surrounded and defined by architecture whose design bears mentioning. For the majority, however, the organic development of the space characterizes it more than design. It is possible with more research that properties will be eligible for the National Register on account of archaeological significance (Criterion D), particularly those greens that have been altered for development or traffic needs.

The majority of village greens will be eligible because of their local significance, but many may also qualify on a state level considering the broad contributions to village greens and settlement patterns in Vermont. An argument for national significance would require strong support and comparative study. Rather, Vermont village greens are important because they reflect the area's rugged pattern of settlement; although many greens ended up serving similar functions as town commons throughout the rest of New England, they were not planned out with the same intent as many of Vermont's more starkly Puritan neighbors. For example, use of the commons for pasturing and grazing livestock that "endured for centuries" in other parts of New England was never a common practice in Vermont.[2] Vermonters were much more concerned with forging their way through the inhospitable territory than with creating village nuclei. Moreover, most settlers of English descent who came to Vermont had already been living in New England, and sought to break away from the more crowded conditions of Massachusetts and Connecticut.[3] The prospect of having one's own expanse of farmland drew many of

[2] Stilgoe, "Town Common and Village Green in New England: 1620 to 1981," 1987, p. 12.
[3] Albers, 96.

Vermont's first non-native settlers to the region.

The concept of "shared space" forms the basis of the village green and provides a function that is, at its most essential form, timeless.[4] Despite the establishment of larger individual farms throughout the state, the village commercial center still emerged as a vital resource for early Vermont settlers. Village greens provided a forum for democracy, public discourse, and engagement, a function still applicable to greens today. Moreover, village greens yield insight into the heart of a community; most often they are used for social gatherings, public events, fairs, farmer's markets, and other important activities that reflect vibrate communities. When these spaces are underappreciated and start to decline, the surrounding community often declines in tandem. Preservation of the focal point of a village center both reflects and stimulates a vital community.

IV. Registration Requirements

A village green must be predominantly open space; border fencing is acceptable. The green should be located in a visually accessible area in the historic center of the village, generally nearby the historically commercial (or civic) district. Some greens may have acquired a completely residential surrounding over time. The green should retain aspects of integrity in location, most importantly, as the proximity to civic amenities historically defined the resource. Although villages have established new greens long after settlement, it is not possible to relocate an existing village green. The village green or town commons should be in a central location to the village center or historic center. It should be walkable to commercial activity and municipal resources. Integrity of setting is next in importance; the green should be surrounded by buildings that inform its history and reflect the commercial center of a town or village. Integrity of feeling will follow integrity of setting for the green.

Some property subtypes may feature differing aspects of integrity in higher priorities. For example, integrity of design will factor into nominations of courthouse and proprietary greens, while meetinghouse and linear greens will not usually highlight this element. Materials and workmanship are aspects of memorial greens that warrant attention, whereas other subtypes may lack anything substantial in this category. Post 20th century/Village Improvement greens are to be registered based upon their association with village beautification initiatives; although for many greens integrity of association may not feature as prominently in a nomination. Addition of contemporary features surrounding the green should be sensitive to the history of the town center. If green and village design is modeled after another sister city in New England (i.e. Craftsbury Common designed after Sturbridge Village, Massachusetts), this should be noted. A "successful" green will feature a diverse and adaptable set of uses, both on the green proper and in the surrounding area. Greens that are overwhelmed by large, single-use structures are diminished in integrity of feeling and association.

[4] Stilgoe, "Town Common," 36.

G. Geographical Data

The following is a working list of identified Village Greens in Vermont. Eligibility for many has yet to be determined.

County	Municipality	Town/Village	Green (Y/N)
Addison	Addison		Y
Addison	Bridport		Y
Addison	Bristol		Y
Addison	Cornwall		Y
Addison	Ferrisburgh		Y
Addison	Goshen		
Addison	Granville		
Addison	Hancock		Y
Addison	Leicester		Y
Addison	Lincoln		Y
Addison	Middlebury		Y
Addison	Middlebury		Y
Addison	Monkton	Monkton Ridge	Y
Addison	New Haven		Y
Addison	Orwell		Y
Addison	Panton		
Addison	Ripton		
Addison	Salisbury		
Addison	Shoreham		Y
Addison	Shoreham		Y
Addison	Starksboro		
Addison	Vergennes		Y
Addison	Waltham		
Addison	Weybridge		Y
Addison	Whiting		Y
Addison County Total			18

Bennington	Arlington		Y
Bennington	Bennington	North Bennington	Y
Bennington	Bennington	Old Bennington	Y
Bennington	Dorset		Y
Bennington	Glastenbury		
Bennington	Landgrove		
Bennington	Manchester		Y
Bennington	Manchester	Manchester Center	Y
Bennington	Peru		
Bennington	Pownal		
Bennington	Readsboro		
Bennington	Rupert		
Bennington	Sandgate		
Bennington	Searsburg		
Bennington	Shaftsbury		
Bennington	Stamford		
Bennington	Sunderland		
Bennington	Winhall		
Bennington	Woodford		
Bennington County Total			6
Caledonia	Barnet	Passumpsic	Y
Caledonia	Barnet	McIndoe Falls	Y
Caledonia	Burke	West Burke	Y
Caledonia	Burke	East Burke	Y
Caledonia	Danville		Y
Caledonia	Hardwick		Y?
Caledonia	Kirby		
Caledonia	Lyndon	Lyndonville	Y
Caledonia	Lyndon	Lyndonville	Y
Caledonia	Newark		
Caledonia	Peacham		

Caledonia	Ryegate	South Ryegate	Y
Caledonia	Sheffield		
Caledonia	St. Johnsbury		Y
Caledonia	St. Johnsbury		Y
Caledonia	Stannard		
Caledonia	Sutton		
Caledonia	Walden		
Caledonia	Waterford		
Caledonia	Wheelock		Y
Caledonia County Total			11
Chittenden	Bolton		
Chittenden	Burlington		Y
Chittenden	Burlington		Y
Chittenden	Burlington		Y
Chittenden	Burlington		Y
Chittenden	Burlington		Y
Chittenden	Charlotte		
Chittenden	Colchester		Y
Chittenden	Essex	Essex Center	Y
Chittenden	Essex Junction		y
Chittenden	Hinesburg		Y
Chittenden	Huntington		Y
Chittenden	Jericho	Jericho Center	Y
Chittenden	Milton		
Chittenden	Richmond		
Chittenden	Shelburne		Y
Chittenden	Shelburne		Y
Chittenden	St. George		
Chittenden	Underhill	Underhill Flats	Y
Chittenden	Westford		Y
Chittenden	Williston		Y
Chittenden	Williston		Y
Chittenden	Winooski		Y
Chittenden	Winooski		Y

Chittenden County Total			19
Essex	Averill		
Essex	Bloomfield		
Essex	Brighton	Island Pond	Y
Essex	Brunswick		
Essex	Canaan		Y
Essex	Canaan	Beecher Falls	Y
Essex	Concord		Y
Essex	East Haven		
Essex	Ferdinand		
Essex	Guildhall		Y
Essex	Lemington		
Essex	Lewis		
Essex	Lunenburg		Y
Essex	Lunenburg	Gilman	Y
Essex	Maidstone		
Essex	Norton		
Essex	Victory		
Essex County Total			7
Franklin	Bakersfield		Y
Franklin	Berkshire		Y
Franklin	Enosburg	Enosburg Falls	Y
Franklin	Enosburg	Enosburg Falls	Y
Franklin	Fairfax		
Franklin	Fairfield		Y
Franklin	Fairfield	East Fairfield	Y
Franklin	Fletcher		
Franklin	Franklin		
Franklin	Georgia		
Franklin	Highgate	Highgate Center	Y
Franklin	Highgate	Highgate Falls	Y
Franklin	Montgomery		Y
Franklin	Richford		Y
Franklin	Sheldon		
Franklin	St. Albans		Y

Franklin	Swanton		Y
Franklin	Swanton		Y
Franklin County Total			13
Grand Isle	Alburgh		
Grand Isle	Grand Isle		
Grand Isle	Isle La Motte		
Grand Isle	North Hero		
Grand Isle	South Hero		Y
Grand Isle County Total			1
Lamoille	Belvidere		
Lamoille	Cambridge		Y
Lamoille	Cambridge	Jeffersonville	Y
Lamoille	Eden		
Lamoille	Elmore		
Lamoille	Hyde Park		
Lamoille	Johnson		
Lamoille	Morristown	Morrisville	Y
Lamoille	Stowe		Y
Lamoille	Waterville		
Lamoille	Wolcott		
Lamoille County Total			4
Orange	Bradford		Y
Orange	Bradford		Y
Orange	Braintree		
Orange	Brookfield		
Orange	Chelsea		Y
Orange	Chelsea		Y
Orange	Corinth	Cookeville	Y
Orange	Fairlee		Y
Orange	Newbury		Y
Orange	Orange		
Orange	Randolph		Y
Orange	Strafford		Y

Orange	Thetford	Thetford Hill	Y
Orange	Thetford	Post Mills	Y
Orange	Topsham		
Orange	Tunbridge		
Orange	Vershire		
Orange	Washington		
Orange	West Fairlee		
Orange	Williamstown		
Orange County Total			11
Orleans	Albany		
Orleans	Barton		Y
Orleans	Barton	Orleans	Y
Orleans	Brownington		Y
Orleans	Charleston		
Orleans	Coventry		Y
Orleans	Craftsbury	Craftsbury Common	Y
Orleans	Derby	Derby Center	Y
Orleans	Derby	Derby Line	Y
Orleans	Glover		Y
Orleans	Greensboro		Y
Orleans	Holland		
Orleans	Irasburg		Y
Orleans	Jay		Y
Orleans	Lowell		Y
Orleans	Morgan		
Orleans	Newport		Y
Orleans	Troy		Y
Orleans	Troy	North Troy	Y
Orleans	Westfield		Y
Orleans	Westmore		
Orleans County Total			16
Rutland	Benson		
Rutland	Brandon		Y

Rutland	Brandon		Y
Rutland	Castleton	Hydeville	Y
Rutland	Danby		Y
Rutland	Fair Haven		Y
Rutland	Ira		Y
Rutland	Killington		
Rutland	Mendon		
Rutland	Middletown Springs		Y
Rutland	Mount Holly		
Rutland	Mount Tabor		
Rutland	Pawlet		
Rutland	Pittsfield		Y
Rutland	Pittsford		Y
Rutland	Poultney		Y
Rutland	Poultney	East Poultney	Y
Rutland	Proctor		Y
Rutland	Rutland		Y
Rutland	Rutland		Y
Rutland	Shrewsbury		
Rutland	Sudbury		Y
Rutland	Tinmouth		
Rutland	Wallingford		
Rutland	Wells		Y
Rutland	West Haven		
Rutland	West Rutland		
Rutland County Total			16
Washington	Barre		Y
Washington	Barre		Y
Washington	Berlin		
Washington	Cabot		Y
Washington	Calais		
Washington	Duxbury		
Washington	East Montpelier		
Washington	Fayston		
Washington	Marshfield		

Washington	Middlesex		
Washington	Montpelier		Y
Washington	Montpelier		Y
Washington	Moretown		
Washington	Northfield		Y
Washington	Plainfield		
Washington	Roxbury		
Washington	Waitsfield		Y
Washington	Warren		Y
Washington	Waterbury		Y
Washington	Waterbury		Y
Washington	Waterbury	Waterbury Center	Y
Washington	Woodbury		
Washington	Worcester		
Washington County Total			11
Windham	Athens		
Windham	Brattleboro		Y
Windham	Brattleboro		Y
Windham	Brattleboro		Y
Windham	Brookline		
Windham	Dover		Y
Windham	Dummerston		
Windham	Grafton		
Windham	Guilford		
Windham	Halifax		
Windham	Jamaica		
Windham	Londonderry		
Windham	Marlboro		
Windham	Newfane		Y
Windham	Rockingham	Bellows Falls	Y
Windham	Somerset		
Windham	Stratton		

Windham	Townshend		Y
Windham	Vernon		
Windham	Wardsboro		
Windham	Westminster		
Windham	Whitingham		
Windham	Wilmington		
Windham	Windham		
Windham County Total			7
Windsor	Andover		
Windsor	Baltimore		
Windsor	Barnard		
Windsor	Bethel		
Windsor	Bridgewater		
Windsor	Cavendish	Proctorsville	Y
Windsor	Chester		Y
Windsor	Hartford	Quechee	Y
Windsor	Hartford	White River Junction	Y
Windsor	Hartland	North Hartland	Y
Windsor	Ludlow		Y
Windsor	Norwich		Y
Windsor	Plymouth		
Windsor	Pomfret		
Windsor	Reading		
Windsor	Rochester		Y
Windsor	Royalton		Y
Windsor	Royalton	South Royalton	Y
Windsor	Sharon		Y
Windsor	Springfield		N
Windsor	Stockbridge		Y
Windsor	Weathersfield	Perkinsville	Y
Windsor	West Windsor		?
Windsor	Weston		Y
Windsor	Windsor		Y

Windsor	Woodstock		Y
Windsor	Woodstock		Y
Windsor County Total			17
State Total			157

H. Summary of Identification and Evaluation Methods

Research was conducted using a compilation of primary and secondary source materials. Several academic theses on Vermont town planning and common lands provided direction for research and for forming typographies of village greens. An informal survey conducted by the Vermont Village Green Initiative, through the Vermont Agency of Commerce and Community Development, identified existing greens throughout all counties in the state. This formed the basis for several more in-depth surveys of individual village greens, documenting form, usage, and features.

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