

**Vermont State Historic Preservation Office (VT SHPO)
Division for Historic Preservation (VDHP)**

End-of-Year Success Stories

Federal Fiscal Year 2023

P23AF01006

(October 1, 2022 – September 30, 2023)

- 1. Preservation Tax Incentives/Review and Compliance: *East Calais General Store, East Calais***
- 2. National Register Program Administration: *Middlebury Village Historic District, Middlebury and St. Albans Historic District, St. Albans***
- 3. Review and Compliance: *Flood Recovery and Resiliency***
- 4. Preservation Tax Incentives/Review and Compliance (Archaeology): *Julius and Sophia Norton House and Norton Pottery, Bennington***

**1. Preservation Tax Incentives/Review and Compliance
*East Calais General Store, East Calais***

Vermont's small but mighty Rehabilitation Investment Tax Credit (RITC) program supports a wide range of rehabilitation projects around the state, ranging from multi-million-dollar downtown developments to small "mom-and-pop" rehabilitation efforts. Annually, the program oversees completion and certification of roughly a dozen projects, with more than half of those projects involving affordable housing. Vermont's many active non-profit housing developers typically take advantage of additional funding streams, including Housing Tax credits, Community Development Block Grants through HUD, and other federal funding through lead abatement, energy efficiency etc. This year, one project worthy of highlighting is the rehabilitation and re-opening of the c. 1850 Clarence Dwinell Store, better known as the East Calais General Store.

This Greek Revival-style building was constructed c. 1850. A two-story gable porch with chamfered posts is its most prominent architectural element, augmented by deep stylized cornice returns, large storefront windows, and a central entry into the main block with a three-bay layout. The Dwinells were the first operators of the store, running their business on the ground floor while living upstairs. The store has long been a key commercial engine and community gathering place in this rural village that boasts a population of less than 1,500. In December 2019 when the store operator went out of business, the loss left a gaping hole with residents who were forced to travel many miles for basic grocery items. Added to this, since the building had fallen into disrepair, a major investment was required for any new operator. Finding traditional financing to make re-opening the store feasible was proving impossible. This store was the social hub of East Calais, the place where people visited and supported their neighbors; its loss disconnected residents.

In June 2020, the building was purchased by East Calais Community Trust (ECCT), a non-profit organization with a mission to support local community development, sustainable economic growth, and historic preservation. ECCT employed a community-supported enterprise model, successfully adopted in similar small towns in Vermont. The organization planned to own the real estate and apply for public funding to rehabilitate the building, after which they would lease the finished space to an operator. The plan would significantly reduce the start-up costs for the new commercial business and put the community in control of the real estate long term. Three upper-level apartment units were created where the Dwinell family once lived to provide income to help the non-profit maintain the building, hoping to keep the commercial rent low.

Ultimately, the community was successful in raising significant public and private funds to meet their \$2.7

million rehabilitation budget. The project received a congressionally designated award from then-Representative Peter Welch, HUD funding through the Vermont Community Development Program, Northern Borders Regional Commission funding a federal grant from USDA Rural Development, and Downtown and Village Center State Tax Credits. Funding was also provided by Vermont Housing and Conservation Board, Vermont Community Foundation, and Efficiency Vermont. A Paul Bruhn Historic Revitalization Grant, administered through the Preservation Trust of Vermont, supported preservation work and funded a National Register Historic District nomination for the village of East Calais, which was formally listed in September 2020. The store was a key anchor and contributing building in this newly created historic district.

Staff from the Vermont State Historic Preservation Office worked with the project team to ensure the historic character of the building was preserved while also striking a balance to achieve full ADA accessibility and improve the building's energy efficiency. In fact, the building is now the first carbon neutral general store in Vermont.

Early discussions revolved around an existing garage addition that was constructed sometime after 1920 but within the period of significance for the district. Although the footprint of the addition remained, it had lost its integrity as the false front, garage, doors, and original siding were no longer extant. There were also no remaining significant interior features. Further, historic photographs gave a clear picture of what had preceded the addition – open horse bays for an earlier form of transportation. The project team liked the idea of restoring the appearance of these horse bays on the exterior that would also allow for restoration of the second-story windows.

Another important goal was to make the store compliant with ADA. The existing lot was tight with no room for a ramp on the east or west elevations and no first-level ground access on the rear elevation where the grade rose steeply. The project team began brainstorming how to design a ramp for the north (front) elevation. Two possible concepts were initially considered, taking advantage of an existing door opening into the east ell. These options avoided impacts on the main block's two-story porch and an interior ramp could provide accessibility between the differing floor heights of the ell and the main block within the store. The initial Part 2 RITC application proposed a covered ramp that provided a straight run into the building. NPS conceptually agreed that a ramp at the north elevation of the east ell made sense but did not approve this initial proposal because the ramp would cross in front of the restored former horse bay openings. Ultimately the ramp was shifted to the west, creating a new doorway into the east ell, and closing the existing opening. This allowed the ramp to avoid crossing in front of the former horse bay openings but remain tight to the ell and fully covered, an important consideration in Vermont's climate. Additional details were carefully considered to minimize the visual impact of the new ramp. Instead of a bulky wooden railing a lighter and more transparent metal railing was used. The exterior base of the ramp was also finished with horizontal wood planking to create a low wall that further reduced the amount of railing required.

The East Calais General Store re-opened in October 2023. The final Part 3 was approved in December 2023. The Vermont State Tax Credit program was the subject of an article "Vermont Tax Credit Aimed at Rehabilitations, Upgrades for Developments Varied in Scale," published in the January 2024 issue of *Journal of Tax Credits*. The East Calais General Store was the project showcased in the article.

Meets State Plan Goal 1: Advocate for Historic Preservation

Objective: II. Educate the public that historic preservation is culturally, financially, and environmentally beneficial and worthwhile.

Actions:

- 1) Provide information about energy efficient features inherent to historic properties and current guidance on how to improve energy efficiency while still maintaining the historic integrity of the resource.
- 3) Foster Rehabilitation Investment Tax Credit (RITC) and State Downtown & Village Tax Credit programs.
- 4) Promote successful historic preservation projects to influence perceptions about historic preservation.

Meets State Plan Goal 2: Recognize Historic Places

Objective: I. Identify and document Vermont's archaeological and historic resources

Actions:

- 1) Provide guidance on the importance of survey, the advantages of designation to the State and National Registers of Historic Places, and the requirements of the designation processes.

Meets State Plan Goal 4: Cultivate Pride of Place and Stewardship

Objective: II. Encourage responsible stewardship of archaeological and historic resources.

Actions:

- 1) Demonstrate best preservation practices in the care and maintenance of historic resources and showcase application of *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties*.



Figure 1: East Calais General Store, prior to rehabilitation



Figure 2: East Calais General Store, post rehabilitation

2. National Register Program Administration ***Middlebury Village Historic District, Middlebury*** ***St. Albans Historic District, St. Albans***

Vermont SHPO has worked diligently to update the nomination process and the results show increased nominations with complete context and significance statements. To ensure this quality of each nomination, we prioritize webinars and training dedicated to the evaluation of eligibility and preparation of nominations and are preparing a guidance document. As of January 2022, Vermont's National Register listings included 266+ historic districts and 12,316 buildings, structures, and sites listed statewide since 1966. The number of nominations processed and forwarded to the National Register of Historic Places for successful designation has increased 70% from the previous five years. One reason for this increase is the Paul Bruhn Historic Revitalization Grant Program administered by the National Park Service; funding requires listing in the National Register of Historic Places within three years of award. Other funding sources regularly used to create and update nominations are Certified Local Government grants and mitigation funds from state and federal projects. Another observation is the need to update historic district nominations originally listed in the 1970s and 1980s as buildings and structures have been altered or demolished, and additional historic context information has been researched. All nominations are now available digitally through our Online Resource Center. An inventory of all National Register listings was created and is regularly updated for faster verification purposes. The Vermont Advisory Council on Historic Preservation is annually educated on evaluation of significance, integrity, and notification procedures for National Register nominations. Two important historic districts were updated in FFY2023: the Middlebury Village Historic District and the St. Albans Historic District. Projects such as these ensure that Vermont's National Register documentation remains a relevant and useful planning tool for our communities.

The Middlebury Village Historic District was first listed in 1976, with amendments in 1980 and 2001. In addition to being out of date, the original nomination was not comprehensive and only inventoried a selection of the most significant resources. The 2020 Middlebury Rail Tunnel Project required the removal of two historic bridges in the center of the historic district. As mitigation for the loss of these bridges, the Vermont Agency of Transportation funded a comprehensive update to the Middlebury Village National Register Historic District. The resulting registration form expands the original district boundaries to encompass the entire village core and provides detailed written and photographic documentation of all primary and secondary resources. The updated district now includes 826 resources, 599 of which are contributing. The Middlebury Village Historic District was amendment and boundary increase were approved by the National Register of Historic Places on February 22, 2023.

In St. Albans City, the downtown historic district was first documented in 1980. St. Albans City achieved Certified Local Government designation in 2020, and their first project was to update the 1980 registration form for the historic district. With the support of a 2021 Certified Local Government Grant, the district was re-surveyed, and the boundaries adjusted to account for changes over the past 40+ years. The revised registration form documents 112 resources, 94 of which are contributing to the St. Albans Historic District. The St. Albans Historic District was amendment and boundary increase were approved by the National Register of Historic Places on February 17, 2023.

Meets State Plan Goal 1: Advocate for Historic Preservation

Objective: I. Improve the coordination of activities under the National Historic Preservation Act and the Vermont Historic Preservation Act.

Actions:

- 1) Assist state and federal agencies in fulfilling their stewardship responsibilities.

Meets State Plan Goal 2: Recognize Historic Places

Objective: I. Identify and document Vermont's archaeological and historic resources

Figure 2: Middlebury Village Historic District, VHB for National Register amendment, 2021-2022



Figure 1: Middlebury Village Historic District, Lyssa Papazian for National Register amendment, November 2021



3. Review and Compliance ***Flood Recovery and Resiliency***

In 1927 and 2011, Vermont was the victim of severe flooding events that forever changed the landscape of the largely rural state. In July 2023, on the heels of the July Fourth celebration commemorating President Calvin Coolidge's 151st birthday, Vermont was again ravaged by severe flooding. The most widespread and significant damage occurred because of prolonged heavy rainfall from July 10 to July 11 when rainfall amounts of 3 to 9 inches fell across the state for over 48 hours. Damage from the Great Vermont Flood of July 2023 rivaled – and in some areas exceeded – Tropical Storm Irene in 2011. Only the Great Flood of November 3-4, 1927, an event that preceded modern flood control in the state, exceeded the impact of the 2011 and 2023 events in the past century. Governor Phil Scott, in expectation of the excessive rain, established a State of Emergency on July 9, facilitating mobilization of swift water teams and activating the Emergency Operating Plan.

As Vermonters cleaned from the flooding once the waters receded, the Historic and Cultural Restoration Task Force Annex (H&CRTF) was set into motion. Part of suite of recovery support functions established by Vermont Emergency Management in the wake of Tropical Storm Irene, H&CRTF is comprised of various state and federal agencies with local, regional, state, and national organizations working together to gather and share information and resources that can assist in the restoration and recovery of historic and cultural resources impacted by natural or human-caused disasters. The Vermont State Historic Preservation Officer serves as chair. A primary partner is the Vermont Arts and Culture Disaster and Recovery Network (VACDaRN), which provides resources and training in readiness and in how to respond in the event of an emergency to mitigate the impacts and ensures that our communities recover quickly and grow more resilient. For the July Flood, VACDaRN was the primary clearinghouse for recording damage to historic and cultural resources including historic sites and buildings, museums, collections, town records, and historic artifacts. The inventory, still actively updated, includes 70 of Vermont's most historic places, districts, downtowns, and villages, including three National Historic Landmarks. For the Vermont SHPO, impacts of the flooding included three state historic sites, state-owned buildings, and anything historic statewide.

Just as the waters had devastated our historic places, incorrect information related to the recovery and mitigation of historic resources began to ravage Vermont. Property owners were being advised that historic resources could only be constructed back as they were pre-flood and there was no financial or expert guidance available for properties with State or National Register designations. In the minds of property and business owners this ensured devastation from the next flood events. More significantly, it conveyed a message that Vermont does not care about her historic resources. The State Historic Preservation Office immediately moved into action to correct the misinformation, educate property owners including the State of Vermont's Building and General Services (BGS), and support rehabilitation of historic resources at risk of flooding. Contact was made with the National Park Service's Technical Preservation Services team who had written the *Secretary of the Interior's Guidelines for Flood Adaptation for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings* and the FEMA Federal Preservation Officer to seek guidance for educating those in an assisting role. Consultation with the State Floodplain Manager and the Agency of Natural Resources resulted in an amendment to the Vermont Flood Hazard Area and River Corridor Rule (FHARC). The amendment clarified state-owned historic resources have an exemption for substantial damage and set permit requirements, thus creating a framework for adaptation and alteration while ensuring preservation of character-defining features. This moved BGS, as the steward of all state-owned buildings (except historic sites), to examine alternatives beyond demolition to dry floodproofing, elevating, filling in basements, and site adapting measures. The primary target for this amendment and the

exploration of alternatives pushed by the Vermont SHPO was for the Capital Complex, a grouping of historic buildings surrounding the Vermont State House.

Together with FEMA, Vermont outlined recovery strategies with a focus on training for Arts and Culture private-nonprofits and artisans navigating FEMA Public Assistance and Small Business Administration processes, ensure widespread awareness of the Flood Guidelines including a workshop, coordination with FHARC and VT SHPO, education on the opportunities for the National Flood Insurance Program, and recurring training for stewards of collections and cultural heritage. The arrival of a designated Department of the Interior staffer as the Natural and Cultural Resources Field Coordinator (six months after the event) finally put action to the strategies and expanded the plan. The Association for Preservation Technologies was engaged to volunteer architectural and engineering expertise for four of the most devastated historic properties (Senator Justin Morrill State Historic Site; Theron Boyd State Historic Site, Old Labor Hall, and Vermont Studio Center); two of the four are recognized National Historic Landmarks. The National Park Services flood guidance team will be presenting a two-day in person training about flood resiliency and recovery. This training will be open to regional planning commissions, certified local governments, museum and cultural facility operators, state agencies, federal agencies, and anyone with a vested interest in the steward of Vermont's vulnerable historic resources. Plans are developing to have FEMA Corps assigned to the Vermont SHPO to survey the 11 communities of interest, which includes 22 historic districts. Many of these communities require updated surveys and amended National Register nominations. Other ideas pending include creating private dam and culvert inventories, increasing SHPO capacity to assist owners with historic buildings in floodplains, sponsoring flood-damaged building repair workshops, and developing stable funding for internships for natural and cultural resources. FEMA Regional 1 has been engaged to provide training to the Public Assistance Field Office, including site inspectors, at the Joint Field Office.

Bright stars in the July Flood were those properties addressed after Tropical Storm Irene through buyouts, elevations, and mitigation, and improvements like larger culverts and sewer drains. The greatest example was the Waterbury State Office Complex, which was constructed between 1891 and 1896 as the Vermont State Asylum for the Insane. In 2011 floodwater quickly filled the complex's 35 buildings and connecting tunnels on the 100-acre site. Waters rose above the first floors of many buildings, cresting 2.5 feet over the site's 100-year flood line. A vast team, including VT SHPO, worked for years to ensure rehabilitation of the historic resources was appropriate, new construction met preservation standards, loss of historic resources was adequately mitigated, and all flood hazard mitigation was suitable for the complex and its surrounding historic district. The result was the largest, most expensive, and most complex construction project ever undertaken by the state, and the largest historic preservation project ever attempted in Vermont. The mitigation created a flood-resilient campus, with buildings removed to allow flood water to disperse, tunnels filled in, site and landscape modifications, dry floodproofing, basements filled with lightweight concrete, ground level openings sealed, and new doors and windows elevated. In July 2023, water again flooded downtown Waterbury and surrounded the former hospital complex but stopped well short of the buildings, proof that flood-resilient design works. Improvements made at the Waterbury State Office Complex post-Irene allowed the Winooski River to spread out and slow down, resulting in lower water levels and much less flood damage overall. The solutions worked and the Waterbury State Office Complex stands as a model of how we can build back better and be prepared for the next flood.

Meets State Plan Goal 1: Advocate for Historic Preservation

Objective: I. Improve the coordination of activities under the National Historic Preservation Act and the Vermont Historic Preservation Act.

Actions:

- 1) Assist state and federal agencies in fulfilling their stewardship responsibilities.
- 2) Evaluate state-owned properties to identify potential historic buildings, landscapes, and archaeological sites.

Meets State Plan Goal 2: Recognize Historic Places

Objective: II. Support cultural resource disaster planning and recovery

Actions:

- 1) Create and disseminate pre-disaster preparedness and recovery planning guidance that addresses determination of eligibility procedures, project review, and compliance efforts.
- 2) Establish pre-disaster preparedness and recovery plans for the State-Owned Historic Sites.
- 3) Leverage partnership with the Vermont Arts & Cultural Disaster and Recovery Network (VACDaRN).

Meets State Plan Goal 4: Cultivate Pride of Place and Stewardship

Objective: II. Encourage responsible stewardship of archaeological and historic resources.

Actions:

- 1) Demonstrate best preservation practices in the care and maintenance of historic resources and showcase application of *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties*.
- 3) Increase focus on care and management of collections and archives at the State-Owned Historic Sites and Vermont Archaeology Heritage Center.



Figure 1: Montpelier Flooding, State Street beyond the Winooski River, July 10-11, 2023 (CNN)



Figure 2: Barre Flooding, North Main Street at Third Street, July 10-11, 2023 (Fox Weather)



Figure 3: Waterbury Flooding at State Office Complex, July 10-11, 2023 (Vermont Air National Guard)

4. Preservation Tax Incentives/Review and Compliance (Archaeology) ***Julius and Sophia Norton House and Norton Pottery, Bennington***

The 1846 Julius and Sophia Norton House is located on Pleasant Street in the densely populated economic center of the Town of Bennington. The Greek Revival-style house is characterized by its monumental pedimented Doric portico flanked by matching side porches, side hall entry frontispiece, bold entablatures, and floor-length windows. A Queen Anne-style addition was constructed c. 1880. Originally a single-family house, the property remained in the same family until 1979, when it was rehabilitated to provide seven apartments. Despite this modification, the building maintains a considerable amount of historic integrity. In 2020, the property owners reached out to the Vermont Division for Historic Preservation with interest in rehabilitating the property using the federal RITC program. As part of the process, the property was nominated to the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C for its local significance; the listing was finalized in February 2021. The property also includes a non-contributing detached ca. 1870 barn.

Although the barn was not considered a contributing structure due to later alterations, it was originally a stable barn for Norton Pottery. The first Norton pottery was established in 1793 in the southern section of the town by Julius Norton's grandfather, Captain John Norton. The success of Norton Pottery allowed Julius and his second wife, Sophia, to build this grand home, within view of the pottery works. Interestingly, the barn was not associated with the current parcel until the twentieth century. Judging by a boundary description in a deed, it may have been sold to Lyman Abbott in 1916. It is likely that this structure was built sometime between 1870 and 1877, as it does not appear on the 1869 Beers map of the village but does appear in the 1877 bird's eye view drawing of the village.

The RITC project involved rehabilitation of the existing seven apartment units for affordable housing as well as conversion of the barn, then used for storage, into two additional affordable housing units and administrative space. The project team worked closely with staff from the Division for Historic Preservation and the National Park Service to ensure changes to improve apartment spaces included retaining key historic features and finishes. The project goals also created an accessible entrance at the rear elevation.

Because of the historic association with Norton Pottery, archaeology was also a key component of the project's success. Archaeological reconnaissance focused on the area between the house and barn where ground disturbance associated with utility and parking upgrades would occur. Fourteen shovel test pits (STPs) were initially excavated. Most of the STPs contained historic artifacts; three STPs near the barn contained high density deposits of 19th century stoneware pottery fragments and stoneware 'bats' or spacers used in the firing/glazing process, clearly associated with the Norton Pottery. Archaeological work in 1990 had identified other deposits and structural remains of the pottery facility (VT-BE-0150). Given the physical separation of the two deposits, the archaeological material found in association with the Norton House and Barn was given a new site designation (VT-BE-582).

The initial reconnaissance survey defined an archaeologically sensitive area extending minimally 20 feet from the south and west facades of the barn. Intensive evaluation of this area included four STPs and a 3 X 3-meter block excavation south and west of the barn, and four additional STPs to the east and southeast. No significant archaeological features or deposits were identified in the latter area. However, all remaining STPs and the block excavation encountered the same dense stoneware deposit initially defined to the south of the barn.

The soil stratigraphy was largely consistent with three distinct fill layers on top of the stoneware deposit. The first fill horizon contained domestic artifacts associated with the Norton House and was underlain by a thick layer of charcoal and ash that contained domestic artifacts as well as architectural debris. Based on datable Norton stoneware pottery found below, the burn layer is likely related to the 1873 fire that destroyed the Norton Pottery. Below this is thin fill layer containing mixed historic deposits that also includes out of context Precontact Native American artifacts. The underlying stoneware deposit exclusively contained diagnostic pieces that pre-date the 1860s.

Project plans were modified based on the site stratigraphy and content to limit project excavation depths to completely avoid any impacts to the stoneware deposit within the parking lot expansion area and for most of the rehabilitation work associated with the barn. Direct impacts were limited to narrow utility trenches extending from Park Street to the barn. The utility trench excavation was monitored, and diagnostic pottery was recovered when encountered during the monitoring.

Despite the limited archaeological excavation, over 11,000 artifacts mostly consisting of stoneware and associated kiln furniture from the first half-century of the Norton Pottery manufacturing were recovered and curated at the Vermont Archaeology Heritage Center. Although this deposit may have been originally placed as fill to raise the ground surface abutting the Walloomsac River, the restricted date range of the material provides a unique sample representing the early stoneware production of the Norton Pottery. The in-place preservation of this deposit during the rehabilitation of the Norton House and former Stable Barn will provide an opportunity for additional study of this important archaeological resource.

Meets State Plan Goal 1: Advocate for Historic Preservation

Meets State Plan Goal 1: Advocate for Historic Preservation

Objective: II. Educate the public that historic preservation is culturally, financially, and environmentally beneficial and worthwhile.

Actions:

3) Foster Rehabilitation Investment Tax Credit (RITC) and State Downtown & Village Tax Credit programs.

Meets State Plan Goal 4: Cultivate Pride of Place and Stewardship

Objective: II. Encourage responsible stewardship of archaeological and historic resources.

Actions:

1) Demonstrate best preservation practices in the care and maintenance of historic resources and showcase application of *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties*.

3) Increase focus on care and management of collections and archives at the State-Owned Historic Sites and Vermont Archaeology Heritage Center.



Detail of late 19th-century Birdseye view map of Bennington illustrating Norton Pottery, Norton House, and pottery stable (Shober & Carqueville 1877).

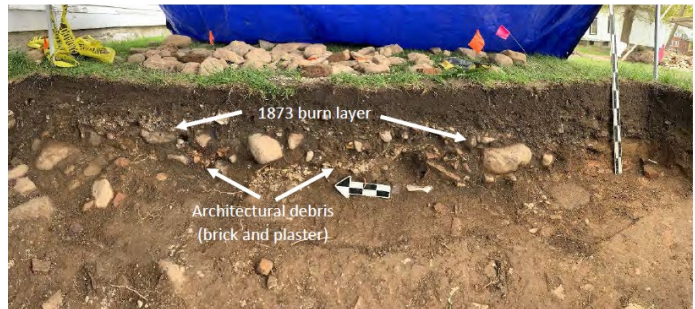


Figure 17. East profile of units 9, 6, and 3 (right to left). North arrow in 5 cm increments. Meter scale, right.

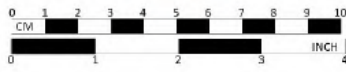


Figure 24. Norton & Fenton, 1844-1847 (Cat No. 934.21).

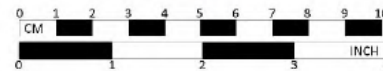


Figure 25. Julius Norton, 1841-1845 or 1847-1850 (Cat No. 428.22).

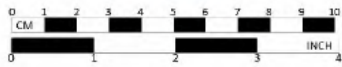


Figure 26. Julius Norton, 1841-1845 or 1847-1850 (Cat No. 935.21).



Figure 27. Julius Norton, 1841-1845 or 1847-1850 (Cat No. 925.21).



Figure 28. Julius Norton, 1841-1845 or 1847-1850 (Cat No. 221.21).



Figure 29. Julius Norton, 1841-1845 or 1847-1850 (Cat No. 935.22).