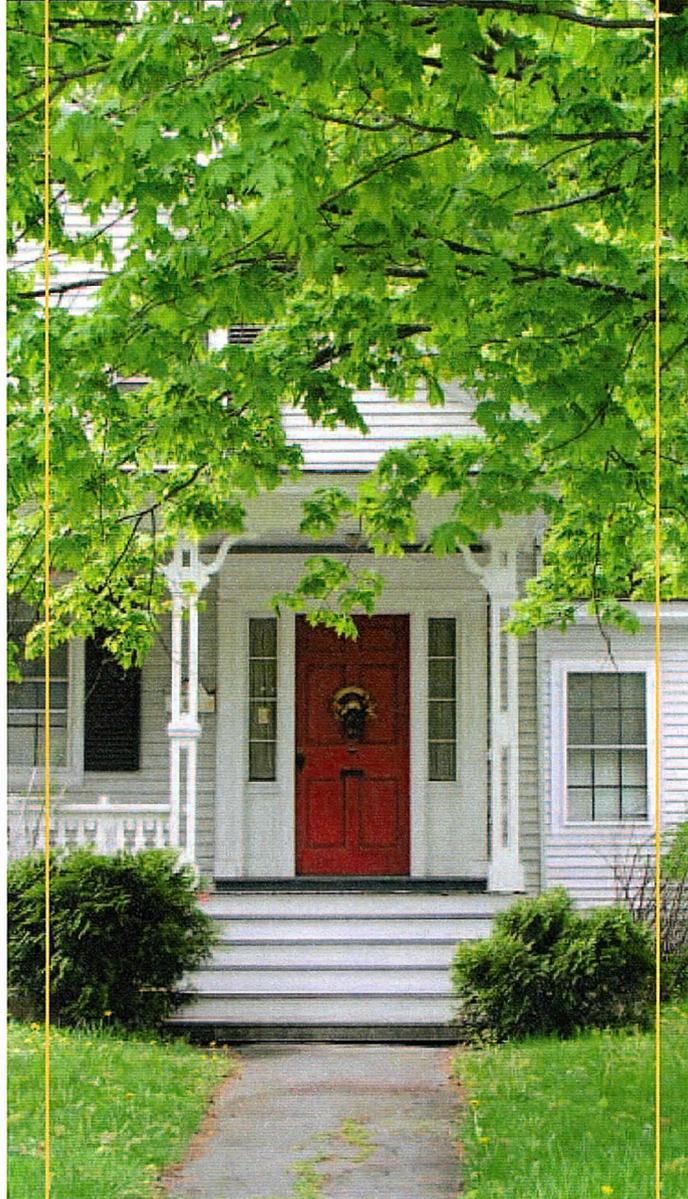


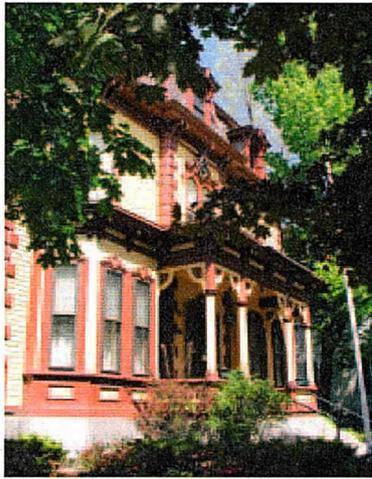
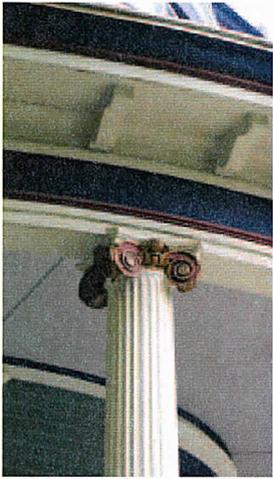
Bellows Falls

Neighborhood Historic District



Self-Guided Walking Tour

TOWN OF ROCKINGHAM, VERMONT



Bellows Falls: A Rich History

The Bellows Falls Neighborhood Historic District is a living narrator of the history of Bellows Falls Village and the Town of Rockingham. In the type, style, and age of its buildings, the district tells a story that's been evolving for almost 250 years. The story of this neighborhood is deeply entwined with the commercial, industrial, and residential development of the surrounding village and town.

The leading character in this story is the Connecticut River, which created here a series of level terraces adjacent to a long and narrow gorge called the Great Falls. The short distance between shores enabled the construction in 1785 of the first bridge anywhere on the entire 410-mile-long river, making Bellows Falls an important river crossroads. At a time when travel by river was more practical than overland, a series of eight locks on the Bellows Falls Canal (1791–1802) lifted boats a height of more than fifty feet around the gorge. It was one of the first transportation canals constructed in the country, and was completed more than two decades before the famous Erie Canal. In 1849, two railroad lines converged here, making Bellows Falls a railroad hub. After the arrival of the railroad, the transportation canal became a system of flumes that directed the river's water into one of the largest paper-making complexes in the world.

All of this industrial activity promoted the growth and

evolution of a downtown commercial district and nearby neighborhoods. Many of the residences in this historic district were built by or for the owners and managers of the canal and railroad companies, and other firms that manufactured paper, farm equipment, or paint. The district is significant for the high survival rate (96%) of its historic buildings and for the diversity of its architectural styles.

Taken together, the dense concentration of many types of buildings helps narrate the settlement, growth and culture of Bellows Falls. There are residential, ecclesiastical, educational, fraternal, commercial and civic structures, as well as barns and historic auto garages. The historic district's significance also lies in its palette of almost every historic architectural style found in the state of Vermont: Federal, Greek Revival, Gothic Revival, Italianate, Second Empire, Stick, Shingle, Queen Anne, Colonial Revival, Dutch Colonial Revival, Foursquare, Neo-Classical Revival, and American International.

In the building descriptions and thumbnail histories that follow, you'll see how particular architectural features represent different styles, and how individual houses relate portions of the overall story of the district and the Village. The entire district is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. It is not a static architectural museum, but a living and vibrant neighborhood of which its residents are proud.



1 Vermont Bank & Trust Company
Site of Hetty Green House 2 CHURCH STREET

This American International Style building was built for the Vermont Bank & Trust Company in 1960, and is the only building of this style in Bellows Falls. International Style characteristics include the flat roof, flat wall surfaces, lack of ornamentation, and large glass areas. The “American” interpretation often uses brick walls in lieu of the smooth white walls found in Europe. This building may be considered historic in 2010, when it is fifty years of age.



The bank stands in the location of the large brick Federal style Hetty Green house, which had been constructed c. 1800 by prominent businessman Captain William Hall. Hetty and Edward Green purchased the house in 1879. While Edward acquired wealth by

trading products from the Orient, his wife became much more famous as the “Witch of Wall Street.” Known for her extreme miserliness and eccentricity, Hetty had a large inheritance and invested it well, making her the richest woman in the world. When her husband passed away in 1902, Hetty moved to Hoboken, N.J., and died in 1916. The house fell into disuse and was demolished about 1940.

2 John T. & Lucy Moore House
5 HENRY STREET

This c. 1891 mansion is an excellent example of the Queen Anne style. It was constructed with “paper money” by paper mill owner John T. Moore and his wife Lucy. As with many properties in the historic district around the turn-of-the-century, the house that now stands at 15 Henry Street was moved out of the way to make way for this larger more stylish home. Queen Anne features of the house include the

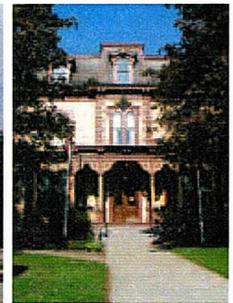


asymmetrical complex massing, hipped cross-gable roof, wrap-around porch, tower, mix of siding types, variety of window types and arrangements, and stained glass windows. It is also a good example of the use of continuous architecture in a residential setting, with the former horse and carriage barn attached to the rear ell.

3 Babbitt Tenement House

11 SOUTH STREET

Originally located one lot to the north at the southwest corner of Henry and South Streets, this apartment building is actually a c. 1850 Greek revival home. It was moved, enlarged, and updated in the Queen Anne style in 1902 by Frederick Babbitt, in order to build himself a new Queen Anne mansion at the Henry Street end of the lot. The older building was converted to an apartment house. This is one of many houses in the historic district that was moved to make way for a larger more stylish home. The original Greek Revival main block can be discerned by the front-gable side hall plan orientation, full entablature at the eaves, pedimented gables, and bold corner pilasters. The later Queen Anne features include the corner tower, wraparound porch, porch features, Queen Anne windows, and the mix of clapboard and shingled surfaces.

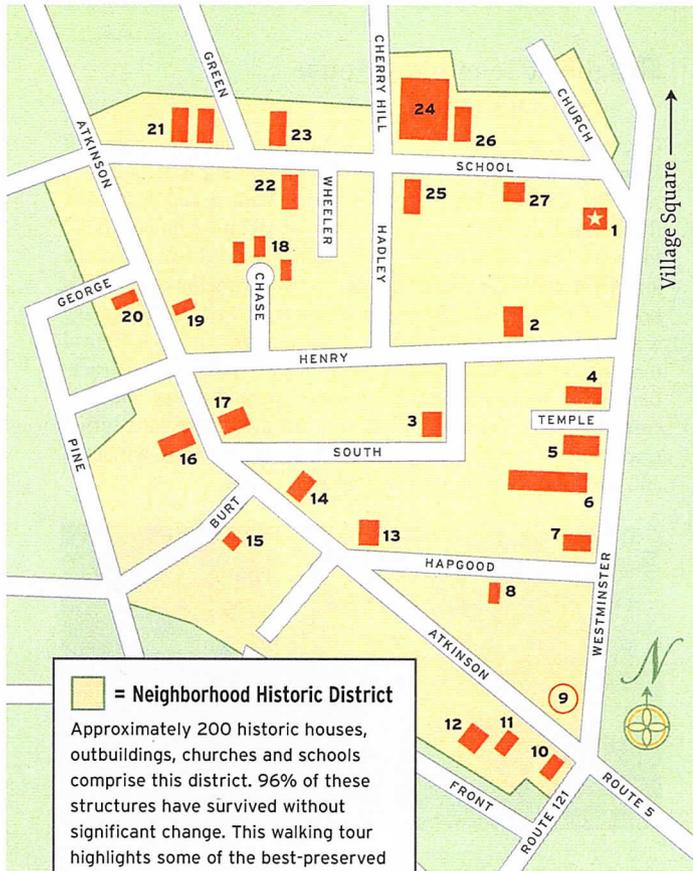


4 Wyman & Almira Flint House
Masonic Temple

61 WESTMINSTER STREET

This c. 1870 former residence is one of the best examples of the Second Empire style in Bellows Falls, and was built with “paper money.” It was constructed for Wyman Flint, the proprietor of Wyman Flint & Sons, manufacturers of tissue and manila paper on Mill Street. Second Empire features of the house include the cubical massing, mansard roof with ornamented dormers, prominent bracketed eaves, paired windows, front pavilion, ornamented window hoods, and porch features such as the chamfered posts and bracketed eaves. In 1909, the property was sold to the Masonic Temple, the current owners. The Masons moved the original ell of the house across the street, to where it now stands at #6 Temple Street. The Flints’ large Second Empire style barn once stood in the location of the library.

Please note: The homes described in this guide are PRIVATE and are NOT open to the public. Please respect the privacy of the residents and do not enter these homes or their yards.



■ = Neighborhood Historic District
 Approximately 200 historic houses, outbuildings, churches and schools comprise this district. 96% of these structures have survived without significant change. This walking tour highlights some of the best-preserved and significant architectural examples.

5 Rockingham Free Public Library

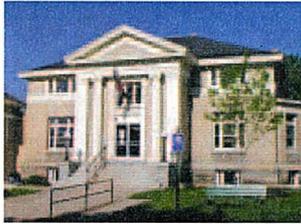
65 WESTMINSTER STREET

This 1909 library is an excellent example of the Neo-Classical Revival style. Neo-Classical Revival features include the light colored brick, symmetrical massing, impressive scale, full-height pedimented pavilion with monumental columns and pilasters, heavy eavoline entablature, low-sloped hipped roof, raised basement, and stone beltcourses and window arches. Its construction was partially funded by Andrew Carnegie, who helped fund the construction of 2,811 libraries. Its rear ell was constructed in 1929, the modern side addition dates to 1966, and the side entry pavilion was constructed in 2003.

6 Company E 1st Infantry Vermont National Guard Armory

71 WESTMINSTER STREET

This 1915 armory is a rare Vermont example of a building designed to look like a castle. Besides its unique architecture, it has the distinction of being the first armory constructed in Vermont. It was modeled after the Waltham, Massachusetts armory. Where the rear wing is located, there was originally a large gambrel-roofed brick gymnasium. In 1976, the armory was converted to the Riverview Apartments, its current use.



7 William A. Hall House

1 HAPGOOD STREET

This c. 1892 house is a remarkable example of the Colonial Revival style, and also has an early (c. 1924) intact automobile garage. Colonial Revival features of the house include the hipped roofs with dormers, broken scrolled pediments, Tuscan porch columns, bow windows, regularly-spaced window openings, and the heavily ornamented eaves. The house was constructed for William A. Hall, creator and manufacturer of casein-based products including paints and adhesives. In 1898, Hall was the first resident of Vermont to own a gasoline-powered automobile. Other residents have included paper manufacturers Francis Flint of Wyman Flint & Sons, and John E. Babbitt, one of the owners of the Robertson paper company. In 1997, the property was purchased by its current owners, who performed a museum-quality restoration and converted it to the Readmore Bed, Breakfast, and Books. The house was constructed on the site of the c. 1791 Solomon Hapgood homestead. Until the second quarter of the nineteenth century, this farm covered most of the southern section of Bellows Falls (below Henry Street). The Hapgood house was demolished about 1885.



8 Holland Church House

6 HAPGOOD STREET

This c. 1883 house is the only example of a pure Stick Style building in Bellows Falls. Stick Style features include the asymmetrical vertical massing, steeply pitched cross-gable roof, decorative flat "stickwork" (trim boards), gable ornamentation such as the corner braces and sawtooth trim, and porch details such as the cross braces and cut-out balustrade. The house was built for Holland Church, a foreman at John Robertson & Sons paper mill. By 1893, the house had been sold to Charles Labaree, the proprietor of the Labaree Veterinary Medicine Company, which operated out of the horse and carriage barn.

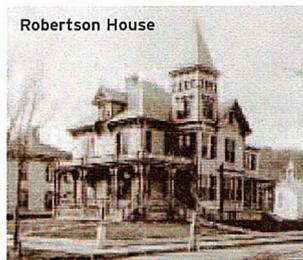
**9 Gas Station & First National Store
Site of Robertson, George, Fisher Houses**

85 & 97 WESTMINSTER STREET

While these buildings are not historic, this location has been chosen for the walking tour because it was the site of three grand Victorian-era homes, two of which were built with “paper money.” These were the c. 1880 Stick Style John Robertson House, the c. 1881 Italianate style Dr. Ozias George House, and the 1880 Gothic Revival style Albert H. Fisher House. Robertson formed one of the first paper manufacturing companies in Bellows Falls, the John Robertson & Son mill. Fisher was one of the proprietors of Flint & Fisher, paper manufacturers. These houses were demolished in the mid twentieth century in response to economics of the automobile age. The Fisher house was replaced by a gas station in 1940 (later replaced with the existing station), and the other two houses were replaced in 1959 by the First National Store supermarket and a large parking lot.



Fisher House

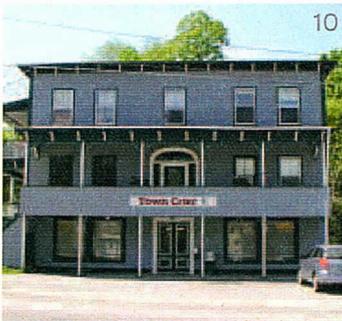


Robertson House

10 Colonel Alexander Fleming House

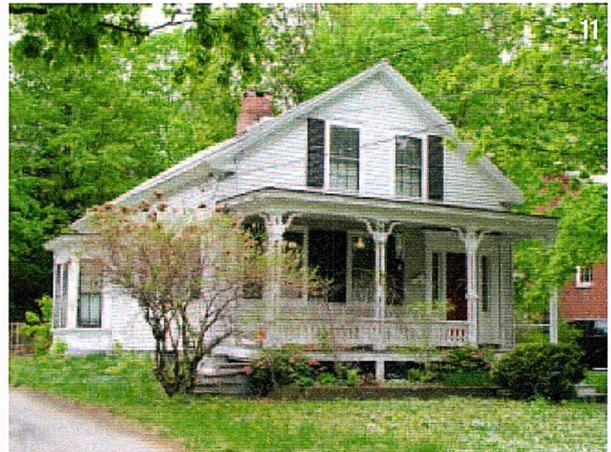
2 ATKINSON STREET

This building is unusual because it is one of the oldest structures in Bellows Falls, and is possibly the only building in Bellows Falls that has been moved twice. It was constructed c. 1820 as the home of Colonel Alexander Fleming, in the location of what is now the Masonic Temple. Fleming was an agent and clerk of the Bellows Falls Canal Company. At that time, it was a 2-1/2 story side-gabled Federal style house; the original front entry is now visible at the second story. About 1869, the house was moved to the northeast corner of Westminster and Atkinson Streets to make way for the more stylish Wyman Flint House (see #4). By 1885, it had been moved again to make way for a new mansion, across the street to its current location. After this, the building was raised one level with a new first



10

story, the gabled roof was replaced with the extant flat roof, and the Italianate porches and cornice brackets were added. The Gould & Marble grocery was located here for over fifty years, and was one of the longest operating grocery stores in Bellows Falls' history.



11

11 Charles & Harriet Hapgood Farmhouse

8 ATKINSON STREET

This c. 1835 house is a good example of the vernacular Greek Revival style, with a front-gable orientation, side hall plan, Greek Revival entry with an entablature, side pilasters, and sidelights, and six-over-six windows. The Italianate porch with tripartite posts and jigsaw-cut brackets dates to the late nineteenth century. The house was constructed for Solomon Hapgood's (see #7) son Charles and his wife Harriet, who lived here for most of their lives and had a large farmstead. There is also a c. 1900 barn behind the house.

12 Bellows Falls School Building #3

8 1/2 ATKINSON STREET

This 1884 schoolhouse is a good example of the Italianate style, with cubical massing, round arched and segmental arched windows, drip-mold window hoods, and a cupola. The corbelled cornices are of the High Victorian Gothic style, which was also a popular style of the period. This is the only remaining nineteenth century grammar school in Bellows Falls.



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13 Charles & Flora Robertson House

15 HAPGOOD STREET

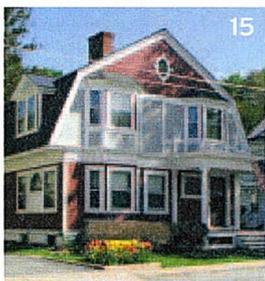
This Queen Anne/Colonial Revival house is one of the largest single-family homes in Bellows Falls. The house, its horse and carriage barn, and two sheds all date to c. 1893. It was constructed for Charles E. Robertson, the "Son" in John Robertson and Son, paper manufacturers. The Robertson family owned the property until the 1960s. Although the Queen Anne and Colonial Revival styles come from very different philosophies (Victorian picturesque vs. classical formal), they were often combined during the late nineteenth century, the transitional period between the Victorian era and the return to the classical formula, which was a reaction to the Victorian styles. Queen Anne features include the steep cross gable roof, projecting gables, mix of siding types, wrap-around porch, and variety of windows and window arrangements. Colonial Revival features are the almost symmetrical front elevation, broken and segmental arches, denticulated cornices, and classical porch columns.



14 Clark Chase & George Page House

33 ATKINSON STREET

This 1898 Shingle Style house is one of the largest houses in Bellows Falls. It was constructed for Clark Chase and George Page as a duplex for their families. Chase was a real estate developer (e.g. Chase Park, see #19) and owned the Chase Furniture Company. Page married Chase's daughter Lilla, and the two men were real estate development partners. Chase lived in the house until his death in 1925, when the building was converted to the Bellows Falls Inn. By 1955, the house was the Graves Nursing Home, and by the 1960s the name had been changed to the McGirr Nursing Home, its current use. Despite the adaptive reuse of the building, it has been well preserved. The 1899 carriage barn behind the house was originally part of the property at 26 South Street, which had been constructed one year after the subject house by George Page. Shingle Style features of the house are its asymmetry, shingled wall surfaces, two-story gambrel gables, corner tower that evokes a lighthouse, the curved classical-style porch, and the grouped windows.



15 Harold & Marian Walker House

4 BURT STREET

This 1910 Dutch Colonial Revival house is one of the only a few houses of this style in Bellows Falls. The first residents were Harold and Marian Walker. Harold was superintendent of John T. Moore & Sons, paper manufacturers. Dutch Colonial Revival features of the house are the gambrel roof, rectangular footprint, and Ionic porch columns.



16 General Nathan Williams House

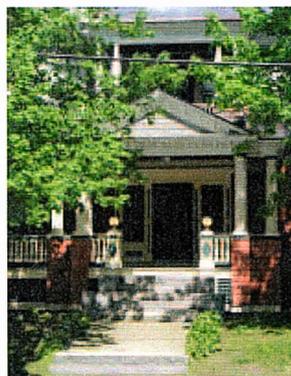
48 ATKINSON STREET

This c. 1902 house is one of the best examples of the pure Colonial Revival style in Bellows Falls. It was constructed for General Nathan Williams, the President, Treasurer and Manager of the Vermont Farm Machine Company. Colonial Revival features include its symmetry, hipped overhanging roof, pedimented dormers, classical full-façade porch, and Palladian window.

17 Dr. A. Lawrence Miner House

47 ATKINSON STREET

This c. 1903 Queen Anne mansion was constructed for Dr. A. Lawrence Miner, who demolished almost an entire block of commercial buildings on Atkinson Street to make way for the house. Miner was the first local resident to own a Stanley Steamer automobile. Queen Anne features of the house include the asymmetrical cross-gable massing, steep hipped roof, projecting gables, corner tower, classical porch with projecting pavilion, decorative chimneys, and window type variety. The house also exhibits Shingle Style features including continuous shingled wall surfaces, shingled porch piers, and an eyebrow window. It was not uncommon for these two house styles to be combined. A Shingle Style detached horse and carriage barn also dates to c. 1903.





18 Chase Park [OFF HENRY STREET]

This is the only “development” in the historic district. All of the houses were constructed 1893–1895 on a lot subdivided from a School Street property. Local developers Clark Chase and George Page built all but one (4 Chase Park) of the houses and Lilla Page, Chase’s daughter and Page’s wife, owned them. Apparently, this was a successful venture, as a few years later they built their mansion on Atkinson Street (see #14).

19 Perley and Cora Huntoon House

53 ATKINSON STREET

This c. 1917 house is the only Four Square type house in the historic district. It was constructed for Vermont Farm Machine Company machinist Perley Huntoon and his wife Cora, and remained in the Huntoon family until the 1970s. Its Four Square features include the low-pitched pyramidal slate roof, low-pitched shed dormers, cube-like massing, rough-faced concrete block foundation, and full façade Colonial Revival porch.



20 Frank Landon House

56 ATKINSON STREET

This c. 1872 house is a good example of a vernacular Italianate constructed by the Bellows Falls Canal Company. There are many houses of this style that were built by the canal company, particularly on Atkinson Street. It was constructed as a two-family house and its first owner was Frank Landon, an employee of the Central Vermont Railroad. Vernacular Italianate features of the house include the front-gable vertical massing, scrolled brackets, bay window, gable window with peaked lintel board, and bracketed tripartite porch posts.

**21 Wentworth House
Harris/Willson House**

29 & 31 SCHOOL STREET

These c. 1835 houses are two of the three brick Greek Revival style homes in Bellows Falls. They were constructed for Asa Wentworth, prominent banker, state senator, and merchant, and J.R. Harris, flour and grain dealer. Greek Revival features include the front-gable massing, pedimented gables, side hall plan, and the inset entries, which have sidelights and transom windows. Both houses have Italianate porches, which were added in the late nineteenth century.



22 Albert & Martha Derby House

24 SCHOOL STREET

This c. 1868 Italianate house was constructed for Albert Derby, proprietor of Derby & Ball, the largest manufacturer of scythe snaths in the world by the end of the nineteenth century. Italianate features include the cross-gable vertical massing, bay window, paired narrow windows with hoods, open overhanging eaves, porch features, and slim corner pilasters. The added tower is of the Queen Anne style.

23 Coolidge/Vilas House

23–25 SCHOOL STREET

This c. 1858 Greek Revival house is an early example of a duplex, and may be the oldest duplex in Bellows Falls. Two of the first inhabitants were surveyor Samuel Coolidge and grocer Samuel Vilas and their families. Both families lived in the house until the early twentieth century. Greek Revival features of the house include the front-gable massing, full-height porches, full entablature, and paneled corner pilasters and porch posts.

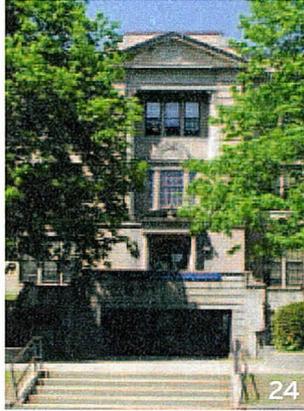


24 Bellows Falls High School

15 SCHOOL STREET

This 1926–27 Neo-Classical Revival school was originally built as the Bellows Falls High School, and is the third school building in this location. Neo-Classical Revival features of the building include its monumentality, symmetry, accented base story, center pavilion with projecting wings, flat roof with cornice and attic, quoins, rusticated surfaces, false windows, classical pilasters and columns, broken pediments, oversized molded cornices and stringcourse, and flat arches with keystones.

Historically significant murals inside the front entrance were painted in the late 1930s by Stephen Belaski. Abenaki Indians are depicted fishing at the Great Falls, and also portrayed is the 1704 sermon by the Rev. John Williams at the mouth of what is now known as the Williams River, to fellow captives from Deerfield, Massachusetts. It is considered to have been the first Protestant sermon in the present state of Vermont. The building now serves as the Bellows Falls Middle School.



25 Billing/Butterfield House

14 SCHOOL STREET

This c. 1840 vernacular Federal style house is one of the few brick Federals in Bellows Falls. It was constructed for John and Helen Billing, and inherited by their daughter Helen and her husband Charles Butterfield. Mr. Butterfield had a greenhouse and poultry breeding operation behind the house, and Mrs. Butterfield was responsible for the construction of several houses on Butterfield Avenue, which was named after her. Federal style features of the house include the symmetrical Georgian Plan massing (five bay by two bay), gabled roof, spare ornamentation, and regularly-spaced windows. The house's brick corbelled cornice is unusual for a vernacular house.

26 Baxter/Phelps House 9 SCHOOL STREET

This c. 1852 Greek Revival house was constructed for either John Baxter or his father Horace, who were both lawyers. The appearance of this house is unique to the region and there are two other houses in the village of the same transitional Greek Revival/Gothic Revival style. Greek Revival features include the front-gable orientation, pedimented gable with flushboard tympanum (space within the pediment), full entablature, and Doric columns. Gothic Revival features include full-height windows topped with pointed arch louvered transoms. This vernacular interpretation of two styles is unusual in that Greek Revival is a classical style while Gothic Revival is a Victorian-era style.



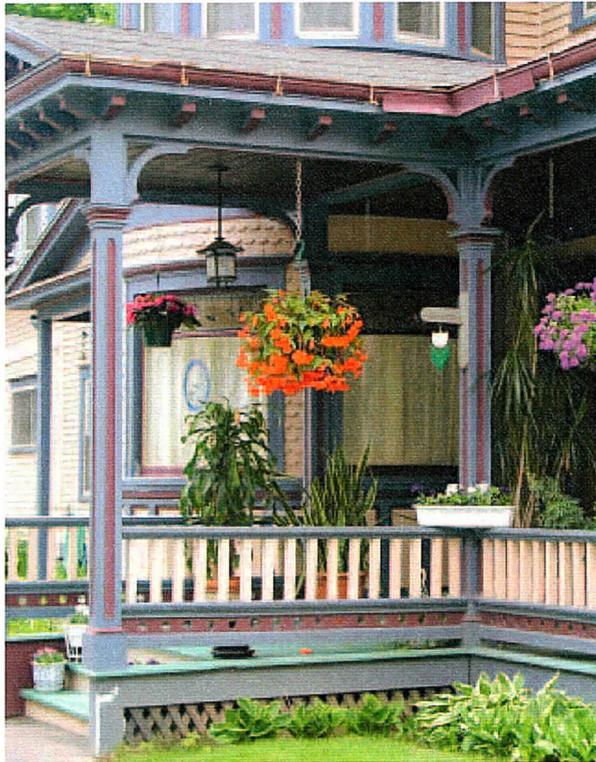
27 Russell Hyde House 6 SCHOOL STREET

This 1848 Greek Revival house was constructed for Col. Russell Hyde with timbers from the dismantled Mansion House Hotel. Hyde was originally a farmer, and at the time, there was enough land around the house to maintain a small farm. In fact, the house behind the Hyde House was originally a barn. Greek Revival features include the symmetry, pedimented gables, paneled corner pilasters, wide friezeband, architrave window casings with peaked lintel boards, and regularly-spaced windows.



Directions to the Village of Bellows Falls, Vermont:

- From Interstate 91 Northbound, take Exit 5. Go right from exit ramp to Route 5. Take a left onto Route 5 North; follow it into the village.
- From Interstate 91 Southbound, take Exit 6. Go right from exit ramp onto Route 103 East. Take Route 5 South into the village.



For more information on the historic district and architectural styles, please contact the Rockingham Historic Preservation Coordinator at (802) 463-3456 or on the web at www.rockbf.org. • This brochure has been produced with the assistance of a matching grant from the Vermont Division for Historic Preservation through the U.S. Department of the Interior, under provisions of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966. Discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, age or handicap is prohibited. Any person who believes he or she has been discriminated against in any program, activity or facility operated by a recipient of federal assistance should write to: Director, Equal Opportunity Program, U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington D.C. 20013-7127. • This brochure was designed and printed in 2004 for the Rockingham Historical Commission and the Town of Rockingham.

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