

**HISTORIC PRESERVATION
AND
DESIGN CONTROL STANDARDS
FOR
ESSEX CENTER AND FORT ETHAN ALLEN
1986**

Town of Essex, Vermont

(The contents of this report was originally an excerpt of the Municipal Development Plan adopted September 22, 1986 and as amended February 9, 1987.)

VI. HISTORIC PRESERVATION AND DESIGN CONTROL

INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

The Vermont Planning and Development Act provides the enabling authority for the creation of a Design Control District for "any area containing structures of historical, architectural or cultural merit." Two areas of the Town clearly fit this description - the Essex Center/Town Common area and Fort Ethan Allen.

Prior to the establishment of any area as a Design Control District, the planning commission must, in accordance with the provisions of the Planning and Development Act, "prepare a report describing the particular planning and design problems of the proposed district and setting forth a design plan for the areas which shall include recommended planning and design criteria to guide future development." This chapter has been prepared with the assistance of the Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission in order to meet this statutory requirement and to ensure that the stated policies and objectives for these areas are implemented through Act 250.

The purpose of designating certain areas within the Town of Essex as Design Control Districts is to maintain and enhance the rich cultural heritage of these areas and to eliminate or minimize substantial character alterations of the buildings. According to State Statute, unless a design control district is established for a specific area neither the Planning Commission nor the Zoning Board of Adjustment have any jurisdiction over ensuring that the design and scale of a building is harmonious with its surroundings. Because Fort Ethan Allen and the Essex Center area are so important to the community, it is essential that some standards are established to protect them.

The design plans which follow are not intended to restrict imagination, innovation, or variety, but rather to assist in focusing on design principles which can result in creative solutions that will develop a satisfactory visual appearance within the community, preserve property values, and foster civic pride in the distinctive historic, architectural and cultural characteristics of these areas.

FORT ETHAN ALLEN DESIGN CONTROL DISTRICT

Since its termination as a military facility, the portion of Fort Ethan Allen located within the Town of Essex has been converted to a variety of uses. To date, the Town has been fortunate that these uses have occurred without demolition or substantial alteration of the buildings within this historic complex.

Presently the Essex portion of the Fort is zoned for three types of land use as is evidenced by Figure 1. The area labeled A is zoned O-1 (open recreation) and is used for recreational purposes that include an open park, tennis courts, and a bandstand. This 14 acre parcel was originally the "Parade Grounds".

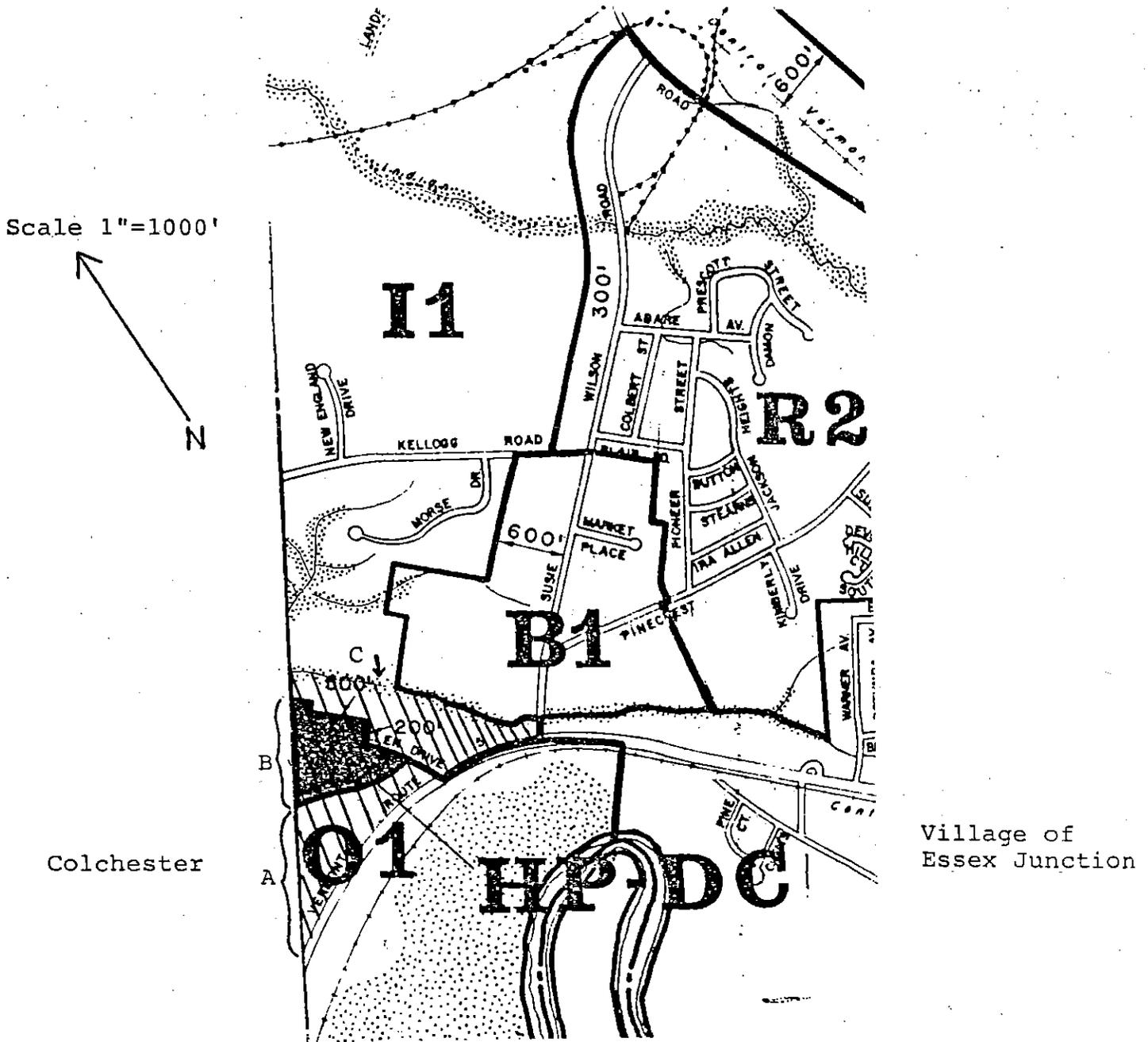
The triangular shaped parcel labeled B is presently zoned AR-2 (medium residential). Of the 21 buildings within this area, 20 are owned by UVM and used for student housing. The other building is Green Mountain Nursing Home. The imposing brick structures within this area served as Officers' quarters.

The area labeled C is zoned I-1 (industrial) and is part of a large industrial district extending to Route 2A. A variety of commercial and industrial enterprises are situated within this parcel with many utilizing the existing Fort buildings.

The University of Vermont is presently contemplating discontinuing student housing within the Fort and has undertaken a feasibility study relative to disposition of their holdings. While the residential zoning use of Parcel B offers protection as far as use is concerned, little can be done without additional controls to prevent demolition or substantial alteration of the existing buildings. For this reason, it is proposed to designate Parcel B an Historic Preservation - Design Control District in accordance with the provisions of Section 4407 (6) of Title 24, Chapter 117 V.S.A.

While this report addresses preservation of only those buildings located in the residential zone, there is a concern for buildings in the industrial parcel C and preservation of the parcel A "Parade Grounds." Since a large portion of Fort Ethan Allen is located within the Town of Colchester, it is recommended that a joint study be undertaken by the two communities to establish a Design Plan for the entire Fort as one single entity.

Figure 1. Zoning Districts in the Vicinity of Fort Ethan Allen within the Town of Essex



/// Fort Ethan Allen within the Town of Essex

A - Open Recreation (O-1)

B - Historic Preservation-Design Control (HP-DC)

C - Industrial (I-1)

The Vermont Division of Historic Preservation surveyed Fort Ethan Allen in 1979 and found that all but a few of the buildings would merit inclusion in the State Survey, even if found in civilian settings, because of the overall quality of the architecture. It was established that the entire Fort complex was of national significance.

The constant repetition of architectural style and building materials throughout the base presents a pleasing visual ambiance. The Colonial Revival architectural style is employed throughout the Fort and the bulk of the buildings - especially the officers' quarters - have a Georgian feel to them.

Of the 21 buildings located within the Design area, only one structure is of recent construction and can be considered an intrusion of the architectural continuity. Of the remaining 20 structures, eight were constructed in 1894; three in 1897; with the remaining nine dating back to circa 1925. Nineteen of the buildings were constructed as dwelling units to provide Officer housing and the other building was constructed as the base hospital and is presently used as Green Mountain Nursing Home. The Division of Historic Preservation's survey of the buildings in this District is included later in this report.

The map on page 6-8 indicates the site of buildings in numerical order from #20 to #40 within the District. Fourteen of the structures utilize variations of four basic designs. However, in all twenty of the structures, there is a constant uniformity in architectural style, and uses of individual details and building materials.

Foundations are built of stone cut rock faced and laid in random Ashlar patterns. They are frequently raised above ground level to a height of four to five feet. Exterior walls are predominately brick and are usually load bearing. A few structures utilize a combination of brick and clapboard. With few exceptions, windows and doors have segmental arched openings and granite sills. Sash generally varies between one over one; two over two; six over six; and six over one. Hip roofs predominate and all roofing material is slate. Cornices with dentils, modillions, or exposed rafter ends are common as are porches with columns and balustrades.

Given the uniform architectural style and use of details and building materials, design criteria can be established to prevent the demolition or substantial alteration of the structures within this District so that they can be preserved and the visual quality maintained.

Demolition

Demolition of the historic structures should be prohibited unless it can be clearly demonstrated that the structure is beyond rehabilitation.

Alteration

All old buildings need renovations from time to time but such renovations should not alter the exterior ambiance of the structure. Exterior renovations should maintain and enhance the architectural style of the building utilizing materials similar to those used in the original construction. Roofing materials should be slate and facade materials should be brick or a clapboard similar to that used in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Replacement of doors and windows should be of the same quality and style originally used on the structure. Repairs and/or replacement of cornices, porches and their columns and balustrades should duplicate the original to the greatest extent possible. The intent is to preserve the exterior quality of the building while not restricting interior renovations.

Expansion and Additions

Expansion of and additions to the historic structures should be discouraged. However, if they are found to be necessary it is important that such construction not detract from the overall quality of the building. Because of the side lot restrictions and desire to maintain the visual quality of the area such activity should be allowed only to the rear of the structures and only if there is sufficient space to accommodate the new construction. Because of the potential that new construction will be visible from the streets and buildings to the rear of the building, it is imperative that the design and materials used be the same as the original building. The objective is that the new construction compliment and enhance the principal structure rather than detract from the quality or overpower the historic structure.

New Construction

If one of the existing historic structures is found to be structurally unsafe and permission granted for demolition, new construction on the site should be of the Colonial Revival architectural style prevalent within the Fort. The roof should be hip although a gable roof could be an option. Exterior walls should be brick or clapboard or a combination of the two. Windows should be similar to those in the area and should feature granite sills if possible. Window treatment of details; doors; cornices; entry arches; dormers; etc should be similar to those found on historic structures in the vicinity and of a like material. Porches with columns and balustrades should be encouraged. The intent is that new construction be of the same architectural period and in harmony with the existing historic structures.

Although the present use and proposed use of the land within this District is residential, conversion of the structures from student housing to another form of residential use (i.e., apartments, condominiums, etc.) should require Planning Commission approval to ensure that the integrity of the Historic District is preserved and that adequate facilities such as parking are available.

SURVEY OF STRUCTURES FORT ETHAN ALLEN DESIGN CONTROL DISTRICT

The following inventory describes buildings of historic significance in the Fort. The map on page 6-8 denotes the location of these buildings which are numbered in accordance with the identification numbers used by the State Historic Preservation Division.

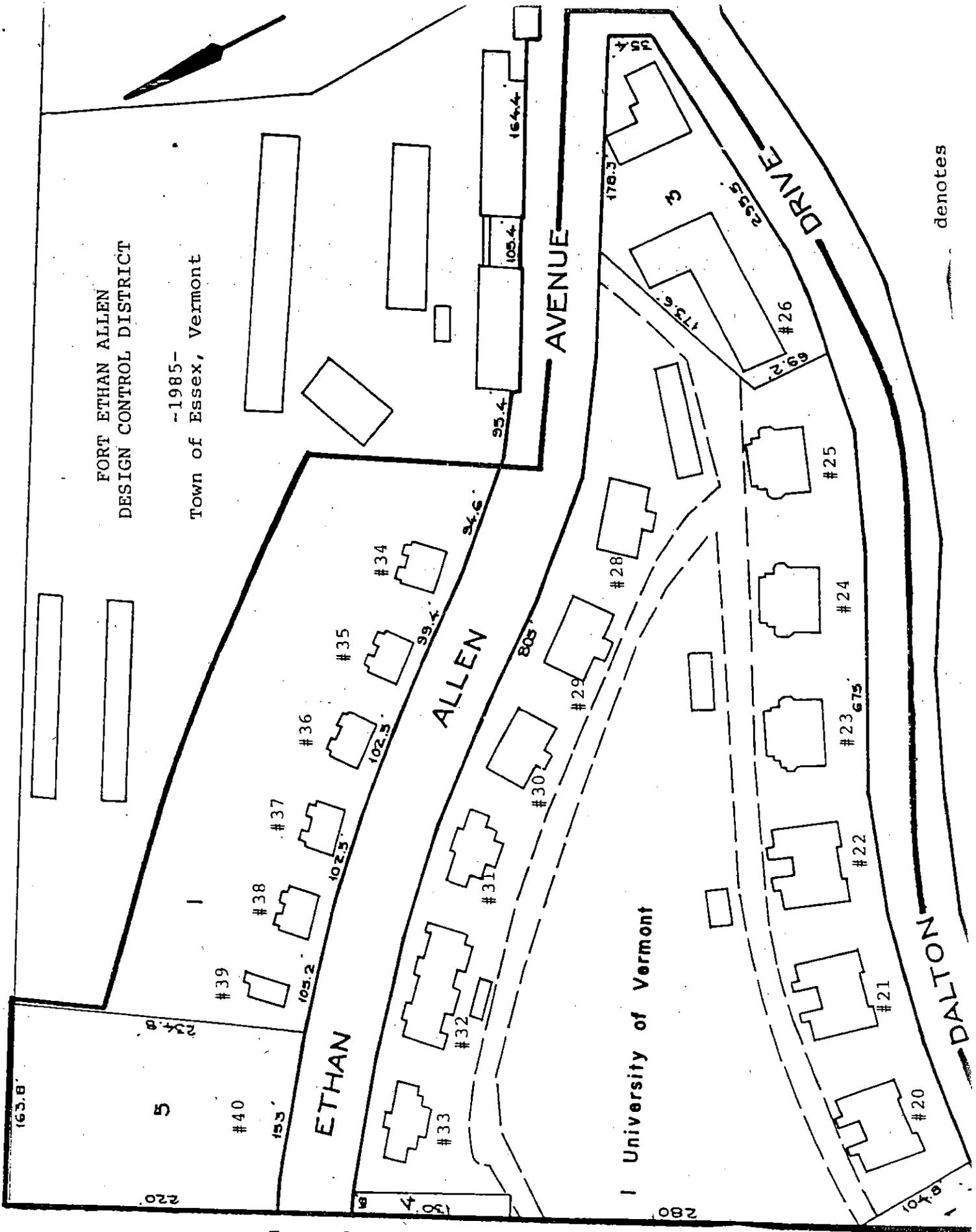
20. This imposing brick structure was constructed in 1894. Architectural style is Colonial Revival with a Georgian look. Built to house officers, the structure is now owned by UVM and used for housing.
21. See description #20
22. See description #20
23. See description #20 except date of construction was 1897.
24. See description #20 except date of construction was 1897.
25. See description #20 except date of construction was 1897.
26. This large brick structure was constructed in 1904 to provide housing for single officers. It is now under separate ownership from the University of Vermont and has been internally converted into an apartment house.
28. Built c. 1925 to provide housing for noncommissioned officers, the building is owned by UVM and used for housing.
29. See description #28
30. See description #28
31. See description #28
32. Built c. 1925, this 2 story wood frame structure was used for N.C.O. housing. Owned by UVM, it is presently used for housing.
33. Built in 1894 as housing for N.C.O.s, this brick building is owned by UVM and used for housing.
34. See description #33
35. See description #33
36. See description #33
37. See description #33
38. See description #33

39. This small single family brick house was built in 1894. It may have housed the family of an N.C.O. or perhaps staff for the adjacent base hospital. Owned by UVM, it is used for housing.

40. Constructed in 1894 as the base hospital of the original Fort, this brick structure is presently used as Green Mountain Nursing Home.

FORT ETHAN ALLEN
DESIGN CONTROL DISTRICT

-1985-
Town of Essex, Vermont



denotes

Town of Essex - Town of Colchester Line

ESSEX CENTER BUSINESS-DESIGN CONTROL DISTRICT

Essex Center was once the commercial and governmental center of Essex Town. Many of the original homesteads and businesses of the original settlers still exist along Route 15, Towers Road and the former town common which is bisected by Route 15, east of Towers Road. A list of structures within the Essex Center area can be found on pages 6-15 through 6-21.

Presently the Essex Center area is zoned for commercial use on the north side of Route 15 between Towers Road and a point just west of the Grand Union shopping center. The remainder of the area is zoned for residential use. Much of the growth that has occurred in the Town of Essex over the past 15 years is concentrated in the vicinity of Essex Center creating pressures and a need for expanded commercial facilities.

In the past, the Town has been reluctant to expand the Business District in this area because of the threat of unsightly "strip" development and the potential for adverse impacts to residential uses. Many of the existing residential structures face an uncertain future. The residential disadvantage of being located along a major transportation route is a distinct advantage for commercial development because of high visibility.

The following section examines the Essex Center area from a design perspective and identifies those features which contribute to the area's overall image.

Characteristics of the Essex Center Area

The predominant visual character of the Essex Center area is residential with structures representing a variety of architectural styles. Interspersed with the residential structures are six public and quasi-public buildings all but one of which date from the nineteenth century (the exception is the library which was built in 1930). In addition to the library, there are two churches, a grange hall which was formerly a church, a Town owned theater which was formerly the Town Hall, and a small schoolhouse now used for offices. All of these blend well with the dominant residential character. The principal discordant feature is the high volume of traffic on the major roadways, particularly Route 15.

Virtually all of the buildings face the principal roadways or the old Town Common. For the most part, the visual interest and quality of the area is created by the principal structure on each property along with front and side yard exposures. Most rear yards are not visible and associated outbuildings tend to be in disrepair and of a less distinct architectural style.

While the principal structures represent a variety of architectural styles, there are a number of common elements which add continuity to the visual experience. Some of these are illustrated in the following sketches. Structures are sheathed in clapboard siding and/or brick. Virtually all have roof overhangs on all sides usually with special cornice treatments. Almost one third of the structures have cornice returns. Roof materials are slate or modern composition shingles although some structures have traditional metal roofing.

Most of the structures in the area are oriented with a gable of the building facing the road (gable front orientation, see Figure 1) and virtually all include a main building block with one or more ells on various sides. The ells frequently have porches or verandas. The structures are one and one-half or two stories in height (see Figure 2).

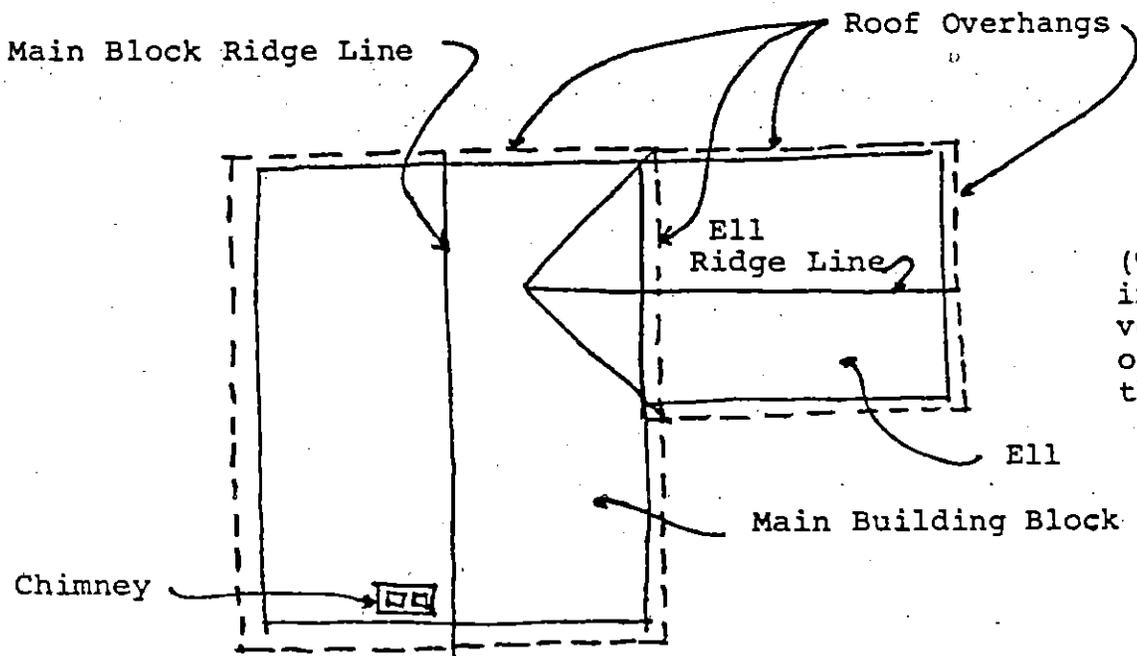
A majority of the structures include double hung sash windows. The glazing patterns vary from one over one to six over six with one church exhibiting large 24 over 24 sash. Most common is one over one or two over two. Windows frequently have decorative treatment at sill and head. Shutters are very rare appearing on only one of the surveyed structures.

The principal entry is generally in the main block of the structures although secondary entries in the ells are very common. The principal entry is frequently protected by a porch or small canopy. The porches are generally supported by turned posts while the canopies are supported by curved or carved brackets. In a few instances the entries are enhanced with side lights.

Future Commercial Development

It is proposed that a Business-Design Control District be established as an overlay zone in the Essex Center area. This district will overlay the "B-2", Light Commercial District and the "B-4", Light Business District along the south side of Route 15 and the "B-3", Business District which is on the north side of Route 15. The specific goals and objectives of establishing a design control district for this area are as outlined below.

1. Maintenance and Improvement of Economic Vitality
 - a. To promote the design of buildings and spaces in a manner which strengthens the Center's economic base while enhancing its attractiveness as a place to work and live.
 - b. To stabilize or strengthen property values.
2. Preservation and Enhancement of Visual Qualities
 - a. To achieve visual compatibility with the existing character of the Center.
 - b. To maintain important open spaces and views which reinforce the visual quality of the Center.
3. Protection of Historical, Architectural and Cultural Heritage
 - a. To assure that the renovation and alteration of existing structures as well as the construction of new buildings for commercial uses is done in a manner to maintain and enhance the character of the Center.



(The ell frequently includes a porch or veranda. The ell is often not as tall as the main block.)

Front (Gable Front Orientation)

Figure 1. Sketch Showing Typical Plan and Roof Features

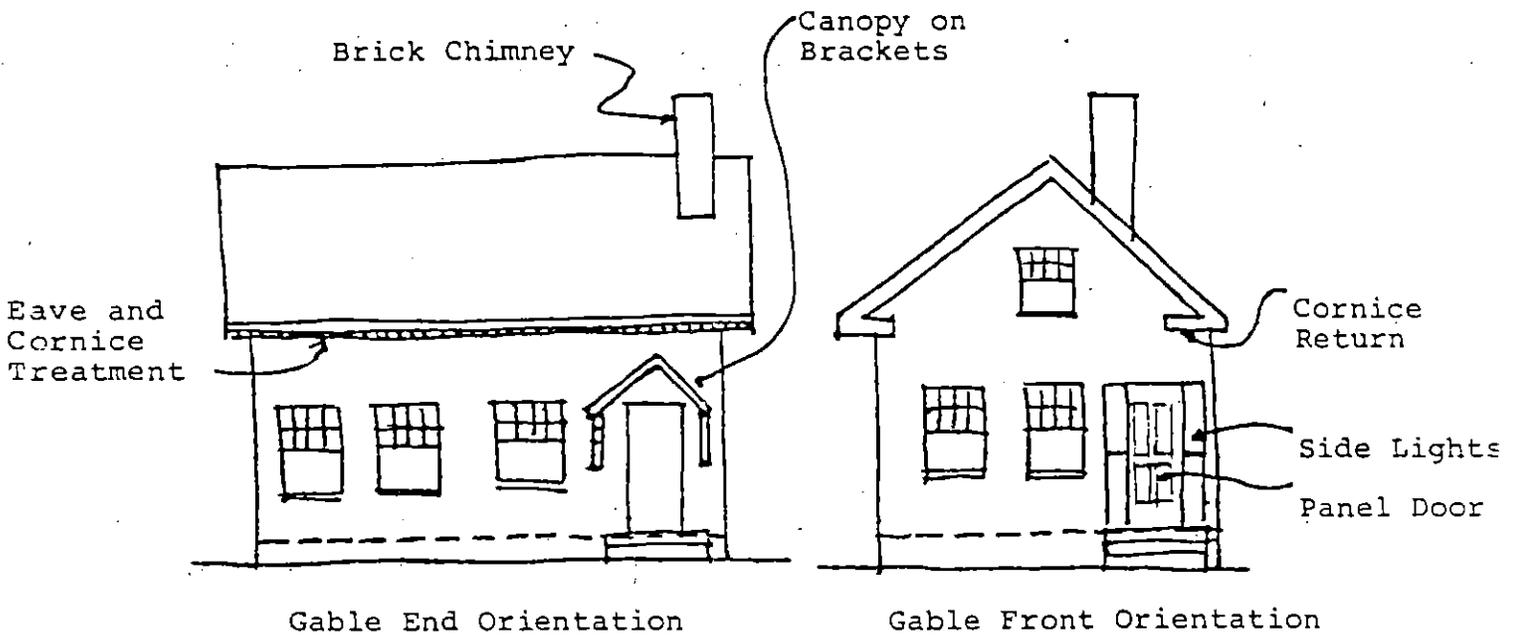
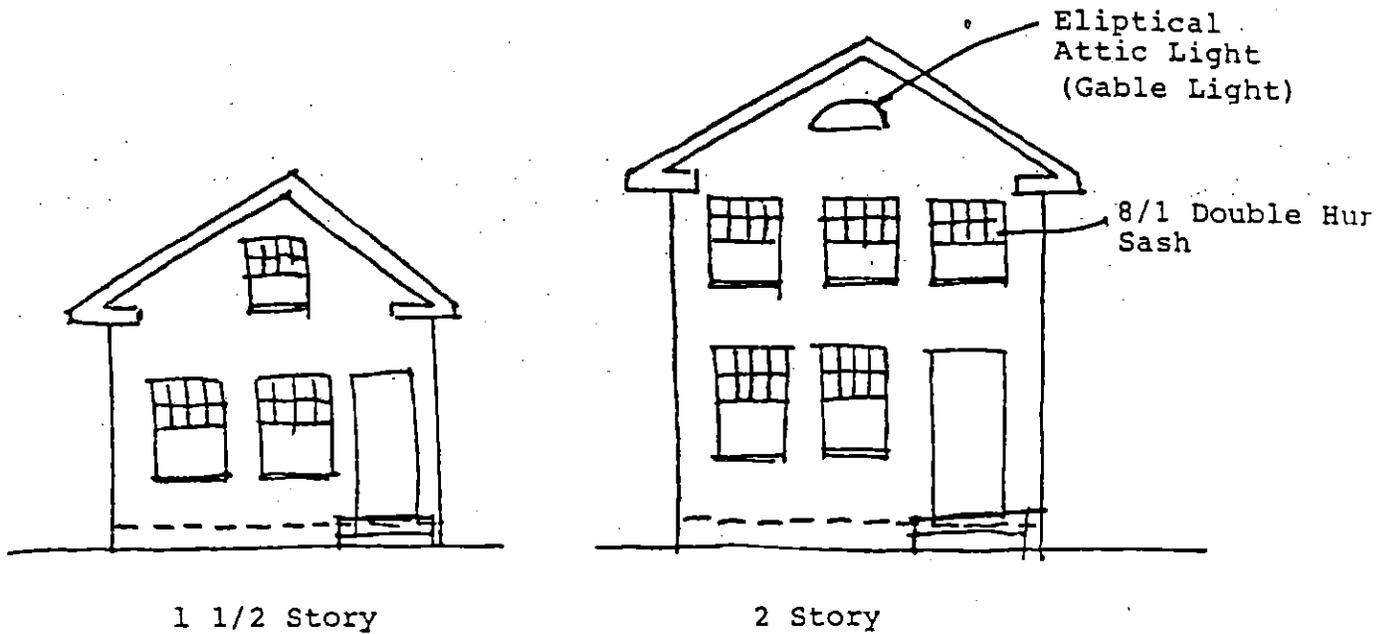


Figure 2. Sketches Illustrating Typical Architectural Characteristics of the Structures in the Essex Center Design Control District.

- b. To maintain those qualities in the Center which bring value to the community including a sense of place and an identifiable focal point of the Town.
 - c. To promote community self awareness and cohesion.
 - d. To avoid changes to structures that are inconsistent with the existing character of the Center.
- 4. Encouragement of Coordination and Harmony
 - a. To assure the provision of small-scale projects designed to serve the community.
 - b. To emphasize the retention of existing buildings.
 - c. To encourage coordinated building design and site development which takes into account adjacent land development and the surrounding area.
 - 5. Consistency in Administration
 - a. To avoid unreasonable or arbitrary requirements of an applicant.
 - b. To assure expeditious plan review.

The Planning Commission will have the ability through the design control review mechanism to ensure that all new commercial development will be of a scale and design that is compatible with adjoining residential buildings. It will not be the intent of this review procedure to restrict the design of new commercial structures to early nineteenth century architecture. However, it is important that the Planning Commission have some control over a proposed structure that is totally out of character or scale for the area. It is hoped that by having this control, the residential structures which add vitality to the village center will be able to coexist with commercial buildings.

New construction within this district should be residential in style and should not exceed 1 1/2 to 2 stories in height with the first floor level at or slightly above grade level. Structures should be gable roofed with roof overhangs on all sides. Some type of eave or cornice treatment similar to that of the existing historic structures should be encouraged. Windows should be wood with double hung sash. Use of panel doors at entries should be encouraged with some type of architectural treatment of entries in a style similar to that of the neighboring structures. Vertical siding should be discouraged with brick or horizontal clapboard preferred for exterior wall covering.

To preserve the visual quality of this area, proposals for conversion to business use should be able to demonstrate that adequate parking can be provided on site to the rear of the structure with suitable landscaping for screening purposes. Parking in front of the building and along Route 15 should be prohibited.

Landscaping of commercial properties should be utilized not only to enhance visual quality but to serve as buffers and screening. Within this district, many of the existing structures are in close proximity to the traveled portions of Route 15. Landscaping would lessen the impact of the traffic. Where a commercial use abuts a residential property, extensive landscaping will be required to serve as a buffer.

It is intended that development in the proposed "B-3" area be compatible with the existing structures in the "B-2" area. However, flexibility is the key to developing this area with consideration of innovative layout and site design being left to the Planning Commission. Clustered development with parks and commons is but one possibility.

While structures may be non-residential in mass in the "B-3" area, height should be limited to two stories. Gable roof styles should be encouraged wherever possible with roofing material of a type prevalent in the district. The utilization of the roof for heating and air conditioning units is to be discouraged. Exterior facades should be brick or horizontal siding.

Signs are a necessary part of commercial development and it is suggested that a sign ordinance be developed specifically for the Essex Center Business District. It is suggested that signs be restrained and in harmony with the structure and area.

SURVEY OF STRUCTURES ESSEX CENTER AREA

The Essex Center area presently includes some 39 plus structures of which 23 have been surveyed by the Vermont Division of Historic Preservation. Twenty-two of the buildings surveyed date from prior to 1900, the earliest being built in 1819. Most of the structures are and were residential structures with a few used for mixed residential and commercial purposes. The few structures not built in the nineteenth century are also residential in nature.

In addition to the structures surveyed by the State, other buildings within the Essex Center area have been documented by the Town Historian. An inventory of these structures follows. The numbers that identify each building correspond to the numbering system used by the Vermont Division of Historic Preservation. Buildings numbered 36 - 39 are not on the State's register but have been identified as structures of historical significance by the Town Historian. A map on page 6-21 denotes the location of these buildings by their identification numbers.

2. THE TYLER HOUSE (108 Center Road, Tax map 58, parcel 51)

This brick house was built as the Tyler residence although it originally had a harness shop in part of the L-portion on the left. Essex residents also refer to this as the Elsie Huntley house because Mr. Huntley, the druggist, lived here.

The gable front block of this brick structure includes six over six sash windows heads, and a corbelled cornice and returns with two sawtooth courses. The door is flanked by rectangular sidelights and pilasters supporting a partial entablature and crowned by a wooden head. An ell with attached shed extends to the east.

5. 110 CENTER ROAD (Tax map 58, parcel 3)

This structure, sided in vinyl, consists of a 1 x 2 bay gable front block and side (east) ell. The ell has a central gable wall dormer and on the first floor is a central bay window. Turned posts support the veranda.

7. 112 CENTER ROAD (Tax map 58, parcel 4)

This clapboard-sided structure has a 1 x 2 bay gable-front block and side (east) ell with enclosed porch.

8. 115 CENTER ROAD (Tax map 58, parcel 48)

This clapboard-sided structure is in the italianate style. The gable-front main block has a round louvered attic vent. Both the side (east) ell and block have paired brackets supporting the cornice and peaked door and window heads. The entry door is sheltered by a flat hood supported by curved sawn brackets.

10. THE "DIAMOND" HOUSE (117 Center Road, Tax map 58, parcel 47)

This yellow gothic brick dwelling on Route 15 is beautifully constructed with a recurrent diamond motif both inside and out. Horace Fairfield owned the property on which the house was built from 1848. He and his father were active in church affairs, and the property next door upon which the Methodist Church stands, was part of land purchased by the Fairfields in 1838.

The painted brick main block is 3 x 1 bays and includes corner pilasters, segmentally-arched window lintels above pointed arched wooden heads, and an east bay window. A clapboard ell extends to the rear which has an attached board and batten addition. The detailing of the structure is largely Gothic, probably added after construction. The pilasters may have been a subsequent addition, probably preceding the "gothicization" of the house.

11. CANDY STORE (116 Center Road, Tax map 58, Parcel 6)

The white house next door to the Grange Hall was formerly a candy store and a Post Office. It is a Gothic Cottage sheathed in clapboards. The main block is three bays across with a central gable wall dormer. The single bay entry porch is decorated with vergeboards of a fleur-de-lis motif. The side ell also includes a central dormer. Its porch is supported by incised piers. Both sections of the structure have paired brackets supporting the cornice and vergeboards decorating peaked window heads.

12. METHODIST CHURCH (119 Center Road, Tax map 58, parcel 46)

Construction of the church began in 1839 based on a gift of the property by Joseph Fairfield, who lived next door. The church is clapboard-sided and has a gable-front orientation. The six-panel door has a peaked head. All three levels of the belfry terminate in a cornice.

13. GRANGE HALL (118 Center Road, Tax map 58, parcel 7)

The Grange was one of the original churches in Essex, erected in 1859 by the Universalists. The last universalist service was held in 1893. The Grange had been holding meetings in the building for years, and asked that the Universalists sell the building to them. Title was finally transferred from the Universalists to the Grange in 1910.

This clapboard-sided structure is gable front with pediment and includes corner pilasters. The double leaf panel doors flanked by rectangular side lights and pilasters supporting a partial entablature is the only opening on the front face. The structure is three bays deep.

14. WILLIAM PACKARD (Present Owner) (Tax map 58, parcel 45)

This aluminum-sided, gable front structure is 3 x 3 bays. Its one-bay entry porch is supported by rectangular posts with chamfered corners and has a deck above.

15. PREVENTORIUM (107 Center Road, Tax map 58, parcel 8)

The Preventorium was a home for children whose parents had tuberculosis. This preventorium, opened by Governor Proctor, was the first in Vermont. There was also a schoolhouse on the site. The old Preventorium building is presently a motorcycle shop.

The main block of this clapboard structure is 5 x 2 bays with center hall and is two-stories in height. Window surrounds are molded. Turned posts and incised brackets support the entry porch with its hip roof and central peak. An ell extends to the rear and is attached to the store to the west. The structure was built by Thaddeus Fletcher to serve as his residence and store after he outgrew his original store in building #20.

19. RICHARD LAMSON HOUSE (124 Center Road, Tax map 58, parcel 10)

Originally a residence of B. B. Butler, operator of a tavern on the northeast corner of Essex Center, this was later the home of local hotel manager Richard Lamson. Jennie Green, the first woman School Superintendent in Vermont, also lived here at a later date.

The main block is gable-front, 1 1/2 stories, 3 x 3 bays. Window surrounds are peaked.

20. C. W. RICE STORE (125 Center Road, Tax map 58, parcel 43)

This two story frame building was built by Billie Bishop (B.B.) Butler for Thaddeus Fletcher in 1819. Fletcher established a prosperous mercantile business there, and he and his daughter, Mary Fletcher, were largely responsible for supporting the Classical Institute Boarding House. Later used as a grain store, in recent years, this building has been the Essex Post Office, apartment dwellings, legal offices and a dance studio. The structure has been added to many times over the years and is sided primarily in shiplap and clapboards. It faces the Common on Route 15.

21. WHITTEN WHEELWRIGHT SHOP (3a Jericho Road, Tax map 58, parcel 41)

The Post Office was housed both in this building and in the Telephone Company. Basil Farnsworth also operated a grocery store in the Whitten house at one time. The Essex Center baseball team used to play on the field in front of the Wheelwright Shop and the Telephone Company.

This structure is five bays wide with center hall plan. It is 1 1/2 stories in height, and the door is sheltered by a peaked hood. A picture window replaces two of the original windows. The side (south) ell includes a shed area.

22. FARNSWORTH WEED PHONE COMPANY (5a Jericho Road, Tax map 58, parcel 40)

This is presently the Byran Bentley home. One of the two roads around the common made a square corner in front of this building. The Post Office was also partially located in the Farnsworth house.

This structure is gable-front, 3 x 3 bays with sidehall plan. The door is flanked by side lights and molded panels. Quadrant lights flank the gable window. The house is sheathed in composite board.

23. ESSEX LIBRARY (Tax map 58, parcel 39)

This one-story clapboard structure built in 1930, is three bays wide and three deep. Round columns support its peaked entry porch.

24. THE NICHOLS HOUSE (8 Jericho Road, Tax map 58, parcel 32)

Charles Nichols built this house in approximately 1860 and it has always been a part of the Town Common. One portion of this structure dates back to 1815. Originally the post road to Cambridge went around the Common and continued west of this brick house. This is also the site of the original sawmill built by S. Pelton.

This two-story structure is 5 x 2 bays on a center hall plan. Splayed flat-arched lintels adorn windows. The brickwork beneath the eaves mimics a denticular cornice. Slate sheathes the gable roof.

25. ESSEX TOWN COMMON AND CONGREGATIONAL MEETING HOUSE
(Tax map 58, parcel 30)

The Town Common was laid out in 1801 and a meeting house built there two years later. The original frame structure was

replaced in 1839 by the brick building that served first as the Congregational Meeting House, then as a church for a variety of denominations. The area of the Common itself was eroded over the years. Absorbed by adjoining properties, taken up by a widened Route 15 which passes through it, what remains of the Common was claimed by the Town in 1973.

This gable-front brick structure is laid in common bond. Double leaf panelled doors are crowned by a rectangular stone lintel, above is a recessed brick panel. On either side of the door are 24 x 24 sash windows crowned by a rectangular stone lintel, below which are recessed brick panels. The triangular attic light is partly glazed and partly louvered.

26. 3A BROWN'S RIVER ROAD (Tax map 58, parcel 29)

The house is gable-front, sheathed in clapboard. Window heads are molded and an enclosed one-story porch is located on the front face. An ell extends to the side.

27. THE LITTLE WHITE SCHOOL IN ESSEX CENTER (Browns River Road, Tax map 58, parcel 28)

This building is currently owned by the Essex Town School District and serves as the Superintendent's Office. It was the first school of higher learning in the community. This was also the site of the Bliss blacksmith shop.

The clapboard-sided, gable-front schoolhouse is 3 x 7 bays. The elongated windows are crowned by peaked heads. The rear portion was added c. 1910.

30. 3 TOWERS ROAD (Tax map 58, parcel 19)

This two-story gable-front structure is 3 x 2 bays, sided in shiplap. The one-story front porch has a deck above.

31. ESSEX TOWN HALL (5 Towers Road, Tax map 58, parcel 18)

This building was built in 1871 and became known as Memorial Hall to honor the veterans of Essex in the Civil War. The Town Hall, as it was often called by residents, was the site of many activities. Jennie Green presided over the Town Library here. Basketball games were played inside. Of course, annual Town meetings were also held in this building. The Essex Players currently use this building.

The brick walls are laid up in common bond. The structure is gable-front, 3 x 3 bays. The paired front doors are flanked by pointed arch windows now boarded up. Above the door is another boarded pointed-arch window.

32. 7 TOWERS ROAD (Tax map 58, parcel 17)

This vinyl-sided structure consists of a gable-front main block flanked by wings. Peaked heads top windows. The veranda is curved.

33. 9 TOWERS ROAD (Tax map 58, parcel 16)

The main block is gable-front, 3 x 2 bays, sidehall plan. An ell extends to the south. The molded window heads are also peaked.

36. THE ESSEX CENTER RAILROAD STATION (18 Towers Road, Tax map 58, parcel 1)

The old railroad station still exists, abutting the old railbed on the Fleury property. The Fleury residence itself is an old creamery.

37. KELLY'S BLACKSMITH SHOP (12 Alder Lane, Tax map 59, parcel 6)

This red house, a former blacksmith shop, is currently the Beaugregard property.

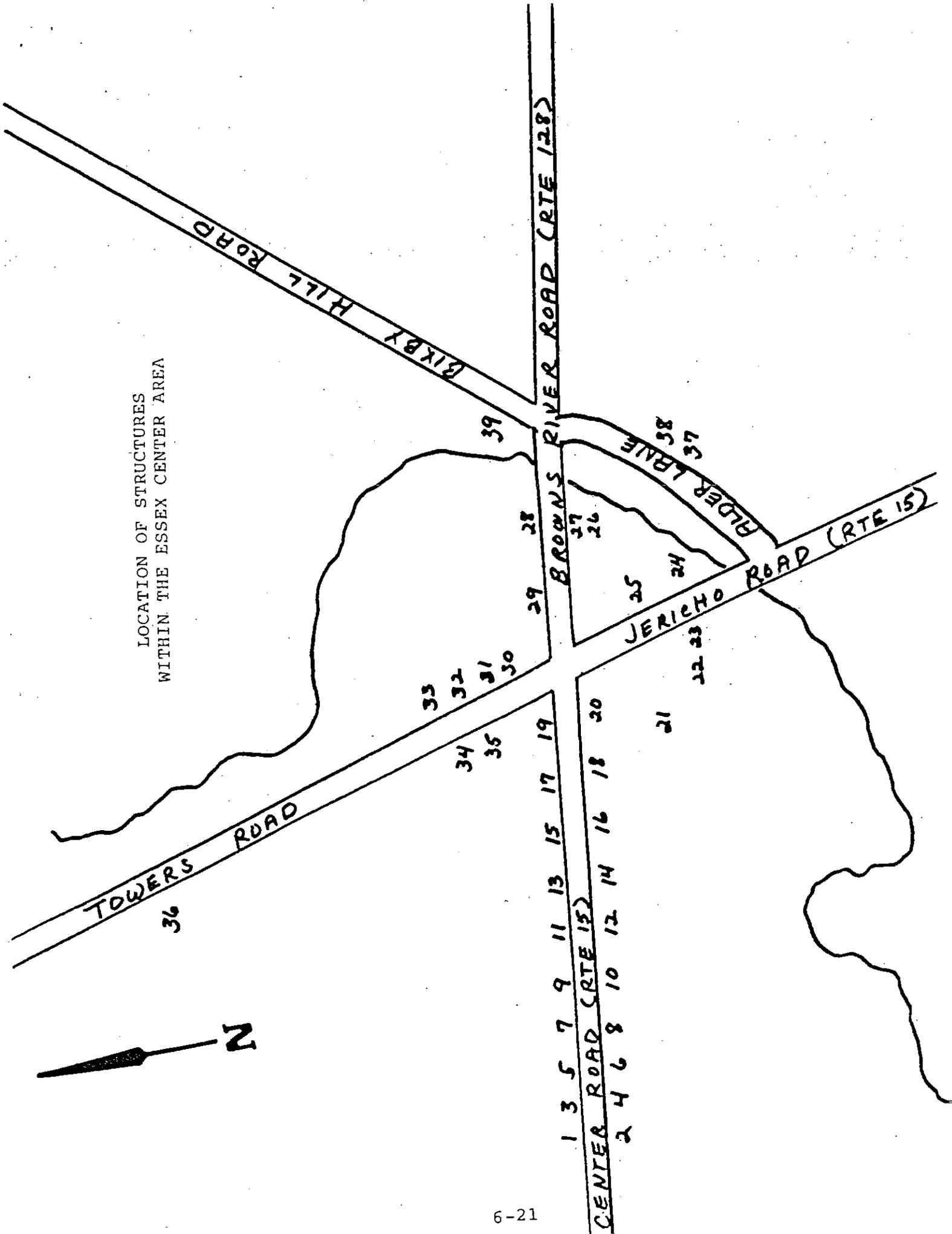
38. W.B. JOHNSON CREAMERY (10 Alder Lane, Tax map 59, parcel 5)

This historic creamery is presently the Hall homestead.

39. ESSEX CLASSICAL INSTITUTE BOARDING HOUSE (Bixby Hill Road, Tax map 58, parcel 23)

The Essex Classical Institute was built in the 1860's on the site of the Chittenden County Academy which was destroyed by fire in 1859. The Institute itself was demolished some years ago and is presently the site of the Essex Elementary School. The Boarding House across the street was built in the 1870's and was purchased by Mary Fletcher to house Essex Classical Institute teachers and students during a period of prosperity. This boarding house still remains and has served in recent years as a nursing home and an apartment dwelling.

LOCATION OF STRUCTURES
WITHIN THE ESSEX CENTER AREA



ADDITIONAL HISTORIC SITES

The following inventory includes several structures and areas that deserve mention in any discussions of Historic Preservation for the Town of Essex.

PAGE'S CORNERS

Page's Corners (the intersection at Old Stage and Colonel Page Road) was the first center of Town activities, but few structures remain. Several other historic sites still exist near Weeds Corner, the junction of Weed Road and Browns River Road. Butler's Corners also still contains several original homesteads.

BUTLER'S CORNERS

In 1800, the Town voted to erect a "sign post" and a "pair of stocks" at Butler's Corners. A "sign post" was a place to post public notices and warrants. A "pair of stocks" was a device for the punishment of criminals.

ROSWELL BUTLER HOUSE (87 Upper Main Street, Tax map 91, parcel 3)

Roswell and William Butler built this brick house and maintained a store nearby. Roswell Butler was First Selectman for a number of years and also represented the Town in the state legislature. The Butler brothers were active in the lumber and mercantile business.

WILLIAM BUTLER HOUSE (91 Upper Main Street, Tap map 91, parcel 4)

This clapboard structure was also built by Roswell and William Butler in 1800. Originally a much smaller structure, this house was added on to by various owners. Operated as a tavern at one time.

THE BUELL TAVERN (90 Upper Main Street. Tax map 10, parcel 2)

This historic tavern at Butler's Corners was originally operated by David Tyler, who also operated taverns at the Center and the Junction. After Tyler emigrated west, S.H. Boynton managed the taverns before returning to St. Albans. This was a noted stopping place for travelers between Johnson and Burlington. This structure has been renovated by the present owner, F. Fiske.

FIRST ESSEX CENTER SCHOOL HOUSE (62 Chapin Road, Tax map 10, parcel 70)

Built in 1805, this is the oldest known school house and the oldest building in the town. It is located just south of the Vermont Toy Farm on Chapin Road and has been most recently used as a smoke house.

THE CASTLE HOUSE (15 Weed Road, Tax map 11, parcel 49)

This white house located on the southern side of Weed Road was the home of Abel Castle. The date over the front door reads 1797.

WEEDS CORNER (6 Weed Road, Tax map 11, parcel 46)

This historic homestead is located at the junction of Weed Road and Browns River Road.

PAGE'S CORNERS AND HOMESTEAD (178 Old Stage Rd., Tax map 14, parcel 2)

This brick house at the intersection of Old Stage and Brigham Hill Roads takes its name from Colonel Samuel Page who built it in 1822. From 1790 to 1822, Page's Corners was the center of Town activities, supporting taverns, Post Office, stores and a prosperous smuggling trade during the war of 1812. Town meetings were held at Page's Corners between 1805 and 1821, when they were moved to the Center.

UNION STORE (5 Colonel Page Road, Tax map 14, parcel 36)

Located on the left side of Colonel Page Road, this homestead was one of the earlier buildings at Page's Corners. It is presently owned by Harriet Powell, the Town Historian.

OTHER GEOLOGICAL AND HISTORIC SITES

ESSEX ESKER - This is a site of special geological significance which runs along a stretch of Alder Brook between Chapin and Old Stage Roads. An Esker is a gravel bed - actually a ridge of roughly stratified gravel and sand - of a subglacial stream. Because of its rarity, the Essex esker has special educational and scientific importance, and it should be protected and preserved.

RAILBED - The old railbed runs from Towers Road bordering the Fleury property across Route 15 southward through the Lang property to the Village of Essex Junction.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION-DESIGN CONTROL - RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The Essex Center Business Districts ("B-2", "B-3", and "B-4") should be designated as a Business-Design Control District and expand to extend northerly to Chapin Road and include both sides of Route 15.
2. An Historic Preservation-Design Control District should be established for the residential portion of Fort Ethan Allen located in the Town of Essex outside the Village of Essex Junction.
3. Joint planning efforts by the Town of Essex and the Town of Colchester should be undertaken to develop a comprehensive plan for the preservation and development of Fort Ethan Allen as a single entity.
4. Preservation of significant historic structures should be encouraged where economically and structurally feasible.

