

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only

received AUG 19 1985

date entered SEP 19 1985

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*

Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Vernon Center Green Historic District

and/or common

2. Location

street & number

not for publication

city, town Vernon

vicinity of

state New York

code 036

county

Oneida

code 065

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
	NA	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> park
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name See continuation sheet

street & number

city, town

vicinity of

state

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Oneida County Office Building

street & number

Park Avenue

city, town Utica

state New York 13501

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

New York Statewide Inventory

title Resources

has this property been determined eligible? ☐ yes ☒ no

date 1973, 1976

☐ federal ☒ state ☐ county ☐ local

depository for survey records Division for Historic Preservation

city, town Albany

state New York

7. Description

Condition

☐ excellent
☒ good
☐ fair

☐ deteriorated
☐ ruins
☐ unexposed

Check one

☐ unaltered
☒ altered

Check one

☒ original site
☒ moved

date 1858 (Parkside Methodist Church)

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Vernon Center Green Historic District is located in the hamlet of Vernon Center, a small community in southwestern Oneida County. The hamlet is situated on New York Route 26, approximately one mile south of the east-west New York Route 5 which links Utica and Syracuse. Approaching the hamlet on Route 26 from the north, one encounters the green directly ahead with two wood frame churches flanking the road and traffic is diverted around the green. The historic district includes a six-acre rectangular green with mature trees and a centrally located gazebo. In addition the boundary was drawn to include the Methodist church and parsonage and the Presbyterian Church, which dominate the north end of the green. Together, the green and the two churches reflect the village planning ideals of the founding settlers. While other nineteenth-century structures front on the green, they all have experienced a variety of alterations and lack sufficient integrity for inclusion in the nomination. The nomination includes a total of five contributing features: the green itself, a turn-of-the-century gazebo, the Parkside United Methodist Church and parsonage, and the Vernon Center Presbyterian Church. There are three modern non-contributing features on the green: a flagpole, a refreshment stand and a playground.

The principal feature of the district is the green, a rectangular park of approximately six level acres laid out in 1798 and landscaped with trees planted in a regular pattern at various times since 1861. At the center of the green is an octagonal, arcaded gazebo with a high roof of concave slope carried on turned posts, built in 1901. Near the gazebo is a small, non-contributing one-story frame concession stand sheathed with ship-lap siding, built in 1948. A non-historic flag pole is located at the north end of the green. A small modern playground in the southwest portion of the park contains equipment installed in 1959 and 1969. Paths cross the green in an irregular pattern based on the configuration of the surrounding roadways.

The Parkside Methodist Church was built in the green in 1828 and moved to its present site in 1858. Built in the Federal style, it was extensively remodelled in a vernacular interpretation of the Romanesque Revival style in 1880, when it received a three-stage corner tower with round-arched and oculus windows, a round-arched portico and a rose window over the center entrance, and round-arched windows in the main body of the building. The adjacent parsonage, east of the church, is a modest late nineteenth century two-story, two-bay residence. Also facing the north side of the green, east of New York Route 26, is the Vernon Center Presbyterian Church. The building is a modest pedimented Greek Revival style building constructed in 1839 and extensively remodelled in 1885 with Gothic-arched stained-glass windows and a central front tower. The upper stage of the spire was removed in 1974. The tower is flanked by two entrance porches.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates 1798-1901 Builder/Architect Unknown

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Vernon Center Green Historic District is historically significant as a rare surviving example in central New York State of an eighteenth-century New England type village green created by and still controlled by members of the community for both religious and public uses. Laid out in 1798 by Vernon Center's founders, natives of Winchester, Connecticut, the green was created in imitation of such Connecticut communities as Hartford, New Haven, and Fairfield, in which central open spaces were occupied by religious, educational and public buildings. During the first half of the nineteenth century, two religious congregations (Methodist and Presbyterian) erected buildings on the green; both had removed to their present locations adjacent to the green by 1858. By the final quarter of the nineteenth century, after the removal of the churches, the green evolved into a landscaped park where church festivals and local celebrations took place; in the twentieth century its role as a center for community activities was expanded by the addition of a refreshment stand and a small playground area. The two churches at the north end of the park were originally constructed in the Federal and Greek Revival style in 1828 and 1839; they were remodelled to reflect the Romanesque and Gothic styles in the 1880s. Both churches still serve their original congregations. Still owned by the Vernon Presbyterian Church, the Vernon Center Green is the most intact of several village greens in the area which date from the same period.

Vernon Center was initially settled in 1798 following the purchase of a tract of some 5,000 acres of land by Hunt Hills acting as general agent for himself and several other natives of Winchester, Conn. The six-acre green, intended "to be and remain solely for public use forever (viz.) for the equal use of all denominations of Protestant Christians to erect buildings hereon for public worship and for Education,"¹ was laid out by a surveyor in 1799. Although the green's creators excluded Roman Catholic churches, their intent to allow Protestants of any denomination to build in the green marked an ecumenical advance over New England towns where, usually, only one denomination prevailed. Each owner of the surrounding one-acre lots was responsible for clearing the space from his property to the center of the green.

In 1802, the newly formed Congregational Society (forerunner of the Vernon Center Presbyterian Church) erected a meetinghouse in the green. In 1828, the two-year-old Methodist Episcopal congregation constructed a church in the green as well. In 1839, the Congregationalists built

¹Edith T. Stitts, "Vernon Center Park" unpublished manuscript, 1976.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Albany, N.Y., New York State Historic Preservation Office, Research Files.
Stitts, Edith T., "Vernon Center Park," unpublished manuscript, 1976.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property approximately 8

Quadrangle name Vernon

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UTM References

A 18 45 9 1 2 0 4 7 6 6 5 3 0
Zone Easting Northing

B
Zone Easting Northing

C

D

E

F

G

H

Verbal boundary description and justification

The Vernon Center Green and the property of the Parkside United Methodist Church and the Vernon Center Presbyterian Church,

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

NA

state	code	county	code
-------	------	--------	------

state	code	county	code
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11. Form Prepared By

name/title Robert Englert, National Register Program Assistant

New York State Office of Parks,
organization Recreation & Historic Preservation date July 1985

Empire State Plaza
street & number Agency Building #1

telephone 518-474-0479

city or town Albany

state New York

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

 national state XX local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

title Deputy Commissioner for Historic Preservation

date 8/15/85

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

Entered in the
National Register

date 9-19-85

for Melores Byrum
Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only

received

date entered

Vernon Center Green Historic District, Vernon, Oneida Co., NY
Continuation sheet

Item number

8

Page 2

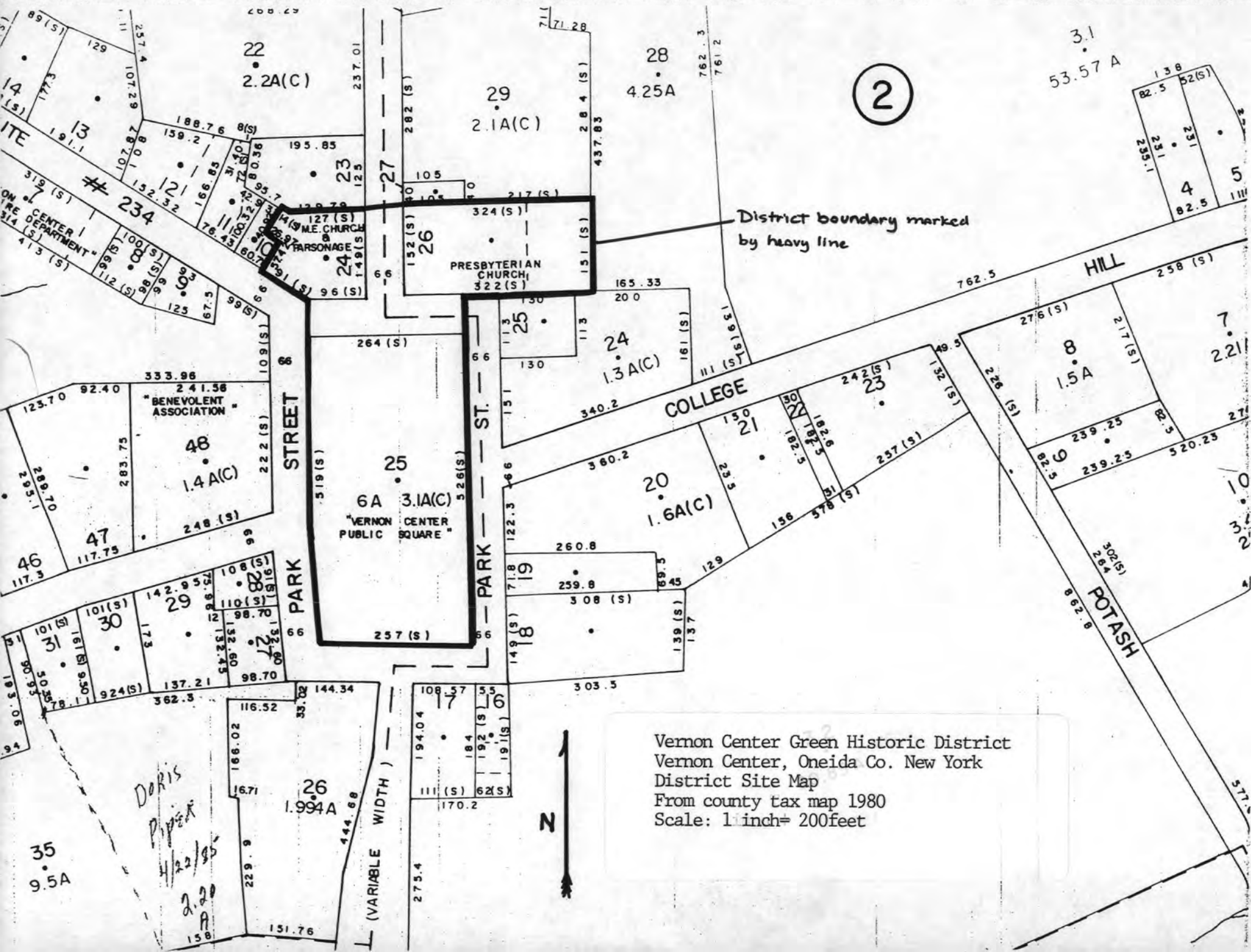
the present Vernon Center Presbyterian Church edifice facing the north end of the green, incorporating some materials from the old meetinghouse. In 1858, the Methodists moved their building to its present location facing the north end of the park and west of the former Congregational Church reorganized as a Presbyterian church in 1851. Both buildings were remodelled to their present appearance in the 1880s.

A third congregation worshipped in a small red building in the south end of the green in the mid-nineteenth century. The "Comeouters" split from the Vernon Center Presbyterian Church in 1842 over the issue of how to end the institution of slavery. Research has not uncovered further information about the congregation. It is probable that it was absorbed into the Vernon Center Presbyterian Church during or shortly after the Civil War; a ca.1873 photograph indicates that its building had been removed and the site planted with trees.

The green began to take on its park-like appearance in the 1860s with the planting of several rows of trees. A ca.1873 photograph indicates that a plank road shown cutting through the middle of the green on the north-south axis of Rt.26, if ever built, had been removed; in 1887 a road linking Clinton Road (College Hill Road) and Youngs Road (Oneida) was removed.

In the 1890s, iron benches were installed and additional trees were planted. The gazebo, a distinctive example of late Victorian era park architecture, was erected in 1901. The green's continued popularity as a community gathering place in the twentieth century is evidenced by the erection of a concession stand in 1948; this building is used for picnics, church-sponsored festivals, and other similar gatherings. A basketball board and swing set were installed in 1959 and 1967.

The largely intact Vernon Center Green with its adjacent churches remains as an example of late eighteenth century civic planning, reflecting the New England origins and Protestant faith of a large share of central New York's initial settlers. Although the green's function has evolved from one of church and school campus to that of public open space and recreation area, it continues the tradition of a green held and maintained by a religious institution for the benefit and use of the public.



Vernon Center Green Historic District
 Vernon Center, Oneida Co. New York
 District Site Map
 From county tax map 1980
 Scale: 1 inch= 200feet

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Ref #

85002431

Vernon Center Green Historic District
Oneida County
NEW YORK

Working No. AUG 19 1985
Fed. Reg. Date: 2/4/86
Date Due: 9/19/85 10/3/85
Action: ☒ ACCEPT 9-19-85
☐ RETURN
☐ REJECT
Federal Agency: _____

Entered in the
National Register

- ☐ resubmission
☐ nomination by person or local government
☐ owner objection
☐ appeal

Substantive Review: ☐ sample ☐ request ☐ appeal ☐ NR decision

Reviewer's comments:

Recom./Criteria _____
Reviewer _____
Discipline _____
Date _____
_____ see continuation sheet

Nomination returned for: _____ technical corrections cited below
_____ substantive reasons discussed below

1. Name

2. Location

3. Classification

Category	Ownership Public Acquisition	Status Accessible	Present Use
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4. Owner of Property

5. Location of Legal Description

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

Has this property been determined eligible? ☐ yes ☐ no

7. Description

Condition

- | | |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> excellent | <input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated |
| <input type="checkbox"/> good | <input type="checkbox"/> ruins |
| <input type="checkbox"/> fair | <input type="checkbox"/> unexposed |

Check one

- ☐ unaltered
☐ altered

Check one

- ☐ original site
☐ moved date _____

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

- ☐ summary paragraph
☐ completeness
☐ clarity
☐ alterations/integrity
☐ dates
☐ boundary selection

8. Significance

Period _____ Areas of Significance—Check and justify below

Specific dates _____

Builder/Architect _____

Statement of Significance (*in one paragraph*)

- ☐ summary paragraph
- ☐ completeness
- ☐ clarity
- ☐ applicable criteria
- ☐ justification of areas checked
- ☐ relating significance to the resource
- ☐ context
- ☐ relationship of integrity to significance
- ☐ justification of exception
- ☐ other

9. Major Bibliographical References

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property _____

Quadrangle name _____

UTM References _____

Verbal boundary description and justification _____

11. Form Prepared By

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

_____ national _____ state _____ local

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

title _____ date _____

13. Other

- ☐ Maps
- ☐ Photographs
- ☐ Other

Questions concerning this nomination may be directed to _____

Signed _____ Date _____ Phone: _____



Vernon Center Green Historic
District, Vernon Center, NY ORISA Co.
Photo: R. Englert, July 1985
Neg: Div. for Historic Preservation

View: to east, Green, gazebo,
concession stand
#1 of 6



Vernon Center Green Historic
District, Vernon Center, NY, Oneida Co.
Photo: R. Englert, July 1985
Neg: Div. for Historic Preservation

View: to southeast, southern
portion Green
#2 of 6



Vernon Center Green Historic
District, Vernon Center, NY, Oneida Co.
Photo: R. Englert, July 1985
Neg: Div. for Historic Preservation

View: to northeast, Vernon Center
Presbyterian Church
#3 of 6



Vernon Center Green Historic
District, Vernon Center, NY, Oneida Co.
Photo: R. Englert, July 1985
Neg: Div. for Historic Preservation

View: to east northeast, Vernon
Center Presbyterian Church
#4 of 6



Vernon Center Green Historic
District, Vernon Center, NY ~~avenue~~.
Photo: R. Englert, July 1985
Neg: Div. for Historic Preservation

View: to north, Parkside United
Methodist Church
#5 of 6



Vernon Center Green Historic
District, Vernon Center, NY, ~~area~~ Co.
Photo: R. Englert, July 1985
Neg: Div. for Historic Preservation

View: to northwest, Parkside
United Methodist Church and
Parsonage
#6 of 6



430754 DP

NEW YORK STATE
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

VERNON QUADRANGLE
NEW YORK
7.5 MINUTE SERIES PLANIMETRIC
SE/4 ONEIDA 15' QUADRANGLE



Vernon Center Green Historic District
Vernon Center, Oneida Co. New York
UTM Reference Vernon Quadrangle
Zone 18 E 459120
N 4766530

Prepared and published in 1978 by the New York State Department of Transportation, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration.

Map base from 1955 U.S. Geological Survey 7.5-minute quadrangle.

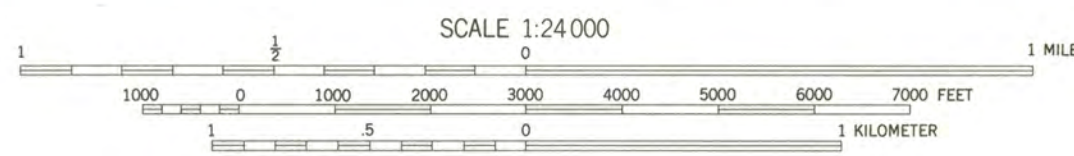
Map revisions made using 1977 aerial photography, construction plans, official records and other sources. Features revised include: highways and other transportation facilities; civil boundaries; recreation sites; hydrography; and buildings. Grey tint indicates intensively developed areas in which only landmark buildings are shown.

Revisions may not comply with National Map Accuracy Standards. Correspondence concerning this and other maps of the Department of Transportation should be directed to: Map Information Unit, New York State Department of Transportation, State Campus, Albany, New York 12232.

1978 revisions by A. Getson



QUADRANGLE LOCATION



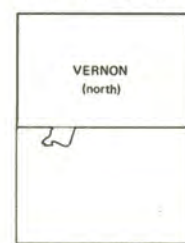
Polyconic projection. 1927 North American datum.

1000-meter ticks based on the New York Transverse Mercator grid. Between 72° and 78° West Longitude, this grid is identical to Zone 18 of the Universal Transverse Mercator grid. Areas east of 72° and west of 78° are direct mathematical extensions of Zone 18.

10,000-foot ticks based on the New York Plane Coordinate grid, Central Zone.

SPECIAL TOPOGRAPHIC EDITION
Contours, at 10-foot intervals, shown unrevised from 1955 U.S. Geological Survey map. Datum is mean sea level.

INDEX TO
1:9600 (1" = 800')
MAP COVERAGE



BOUNDARIES:

State.....
County.....
Town or City.....
Incorporated Village.....

ROADS:

Touring Route markers:
Interstate.....
U.S.
State.....
State Highway number and limit.....
County road.....
Interchange number.....
Divided highways and streets:
Wide mail.....
Narrow mail or barrier.....
Undivided highways and streets:
4 or more lanes.....
Less than 4 lanes.....
Vehicle track; trail.....

VERNON QUADRANGLE
1978 EDITION

