

Section XII

Cultural & Historic Resources

Introduction

Sunapee, like many other New England communities, was founded in the late 1700s as a farming community. The Industrial Revolution changed Sunapee dramatically in the mid to late 1800s as the Sugar River powered many mills and factories. The decline in manufacturing in the mid 20th century combined with a rapid growth in transportation led to Sunapee becoming primarily a residential and recreational community.

The Sunapee Historical Society, founded in 1973, has been the main organization responsible for preserving Sunapee's past. The Society runs a museum at the former Flanders-Osborne Stable in Sunapee-Harbor. In addition to the museum, the Society offers presentations about Sunapee's past throughout the year.

The Town of Sunapee has been moving forward with the preservation of one of its most recognizable landmarks – the Old Town Hall. These efforts have included a Design Charette and registration with the State of New Hampshire's Registry of Historic Places. Old Town Hall has been named as one of the "Seven to Save" historic buildings in New Hampshire.

Sunapee continues to lose parts of its history. Prominent resort hotels and old cottages have been torn down to make way for new buildings. Recently a commercial landmark, the Woodbine Cottage was torn down to make way for future construction.

Preservation Resources

There are several resources available to communities to help with preservation efforts. These include Local Historic Districts, the State and National Registers of Historic Places, and Easements/Covenants.

Sunapee does not have an Historic District. State laws allow for the creation of these districts through public hearings and a Town Meeting ballot vote. An historic district is administered in much the same way as a Zoning Ordinance.

There are no buildings in Sunapee on the National Register of Historic Places and the recent addition of the Old Town Hall to the State Register is the first in Sunapee. Benefits of being added to the register include grants and tax-incentives, and the most lasting benefit: community pride.

Recommendations

1. Prepare a complete historic resource survey for Sunapee
2. Promote the history of the town using historic markers and tours of historic sites.
3. Determine whether any structures or districts should be considered for the National Register of Historic Places.
4. Protect and preserve significant architectural and historic resources.
5. Acquire conservation and preservation easements for historic structures and properties.
6. Continue the work of the Old Town Hall Committee.
7. Preserve the Abbott Library building as an historic resource.