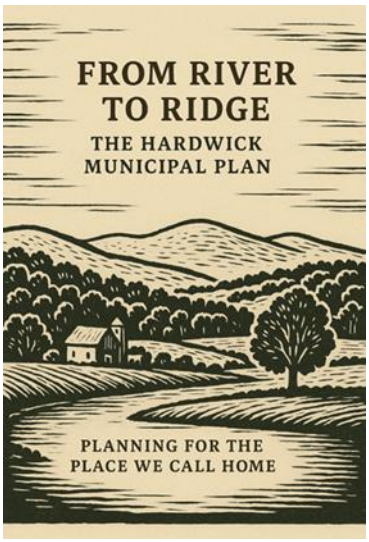
HISTORIC, SCENIC, AND ARCHEOLOGICAL RESOURCES



INTRODUCTION

Hardwick's historic, scenic, and archaeological resources reflect the community's history and the landscapes that have shaped it over generations. From the historic villages of Hardwick and East Hardwick to Buffalo Mountain, the Lamoille River, the railroad, working farms, forests, and the legacy of the granite industry, these resources embody Hardwick's heritage and continue to define the community's identity and sense of place. They connect the past to the present through the buildings, landscapes, and places that continue to shape everyday life in Hardwick.

As Hardwick plans for our future, stewardship of these resources extends beyond protecting individual buildings and landscapes. It includes maintaining the character of the town's villages, conserving scenic landscapes, recognizing archaeological resources, and helping future generations understand the history that shaped the community. Together, these resources strengthen Hardwick's identity and help guide thoughtful decisions as the town continues to evolve.

What We Heard from the Community

The 2026 Municipal Plan Survey confirmed that residents place a high value on the historic character, scenic beauty, and landscapes that define Hardwick's identity. More than half of respondents identified natural beauty and outdoor access as one of the community's greatest strengths, while nearly 44 percent valued Hardwick's historic and small-town character. Residents also expressed support for protecting farmland and forestland, preserving historic buildings, and maintaining the character of Hardwick's villages. Together, these responses reinforce the importance of caring for the places that contribute to Hardwick's character, history, and sense of place.

2026 Municipal Plan Survey Highlights

50.2% identified natural beauty and outdoor access as one of Hardwick's greatest strengths.

43.9% identified Hardwick's historic and small-town character as a defining community asset.

33.9% supported protecting farmland and forestland as a community development priority.

18.3% supported preserving historic buildings.

Historic Resources

Historic record

The Town of Hardwick has a rich history, which informs the values and traditions held by residents today. A period of about 30 years (1890-1920) of industrial production of commercial granite sets it apart from other towns in the region. The Town, with the support of the Hardwick Historical Society (HHS), will continue to ensure that this history is available for residents, new and old. The HHS spearheaded the renovation of the 19th century railroad depot into an archives and museum for its collections.

A survey of historical documents in the various repositories in Hardwick, completed in April 2001, revealed a wealth of holdings. The Town Clerk's Office has responsibility for town records from the early 19th century, including school records. The Hardwick Historical Society has focused on preserving records related to business, social activity and genealogy. The Hardwick Gazette also donated its complete newspaper archive, dating from 1890, to the Hardwick Historical Society. The entire collection is available online at Newspapers.com.

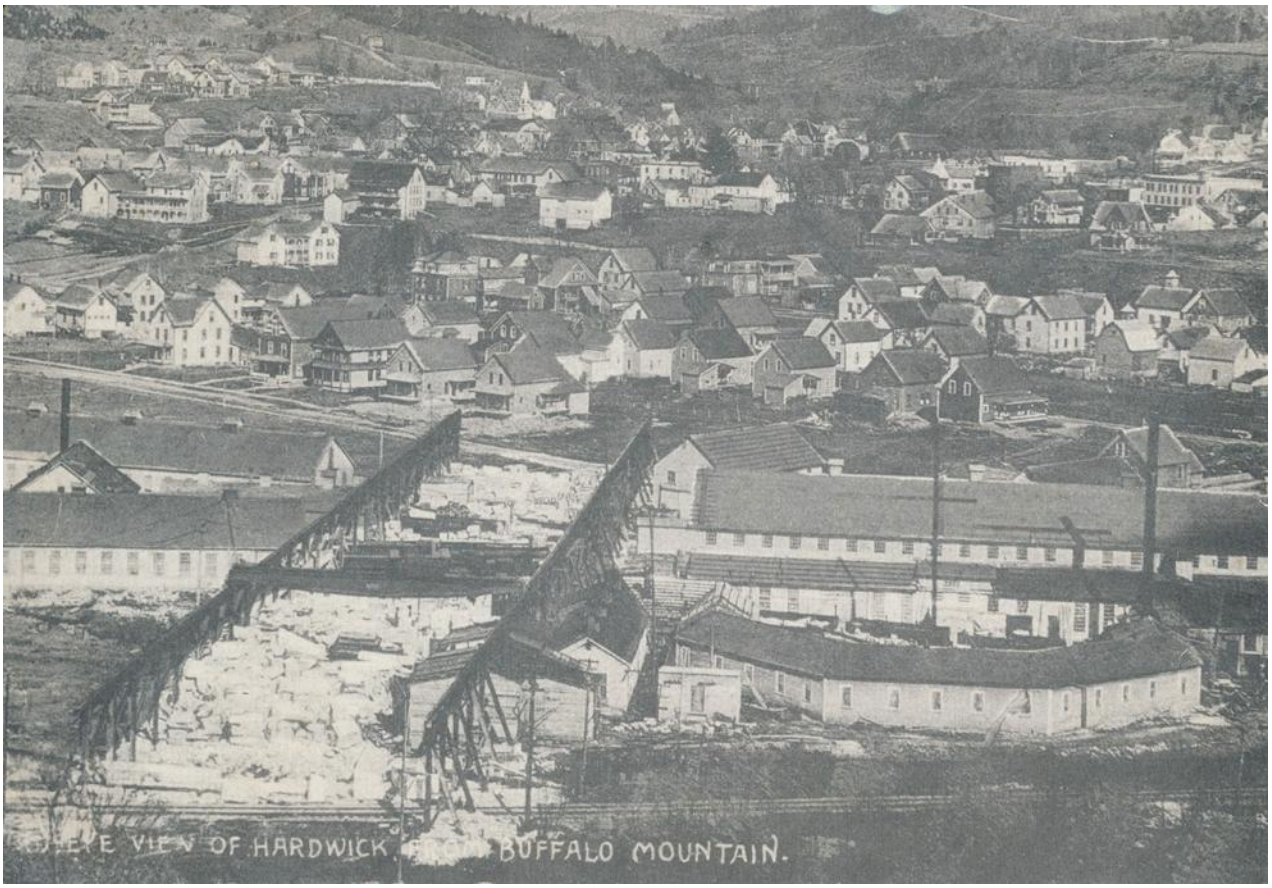
Two Historic Districts in Hardwick are listed on the National Register of Historic Places: the Downtown Hardwick Village Historic District and the Hardwick Street Historic District. In addition, the Vermont Division of Historic Preservation recognizes the West Church Street Historic District, Granite Street Historic District, Wakefield Farm Historic District, Holton and Kimball Hills Historic District, East Hardwick District and Mackville Historic District.

Historic sites and structures

Listing on the National Register of Historic Places recognizes a historic place for its importance in the community, state, or nation. Recognition does not add permit requirements or limit the use of private property. Property owners are not required to restore or maintain their buildings or open them to the public. Similarly, recognition through the Vermont Division for Historic Preservation does not add permit requirements or restrict the use of private property.

Hardwick is fortunate to have completed a Historic Sites and Structures Survey in 1985, documenting 434 historic structures throughout the community. Two individual structures are listed on the National Register of Historic Places: the Cobb School and 143 Highland Avenue. A third structure, the 1913 Yellow Barn, formerly associated with Greensboro Garage has also been determined eligible for listing on the National Register.

In 1898, the former Hardwick Academy / Town House was converted into an opera house. In 2001 the Northeast Kingdom Arts Council was founded and began restoring the Town House. Many improvements have since been completed and the Town House once again serves as a functioning theater and community gathering place.



Scenic Resources

Hardwick is the "Gateway to the Northeast Kingdom" and has a varied landscape that includes open and wooded land, working farms and appealing village areas. Views of rural lands from Center Road, Bridgman Hill, Slapp Hill, Ward Hill, and Belfry Road have special scenic importance to the community. Central to Hardwick's scenic character are Buffalo Mountain, Hardwick Lake, the Lamoille River, and Mackville Pond, which contribute to both the beauty and the recreational opportunities. The Hardwick Trails system, Buffalo Mountain Town Forest, and the Lamoille Valley Rail Trail (LVRT) provide walking and biking in the summer months. In winter, the Hardwick Trails offer groomed cross-country skiing and expanded opportunities for fat biking and snowshoeing, while the LVRT provides opportunities for snowmobiling and cross-country skiing.

Archeological Resources

Archeological sites contain a fragile, complex and irreplaceable record of past human activity. Two areas have been identified as having expected moderate-to-high archeological sensitivity. The first is located along both sides of Alder Brook, from Hardwick Lake to Eligo Pond in Craftsbury. The second follows Greensboro Brook from Caspian Lake in Greensboro to the

Lamoille River. This designation does not necessarily indicate that archaeologically significant resources have been found in these areas, and none has been documented to date.

With the Lamoille River flowing through the heart of the town, and Alder, Cooper and Nichols Brooks flowing into the Lamoille from the surrounding hills, Hardwick may have been an important landscape for Native American peoples. However, Native American archaeological sites, as well as historic archaeological sites associated with early settlement, agriculture, industry and tourism remain to be discovered within Hardwick's borders.

Goals, Policies, & Recommendations

GOAL

- To protect, preserve and celebrate Hardwick's historic, scenic and archaeological resources while supporting thoughtful stewardship, compatible development and continued investment in the community's historic villages and cultural landscapes.

POLICIES

- The Town encourages the preservation, rehabilitation, and adaptive reuse of historic buildings whenever practical.
- The Town supports the stewardship of scenic roads, viewsheds, working landscapes, and natural features that contribute to the community's identity and rural character.
- The Town will account for historic, scenic, and archaeological resources when planning and designing municipal infrastructure, transportation, flood resilience, and community development projects.
- The Town supports preservation and resilience strategies that maintain the character and long-term vitality of Hardwick's historic neighborhoods

ACTIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

- Support the Hardwick Historical Society in preserving and interpreting the community's history.
- Seek education, technical assistance, and available funding opportunities to encourage the rehabilitation and adaptive reuse of historic buildings.
- Maintain municipally owned historic buildings and incorporate their long-term preservation into capital planning
- Minimize impacts on scenic, historic and cultural resources when planning municipal infrastructure improvements and hazard mitigation projects.
- Support educational opportunities, interpretive signage and partnerships that increase awareness of Hardwick's history and cultural heritage.
- Encourage preservation approaches that allow historic buildings and districts to remain viable while adapting to changing environmental conditions.

Community Themes

Affordability
None?

Resilience

Thoughtful stewardship helps historic buildings and cultural landscapes remain part of the community as Hardwick adapts to changing environmental conditions.

Walkability & Connectivity

Historic village centers, scenic roads, trails, and public spaces create walkable communities and strengthen connections between neighborhoods, natural resources, and community destinations.

Community Wellness

Historic places, scenic landscapes, and cultural resources foster community pride, provide opportunities for learning and recreation, and strengthen residents' connection to place.

Community Identity

Hardwick's historic villages, scenic landscapes, and cultural heritage define the community's unique identity and preserve the stories of the people and places that shaped the town.