

44 Norwich Village Historic District

Norwich, Vermont

When a community values and invests in its heritage, its buildings and landscape exude an authentic charm and character that is near impossible to replicate. Norwich Village Historic District is one such New England community, listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1991.

The “Township of Norwich,” located on the Connecticut River, began with 25,365 acres as a Province of New Hampshire in July 1761. However, its allegiance was short lived as residents joined the movement to create the State of Vermont in 1777.

Throughout its rich history, Norwich has been the site of Vermont’s First Constitution for schools and secondary learning, the first Vermont town to welcome a sitting US President, and home to the oldest of Paul Revere’s church bells, mounted in the steeple of the Norwich Congregational Church, stamped “*Revere and Sons, Boston, 1817.*” Native-son Captain Alden Partridge opened his American Literary, Scientific and Military Academy in Norwich in 1820, later renamed Norwich University in 1834. Within four years of opening its doors, the academy had 160 students and was a significant factor in the community’s growth through 1866. In time, several stores, a grammar school, and many residences were located in close proximity to the academy buildings.



Today, the Norwich Village Historic District is largely intact and is a good example of a traditional rural Vermont town. Although located just off Interstate 91, the impact of the highway on the Village has been minimal. Beautifully restored buildings of Federal, Georgian Plan, Cape Cod and Greek Revival styles are set close to the road on relatively flat lots, shaded by large, mature trees. In recent years, some residential buildings have been converted to commercial use, although care has been taken to preserve the historic character.

Since its inception in 1951, the Norwich Historical Society has played a vital role in maintaining the authenticity of the Norwich Village District, including the purchase and renovation of the Hutchinson-Taylor and Lewis houses. Any visit to Norwich should begin with a visit to the Historical Society, located on Main Street, which is open Wednesdays and Thursdays throughout the year, from Memorial Day weekend through October, as well as other times by appointment.

Sources:

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“Norwich Corridor Streetscape Plan.” *ORW Landscape Architects and Planners*. 2012. Web Accessed October 2, 2013 by L.Morrow. <http://www.orw.biz/2012-07-19-19-10-04/norwich-corridor-streetscape-plan>