

43 Quechee Historic Mill District

Hartford, Vermont

The Quechee Historic Mill District (also known as Quechee Village) offers a taste of Vermont's rural, peaceful appeal. Historically mixing residential, industrial, and commercial uses, the identity of the Mill District has always been closely linked to the Ottauquechee River that winds through the Village. Construction dates within the district range from the early 1800s to the 1900s, although the majority dates to the mid 19th century. While, frame and the clapboard construction is dominant; approximately seven buildings within the district are constructed of brick. The Quechee Historic Mill District was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1997.



Quechee Village is one of five villages in the Town of Hartford, and is located just to the north of the heavily traveled US Route 4, which connects another Hartford village, White River Junction, Interstate 91 and the town of Woodstock to the west. The spine of the district is along Quechee Main Street, which extends in an east-west direction, parallel and to the north of the Ottauquechee River. In total, the district is comprised of 73 properties. While many of the district's properties are located on Main Street, several structures of note can be found on a number of lesser intersecting streets. There are several significant buildings on Waterman Hill Road, which extends north from Route 4, crossing the river and terminating at Main Street.

In 1765, the early town proprietors voted to grant 600 acres adjacent to the river falls as an incentive to attract saw and grist mills, envisioning the mills as a way to entice jobs and spawn growth. By 1774, the Town conveyed land to John Marsh providing he establish a saw and grist mill. Both mills were built and operational within four years. Fueling village growth was the arrival of the Woodstock Railroad in the late 1870's, and a nearby east-west roadway.

Quechee's future looked bright until the railroad stopped operating in 1933 and the rail bed became the main road, the present Route 4. With the loss of this major industry, the once thriving village continued a downward trend. The village population decreased, and the mill and many homes were left vacant and deteriorated.

In 1967, land and buildings were acquired by a development company that envisioned the mill district as an ideal location for a four-season planned community. Older homes were purchased and restored, and new homes and condominiums sprang up on the surrounding hillsides. Amenities were established outside the village including a ski area with a 2,700-foot chairlift, riding stables, clubhouse, and a 36-hole golf course. Buildings restored by Quechee Lakes

Corporation were sold to private owners with uses controlled by the development's master plan and deed restrictions.

Currently the majority of the buildings in the district are primarily single-family residential in nature. However, the building that drove the village economy for about 100 years again took on a new commercial use, this time for glass and pottery production and fine dining. Since the 1970s a number of the buildings in the center of the village have been converted to commercial use, including shops, offices, and bed and breakfast inns. Also within the district are buildings, which presently, or in the past, have served as the village library, a church, and a post office.

Quechee Main Street continues to be the center of the Village, and is a good place to view the adaptive reuse of these historic properties.

SOURCES:

Mausolf, Lisa.. "Quechee Historic Mill District." *Connecticut River Joint Commission, Inc.* Connecticut River Joint Commission, Inc., July 3, 1997. Web. Accessed, February 19, 2013, L. Morrow. <http://www.crtc.org/heritage/V11-54.htm>

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