

Northborough Historic Resources Survey: Architecture Northborough, Massachusetts

For Phase II of the Town of Northborough's historic resources survey, AHS architectural historian Bruce Clouette, Ph.D., and other AHS personnel inventoried 140 properties using Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC) Forms A (areas), B (buildings), and F (structures). Historic houses included all the major 19th-century styles—Greek Revival, Gothic Revival, Second Empire, Queen Anne—as well as vernacular types, such as employee houses associated with former textile mills and owner-occupied houses in working-class neighborhoods. Among the other resources inventoried were a gristmill and dam, a woolen mill, a comb factory, stone bridges, a former creamery, a 1926 fire station, and the town's 1939 high school.

Northborough has a rich variety of historic resources. Agriculture, the only major economic activity in the Colonial period, evolved into marker-oriented dairy and orchard production in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, and a number of historic farmsteads remain. Small-scale industries took advantage of the waterpower of the Assabet River, with a former comb factory and a woolen mill attesting to the town's manufacturing history. The coming of the railroad in 1855 furthered the town's growth; although the railroad station no longer exists, the importance of the railroad is recalled by stone-arch bridges along the line and a small commercial area in the center of town that grew up around the depot. In addition to local historical records, the survey required research at specialized archives, such as the American Textile History Museum in Lowell.

The survey was conducted in accordance with MHC's inventory and photographic standards. The forms, including extensive digital photography, were submitted electronically for ready inclusion in MHC's MACRIS database, with location maps produced using the town's GIS system.



Queen Anne-style house, built ca.1886 for employees of "The Cliffs," the mansion of Daniel Wesson (of Smith & Wesson fame).



Greek Revival-style house, built ca.1850 for comb manufacturer Wilder Bush.



Worker houses, ca.1866, associated with a former woolen mill.