

9 COMMUNITY HERITAGE AND SENSE OF PLACE



TOPICS INCLUDE:

Understanding Pembroke's community heritage

Challenges & opportunities going forward

Summary of Pembroke's historic resources & architectural heritage

This chapter focuses on historic and cultural resources and explores opportunities to connect these resources to other chapters in the master plan. Understanding how a community has developed over time helps to inform future development and protection efforts and is an essential foundation for the important topics covered in other chapters, such as land use, natural resources and economic development. Keeping the shared vision of preserving the town's highly valued community heritage and sense of place should be carried forward to the entire master plan. All of Pembroke's natural and cultural resources contribute to creating the sense of place that is unique to Pembroke.

The 2004 Historic and Cultural Resources Chapter includes extensive information on the town's cultural and historic resources and its archeological resources and historic villages; readers should refer directly to that report for more detail, which is incorporated into this plan by reference (See Appendix).

Pembroke is...

a community that embraces its unique, historical character and encourages an understanding of the town's history and its role in enriching community life and the sense of place that residents enjoy. Pembroke values its traditions as well as the architecture that shapes its surroundings and is committed to ensuring that cultural and historic resources are appreciated for their value in retaining visual character and enhancing quality of life.

WHAT THE COMMUNITY SAID...

Participants in the Pembroke public outreach process consistently voiced a desire to preserve the rural character and sense of place, with a majority ranking the historic character, community spirit and Suncook Village as important. Many expressed their support for preserving Suncook Village as an historic resource and encouraging rehabilitation of Main Street building facades. The overwhelming majority (84%) of responses ranked maintaining Pembroke's rural character as important/somewhat important to them and there was strong support (75%) for community cultural events such as Old Home Day, Summer Concert Series, etc. Some of the responses to the question on identifying a special site or place that should be protected include the clock tower and Suncook Village.

Themes that can be identified from the visioning session and community survey include:

- Importance of historic character and cultural heritage to overall quality of life;
- Need for balance between development and preservation;
- Interest in focusing new development near existing development to retain Pembroke's rural character;
- Desire to maintain rural aspects of Pembroke to preserve the quality of life and community character;
- Support for the continued evolution of Suncook Village into a pedestrian-friendly downtown with small businesses and housing options; and
- Desire to maintain and enhance community spirit and connection through a strong sense of community identity, social investment and sense of place.

SENSE OF PLACE/COMMUNITY

What do we mean by “sense of place?” Sense of place refers to the combination of unique characteristics that make a place special. Aesthetic, historic sites, environmental features, and the intangible community feeling all contribute to a town’s sense of place. The rural character so highly valued by Pembroke residents is deeply rooted in sense of place and is often used to describe all those special places in a community.

In Pembroke, residents identified those characteristics as historic architecture, the cultural and historic significance of Suncook Village, social events like Old Home Days, Christmas in the Village, rowing regattas on the Merrimack River, and the many farms, rivers, and forests. From its mill buildings to its stone walls, to its corn fields and rural-village feel, residents value all of these characteristics. This sense of place inspires a deep feeling of community spirit and pride, and that pride lends itself back to making Pembroke a special place to live. As Pembroke moves into the future, decision-making needs to be conscious of preserving the cultural and natural resources that make Pembroke unique from other towns.

MEET ME IN SUNCOOK

The Meet Me in Suncook Committee was established as a nonprofit organization in 1999 for the purposes of “fostering an appreciation of the history of Suncook and to encourage preservation of its architecture as well as to promote the growth and prosperity of the Village. Since that time, the organization has accomplished many notable achievements in Suncook Village, including:

- Fund raising for the restoration and maintenance of the Suncook Village Clock
- Participated in the planning that led to the town’s retention and maintenance of the old Fire and Police Station (the Perry Eaton Building) on Union Street in Pembroke
- Sponsorship of the listing of the downtown in the National Register of Historic Places
- Writing and petitioning for state historical markers commemorating the village, the “Suncook Connection” double-deck bridge, Robert Frost’s honeymoon in Suncook, and a combined marker for Pembroke Street and the Pembroke Street Horse Watering Trough
- Creating a program offering historic building plaques to downtown property owners
- Organizing a number of walking tours of Suncook Village
- Creating a self-guided tour map for the Village
- Sponsorship of several art contests for local students

All of the organization’s efforts have had a positive economic impact on the village and the broader communities of Pembroke and Allenstown and have enhanced a sense of pride, history, and accomplishment in Suncook Village.

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

STEWARDSHIP

Sound and responsible stewardship of our historic and cultural resources is usually associated with assuming a certain level of responsibility for protecting, managing and providing education about these resources. These responsibilities can take on many aspects, from volunteering for local boards and committees to participating in community events and other educational opportunities, all in an effort to create an interest, and encourage more participation, in active stewardship. Stewardship responsibilities can range from taking care of our own property's resources such as stone walls, cellar holes and historic houses to lands that are held by the town. The challenge is to engage the community at multiple levels, from what they can do with their own property to participating in the protection of these resources by the town or other organizations. One potential opportunity could be the establishment of a Heritage Commission, discussed in more detail in the following section on Objectives and Recommendations.

VOLUNTEERISM

Tied very closely to stewardship of our cultural and natural resources, volunteerism plays a large role in the success or failure of many activities. Why an individual decides to volunteer is instrumental in understanding how to approach recruitment of a broader base of volunteers in our communities, specifically, it is critical that we figure out what will attract a younger demographic to participate in more of our local and regional boards and committees. Reliable data on why people volunteer is not readily available but one can easily assume that it can be for reasons such as a strong commitment to civic engagement, giving back to the community or a personal commitment or interest in a particular asset of the community, a civic function, or an unmet need.

New Hampshire communities like Pembroke have a long tradition of reliance on volunteerism to fulfill many local functions like planning and natural and cultural resource protection. Using volunteers to support efforts for cultural events such as Old Home Day and other initiatives is often critical to the success of the event. Looking for new and creative partnerships to help with a specific project can be invaluable to getting a project off the ground and engaging new residents in town activities. How Pembroke responds to the reality of an aging population, a declining pool of a younger population ready to take over, and the overall drop in the volunteering rate is going to be critical to maintaining the integrity and sense of community so valued by residents.

FUNDING

Funding is another challenge, especially for municipalities. The types of projects that preserve cultural and natural resources usually require some kind of funding. It could be costs associated with the restoration of a historic façade or attorney fees required to draft an easement deed to protect a valuable piece of conservation land. Nearly all community projects require some kind of financial assistance. All towns struggle with balancing a reasonable tax rate and providing excellent service to its residents. When you add in special projects beyond the scope of regular town maintenance and services, like for cultural and environmental initiatives, communities sometimes find themselves scraping the bottom of the funding barrel.

So how can preservation of our cultural and natural resources be funded? First, there are grants available from state and federal governments as well as private organizations. Grant programs like EPA's brownfields redevelopment, the state Land and Community Heritage Investment Program and the National Park Service's grants for historic preservation and technology and training can assist communities in achieving their goals. There is also the option of establishing a non-profit such as a Friends group that could support activities related to not only community heritage, but conservation and other endeavors. Reaching out to create innovative partnerships with different town boards and committees can create new opportunities to also attract volunteers who may not be able to commit to attending meetings and administrative functions.

Private fundraising is also an option and can be pursued with the help of social media and online fundraiser websites like GoFundMe, where donors can follow the progress of the project online and, therefore, feel more connected to the cause they have donated to. There are some recommendations in the next section that are tied to funding and have been a priority since the last master plan in 2004, including the completion of a town-wide architectural survey.

EDUCATION

Creating public awareness for special places and community features can help generate interest and attract more people who may be able to contribute to the cause. Educating the public about the things that make Pembroke special can go a long way. This can be achieved through interpretive signage on-site, information on the town website, organized events (like educational trail walks or historic Village tours), or event booths at Old Home Day promoting Pembroke's cultural and natural resources.

While Pembroke public schools do provide opportunities for students to learn about history through "history days" and other events, finding more ways to collaborate with stewards of the town's cultural and natural resources would support the integration of locally-inspired curriculum into students' education. For example, a lesson plan on New England's mill history might end in a field trip to Suncook Village where students can see the effects of history on modern times and cultivate more appreciation for their hometown treasures.

These are just a few ways to create public awareness and get more people involved. The more community involvement, the more support for preservation of cultural and natural resources.

CHAPTER OBJECTIVES & RECOMMENDATIONS

<p>OBJECTIVE 1 Respect and value Pembroke’s rural character.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Encourage developers and landowners to consider preserving the historic and cultural resources found upon the landscape by promotion and education. → Encourage legislation and/or policies that establish an incentive for preservation of archaeological and historic resources on private property. → Protect and preserve stone walls along range roads and encourage landowners to consider retaining or rebuilding stone walls during alteration or development.
<p>OBJECTIVE 2 Support connectivity that links natural, cultural and community networks</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Cooperate with other municipalities in seeking legislation to authorize the adoption of comprehensive policies for managing Class VI roads. → Preserve existing range roads as Class VI roads or as Class B trails, or upgrade only if necessary while preserving the historical integrity of the roadway. → Look for opportunities to support the planning and creation of public spaces such as park benches, landscaping, community events or creative use of public buildings.
<p>OBJECTIVE 3 Encourage sustainable development practices that includes historic preservation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Develop architectural design guidelines to enhance the aesthetics, character, and existing design of residences and businesses in the Suncook Village area. → Improve the language of the Architectural Overlay District to stipulate aesthetic guidelines which are appropriate for preserving existing historic architecture and encouraging the adherence of the guidelines by new development. → Encourage the granting of discretionary preservation easements as authorized under RSA 79-D.
<p>OBJECTIVE 4 Create a community of residents and homeowners that understand and appreciate Pembroke’s historic and cultural assets and are interested in connecting and educating others on the importance of preserving historic and cultural assets.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Develop/update educational materials in an effort to engage residents to participate in the protection and preservation of the natural and cultural environment. → Work towards the establishment of a Pembroke Heritage Commission. → Plan for a town-wide survey of historic structures that will provide direction for any future designations or education programs. → Encourage town administration to distribute materials to property owners and builders relating to historic and cultural resources and grant opportunities for preserving these features. → Communicate with the NH Division of Historical Resources on a regular basis to obtain current information on resource preservation that can be disseminated to the public.

HERITAGE COMMISSIONS

Heritage Commissions can offer a valuable opportunity for a community to manage, recognize and protect historic and cultural resources. Since 1992, heritage commissions have provided opportunities for local governments in NH to manage, recognize, and protect historical and cultural resources. As outlined in RSA 673:1(II) and 674:44-b, there are a range of advisory activities and each community can use the enabling statute to meet specific needs or address pressing issues and concerns. Activities of a heritage commission can include advising and assisting other local boards and commissions; conducting inventories; educating the public on matters relating to historic preservation; and serving as a resource on Town history and any revitalization efforts. A heritage commission can also accept and expend funds for a non-lapsing heritage fund, acquire and manage property, and hold preservation easements.

A heritage commission is uniquely suited to advise local agencies and boards on matters that might affect historical or cultural resources. One of its purposes is to serve as steward for all such resources within the community. For instance, the planning board can consult with the heritage commission if it is reviewing a project that might impact a historic building, or the conservation commission might seek background data on a farm building associated with land it is trying to conserve. The commission could testify in support of a variance before the zoning board of adjustment, if the outcome would preserve a significant resource and retain the spirit of the ordinance. The board of selectmen might seek input when it needs to develop a work program for renovating or disposing of a civic structure. There are many opportunities to collaborate with other boards and committees to protect cultural and historical resources. In summary, a heritage commission functions similarly to what a conservation commission does for natural resources.

Source: Based on information from the NH Preservation Alliance

EARLY HISTORY

Granted in 1728, the town was first known as "Lovewell's Town", in honor of Captain John Lovewell. Lovewell was widely regarded as a martyred hero when he and half of his fellow rangers were killed in 1725 in "Lovewell's fight" with the chieftain Paugus and a party of eighty raiders near today's Fryeburg, Maine. Shortly afterward, the town took the name of "Suncook", the Pennacook Abenaki name for the river flowing through the area. When the town was incorporated in 1759 by Colonial Governor Benning Wentworth, it was given the name "Pembroke" in honor of Henry Herbert, ninth Earl of Pembroke in southern Wales.¹

The name "Suncook" given to our village and the river forming Pembroke's boundary with Allentown is derived from Abenaki words: "Senikok" for at the rocks and "Suncook" for rocky place.²

¹ Elmer Munson Hunt, *New Hampshire Town Names and Whence They Came* (Peterborough: William L. Bauhan, 1970).

² https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_place_names_of_Native_American_origin_in_New_England#New_Hampshire

In his pamphlet “Historic Indian Trails of NH,” Chester Price describes the Suncook Trail, noting that the “‘Sen-kek,’ or ‘Sen-kook,’ ‘Stony (water) place’ Trail led from what is now Manchester along the east bank of the Merrimack River to the Suncook River, and followed the banks of that stream though the Suncook valley ...” The pamphlet continues by noting that the regions encompassed by the trail were “much frequented by ancient Indian tribes, as attested by the great numbers of very old artifacts found at these places.”

HISTORIC RESOURCES

Pembroke was a prosperous agricultural community and supported several industrial centers and brickyards for much of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Evidence of Pembroke’s past exists in its historic homes, churches, village center, and the rural outskirts of town, especially the agricultural lands along Buck Street and the horse farms along the Fourth Range Road. The structures and sites that tell the story of Pembroke’s history and culture are irreplaceable. They need to be preserved as Pembroke grows and changes.

The defining characteristic of Pembroke’s cultural heritage can be found scattered throughout town and clustered in its historic village as well as the views and vistas offered along roads lined with mature trees and stone walls. Many of the historical and cultural resources are shown on the **Historical and Cultural Resources Map**. Preservation of these resources is accomplished through a variety of programs, including those listed below.

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

Authorized under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, the National Register is part of a national program that coordinates and supports public and private efforts to identify, evaluate, and protect our historic and archeological resources. Properties listed in the Register include districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects that are significant in American history, architecture, archeology, engineering, and culture. The National Register is administered by the National Park Service, which is part of the US Department of the Interior. Locally, it is administered by the [NH Division of Historical Resources](#) (the State Historic Preservation Office) in Concord.

In order to promote places of historic importance through National Historic Register designation, a research and writing effort is required of townspeople or consultants. Once a property is listed, the benefits are: recognition that a property is of significance to the Nation, the State, or the community; consideration in the planning for Federal or federally assisted projects; eligibility for Federal tax benefits; and qualification for federal and state assistance for historic preservation, when funds are available.

Table 9.1 lists the existing National Register sites in Pembroke.

Table 9.1: National Register of Historic Site Listings in Pembroke

National Register Entry	Date Listed	Location
Noyes Block ¹	02/27/86	48 Glass Street
Pembroke Mill (Emerson Mill)	09/12/85	100 Main Street, Corner of Front & Main
Suncook Village Commercial/Civic Historic District	3/15/05	Central Suncook Village

Source: National Register of Historic Places Database, 01/18

¹ The building has two names on the National Register nomination: a common name and a historic name.

STATE REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

The NH Division of Historical Resources also administers the New Hampshire State Register of Historic Places. The State Register offers a less complex means of listing and recognizing significant buildings, districts, sites, landscapes, structures or objects that are meaningful in the history, architecture, archaeology, engineering, or traditions of New Hampshire residents and communities. The benefits of State Register listing parallel those described above for the National Register. Neither the National nor the State Register of Historic Places impose any restrictions on private property rights.

STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE MARKERS

New Hampshire's state highway historical marker program is administered by the NH Division of Historical Resources (NHDHR). Marker requests are reviewed by the State Historic Preservation Officer; costs of the markers are borne either by the Transportation Fund or the sponsoring municipality/organization. Requests for markers must include draft text for the marker, research and justification, and a petition signed by at least 20 persons. There are three state historical markers in town. It should be noted that the NH Division of Historical Resources website does not list the current titles of the markers for the First Meeting House and Pembroke Street/Watering Trough.

Table 9.2: State Historical Markers in Pembroke

State Historical Marker	Date Erected	Location
First Meetinghouse	2008 ²	Route 3 adjacent to Whittemore Homestead
Pembroke Street/Pembroke Watering Trough	2016	Route 3 at Pembroke Hill Road
Suncook Village	2003	Corner of Main and Union Streets, Suncook Village

Source: NH Division of Historical Resources archives, personal communication, James Garvin

LOCAL HISTORICAL MARKERS AND SIGNIFICANT HISTORIC SITES AND STRUCTURES

Local markers are erected by residents to celebrate the uniqueness of the community and its heritage. There are 24 local markers that are known in Pembroke and they are shown on the **Historic and Cultural Resources Map**. Many historic sites and structures document the early community of Pembroke and are also listed on this map.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES AND RESOURCES

Archaeological resources are non-renewable resources - once such a site is disturbed, some or all of the information is lost forever. While there are state and federal laws that protect sites that lie under public lands and waters as well as private sites that require state permits or government funding, many sites are on private lands. For this reason, archaeologists and historians universally urge all private property owners to refrain from investigating known or suspected archaeological sites except under the guidance of a trained archaeologist. The best protection for archaeological resources is almost always to leave them alone until a genuine need, either for information or for changes to the land, arises at some future time.

With its extensive Merrimack River frontage downstream from Garvin's Falls, and with its two other boundary streams, Pembroke clearly offers a high potential for prehistoric archaeological sites. A number of potential locations for such sites have been subjected to potentially damaging activities over the years, and many such sites have probably been destroyed.

The building and rebuilding of Suncook Village in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, clay excavation for brick manufacturing along the Merrimack River in the nineteenth century, the grading of Memorial Field and the landscaping of Pembroke Pines Country Club in recent years, and ongoing sand and gravel mining along both the Merrimack and the Soucook Rivers have undoubtedly destroyed many prehistoric sites and deprived posterity of the information they might have offered.

Pembroke is especially fortunate in having a reliable guide to those historic sites that date before 1895. That guide is offered by the *History of Pembroke, N. H., 1730-1895*, written by the Rev. N. F. Carter and Hon. Trueworthy L. Fowler. The two maps and their descriptive keys offer a comprehensive guide to nearly every site that had been occupied in town down to the end of the nineteenth century, including those that had already been transformed through abandonment into archaeological sites.

Because it has been the site of a number of federally-funded highway and bridge projects or of housing projects that have required federal permits, and because its river frontage has been transected by a gas transmission pipeline, Pembroke has been the focus of a number of archaeological investigations. Many of these site reports were written or co-authored by Victoria Bunker Kenyon. Published articles relating to Pembroke's archaeology, several of them by Ms. Kenyon, are cited in the *Historical Documents or Studies* section.

RANGE ROADS

Pembroke has one of the earliest, most regular, and best-preserved systems of range roads and cross range roads to survive anywhere in New Hampshire. In some cases, these roads survive only as nearly abandoned lanes between parallel stone walls, more frequented by hunters or loggers than by ordinary travelers. In other cases, the range roads are the principal routes of automobile travel and of access to homes and businesses. Most of the town's principal roads retain designations like "Third Range Road" or "Fourth Range Road." Even the road commonly known as "North Pembroke Road" bears the alternate name of "Eighth Range Road."

Range roads are defined as parallel highways that provide (or once provided) access to rows or ranges of farm lots of generally regular size. To connect these parallel highways, other roads were laid out at right angles, as needed. These right-angle connectors are often called "cross range roads." Examples of cross range roads in Pembroke are Brickett Hill Road, Cross Country Road, and Pembroke Hill Road. Together, Pembroke's range roads, cross range roads, and farm lots superimpose a grid on the land.

This road system of Pembroke retains the old Suncook layout of the 1730s, and that plan persists today. The system of parallel roads is thus a visible reflection of Pembroke's earliest years of settlement. The careful preservation of that system, both for highway and for trail uses, should be a conscious tribute by present and future generations to the first planners and settlers of the land that became Pembroke.

STONE WALLS

Pembroke has some of the finest stone walls in the Merrimack Valley. The impressiveness of these structures is enhanced by the fact that many of them border the straight roads and rectangular fields that were dictated by Pembroke’s range township layout (see “Pembroke Range Roads”). The walls thus became a stone grid that makes the rectilinear town plan visible across our landscape.

Pembroke has varied examples of stone walls. Some are a single stone in thickness, yet rise to a surprising height for structures that seem so unstable and have received so little maintenance for so many decades. Others are built with two separate faces of stone, with the two or three foot gap between these structures filled with thousands of smaller stones and pebbles turned up by the plow during decades of tillage.

While most walls in Pembroke are built from the glacially-rounded fieldstones that are found everywhere in central New Hampshire, some of our finest walls were constructed from split granite along the roadway frontages of such early burying grounds as Pembroke Street Cemetery, Old North Pembroke Cemetery, New North Pembroke Cemetery, and Pembroke Hill Cemetery.

Pembroke also has a rare stone structure in its surviving town animal pound. Built in 1813, this high, rectangular fieldstone enclosure stands on Pembroke Hill Road near its juncture with Fourth Range Road. Built to hold stray livestock until the animals could be claimed by their owners, the Pembroke town pound is one of relatively few structures of its type to survive in the Merrimack River Valley.

PEMBROKE CEMETERIES

Pembroke has eight public cemeteries and two private cemeteries. Several of the public cemeteries were originally established as private burying grounds and later transferred to town custody for safekeeping and maintenance. Among the public cemeteries, three - Old North Pembroke, Abbott, and Richardson—are filled and closed to future use. All of Pembroke’s cemeteries are considered historic, and all are subject to protection under RSA 289, the state statute that deals with cemeteries. The oldest gravestones are found in Pembroke Street Cemetery, behind the Hearse House.

Table 9.3: Public Cemeteries

Name	Date	Location
Pembroke Street Cemetery	By 1750	Pembroke Street
Buck Street Cemetery	1799	Buck Street
Old North Pembroke Cemetery	1801	North Pembroke (Eighth Range) Road
New North Pembroke Cemetery	1860	North Pembroke (Eighth Range) Road
Pembroke Hill Cemetery	c. 1860	Fourth Range Road (originally private)
Abbott Cemetery	c. 1815	Borough Road near Sixth Range Road (originally private)
Richardson Cemetery	c. 1850	Sixth Range Road at Cross Country Road (originally private)
Evergreen Cemetery	1885	Buck Street (originally private)

Source: Input from the Natural & Cultural Resources Subcommittee

Table 9.4: Private Cemeteries

Name	Date	Location
French-Dearborn Cemetery	c.1823	Off Borough Road near North Pembroke Road
French Cemetery	c. 1850	North Pembroke Road near Borough Road

Source: Input from the Natural & Cultural Resources Subcommittee

MILL SITES AND HISTORIC DAMS

Pembroke was once the site of numerous mills on the Suncook and Soucook Rivers. Except for Suncook Village, where Pembroke's earliest mills were established in the 1730s, all of these water-powered sites have disappeared and their dams have been removed. At the center of Suncook Village, the river powered gristmills, sawmills, paper mills, a nail factory, and fulling mills for cleansing woolen cloth. Just upstream from the double-deck bridge, a former dam powered grist and sawmills. A window glass factory, not powered by water, operated during the 1830s between the upper and lower Suncook Village mills.

On the western side of town, the Soucook River forms the boundary with Concord and powered sawmills, gristmills, and fulling mills.

Suncook Village was long a site of textile manufacturing. The Pembroke Cotton Factory Company built the first textile mill here in 1811. The first mill was replaced by a second, which burned in 1859. The third mill, Pembroke Mill (now called Emerson Mill for a later corporate owner), which stands today, was built in 1860 and now houses condominiums. It was the first (and smallest) of three mills built in Suncook Village during the 1860s by the Pembroke Mills Company. It is 273 feet long and 72 feet wide. In 1895 it had 20,000 spindles and 422 looms, and was powered by two turbines producing 400 horsepower, and for auxiliary power had two steam engines that produced another 400 horsepower. It was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1985.

A second factory, named Webster Mill, was built just upstream in 1865. It burned in 1983. It was larger than Pembroke Mill, being 310 feet long and 72 feet wide. Its dam remains, and supplies water through a power canal and penstock to a modern hydroelectric plant some 1,200 feet downstream from the Webster Mill dam at Pembroke or Emerson Mill, in the approximate location of that mill's original power house.

The third factory, China Mill, was built on the south (Allentown) side of Suncook River in 1868. It is 510 feet long and 72 feet wide, and employed 800 people in 1895. It still produces textiles and generates hydroelectric power through its own turbines and a rope-driven dynamo within the mill.

The waters of the Suncook River generated 2,200 horsepower to turn the turbines of the three mills. By 1900, the mills employed 1,555 men, women, and children, producing 36 million yards of cloth each year.

Another industrial site lay upstream from Suncook Village at East Pembroke, where the natural Buck Street Island invited the construction of two dams to power industries that included grist and saw mills, a box shop, a twine mill, and an axe handle factory. All of these factories disappeared in a major fire in 1900, and the two dams were purchased by Suncook industrialists to store water for the downstream mills. The dams were removed in 2011-12 after an upstream avulsion or channel alteration seemed to increase the hazard of flooding at the island.

Table 9.4: Historic Dams

Name	Location
Buck Street Dams (1908; remodeled 1923); removed except for abutments in 2011-12.	Across Suncook River on each side of Buck Street Island, immediately west of the Route 28 highway bridge at the Pembroke-Allenstown town line.
Osgood's sawmill dam (1890); removed except for abutments and gatehouse.	Across Suncook River just upstream from the double-deck bridge.
Webster Mill Dam (1865); rebuilt in concrete just downstream from the original dam in 1916. Its gatehouse is dated 1921.	Across the Suncook River behind the Post Office on Glass Street.
Pembroke Mill Dam (1860); built of granite.	Across the Suncook River immediately downstream from the Main Street Bridge and adjacent to Pembroke or Emerson Mill.
China Mill Dam (1868); rebuilt in concrete in 1926; gatehouse is dated 1922.	Across the Suncook River south of the intersection of Front Street and Bridge Street.

Source: Input from the Natural & Cultural Resources Subcommittee

PEMBROKE'S ARCHITECTURAL HERITAGE

Pembroke's architecture has evolved with the decades as development, settlement patterns, available materials, and trends dictated the need and desire for different building styles.

Prior to the advent of modern suburban development, the majority of land in Pembroke was in agricultural or forestry use, and therefore its rural dwellings were widely spaced. Pembroke has long had a few nodes of more concentrated population and activity. In these areas are to be found relatively dense groups of early buildings, sometimes of a domestic nature, sometimes industrial or commercial, and sometimes, as in Suncook Village, combining more than one function and architectural attribute. Suncook Village is the single district in Pembroke that displays an urban character, combining many architectural styles, a variety of building materials, blocks of contiguous structures separated by party walls, and diverse building functions, all concentrated within one small area of dense construction. Suncook Village is one of the best preserved small manufacturing centers in New Hampshire, but also retains a number of detached houses that predate its expansive growth as a center for manufacturing cotton cloth after 1860.

The second area of architectural concentration and diversity is Pembroke Street, one of the many parallel range roads that characterize the town's early highway plan. As a wide and straight thoroughfare, Pembroke Street eventually evolved into a "highway village," in which larger farmsteads along the principal street were subdivided or supplanted by smaller house lots. Homesteads are built along the street in fairly close proximity to one another.

Building Materials

To an unusual degree, Pembroke and neighboring Allenstown abound in the materials from which traditional New Hampshire architecture has been constructed. This is due to ample available waterpower, at least in the eastern part of town. A series of dams harnessed the power of the Suncook River beginning in the 1730s, powering the sawmills that were necessary to convert the local forests of conifers to merchantable boards and timber.

Pembroke also abounded in excellent clay and sand for making bricks. Bricks were necessary for building chimneys in wooden houses. After about 1830, buildings constructed wholly of brick became more common in town, especially along Pembroke Street and in Suncook Village, but also in North Pembroke. Between the Civil War and about 1890, the center of Suncook Village was largely rebuilt in brick. By 1878, after the advent of the railroad in Pembroke and adjacent Hooksett, six brick manufacturers in Hooksett, Suncook Village, and the banks of the Merrimack in Pembroke were employing sixty men in making bricks. Each local yard averaged about 80,000 bricks per year per man employed, for an annual total of about 4.8 million bricks.

Nearby ledges ensured the availability of granite in inexhaustible quantities. Although Rattlesnake Hill in Concord, some ten miles from Suncook Village, had been noted for its production of fine, white granite since the early 1800s, another source of comparable stone lay still closer to the growing village. The granite ledges of Allenstown, located less than two miles away, produce a stone that is comparable to that of Rattlesnake Hill, but located at a lower elevation.

Pembroke was unusual in having a local supply of window glass for more than ten years after the opening of the Chelmsford Glass Company on Glass Street in Suncook Village in 1839. The company built a substantial glasshouse and continued in operation until about 1850.

House Styles

Houses in Pembroke reflect the evolution of the town from the late 1700s, when the earliest surviving houses were built, to the present day. A survey of our dwellings through the centuries offers an accurate picture of how our lives have changed—and have generally grown easier and filled with wider possibilities—with each passing generation. Pembroke’s houses also show how buildings incorporated local materials and reflected the skill of local builders in a time before easy transportation, and how over time they began to reflect more complex designs and manufactured details that became available through rail and highway commerce.

House styles have evolved to reflect ever-changing American fashions in architecture. Each period has a favored set of features, and often a favored floor plan. House styles can be bewildering in their variety, but the photographs below give an overview of the changing appearance of houses as one style replaced another.



Photo provided by James Garvin

WHITTEMORE HOMESTEAD
374 Pembroke Street - circa 1800

This center-hallway house with two fireplace chimneys reflects the largest type of house built in the late 1700s. It is one of four such houses in Pembroke. The town has a few more modest one-story, center chimney “Cape Cod” houses of the same period.



Photo provided by James Garvin

DOW HOUSE

262 Pembroke Street - circa 1825

The house of the Federal Style of the early 1800s has a floor plan similar to that of the earlier Whittemore Homestead, but its fireplace chimneys are located against the outer walls. The Doe House is thought to be the oldest surviving brick house in Pembroke, and reflects the beginning of an important local brickmaking industry.



Photo provided by James Garvin

LOCKE HOUSE

225 Pembroke Street - circa 1850

With its gable end facing the street and a triangular pediment at the top, the Locke House is meant to resemble a Greek temple, and is a modest representative of the Greek Revival style, dominant from about 1830 to about 1850.



Photo provided by James Garvin

WORKERS' BOARDING HOUSES

1 to 39 Front Street, Suncook Village - circa 1855

The Pembroke Mill Corporation built these boarding houses for workers who were employed at the mill across the street. The buildings reflect the plain detailing of the Greek Revival style, adapted to multi-family use. Multi-family houses are common in Suncook Village as well as other manufacturing centers, with many examples of later styles seen along Glass Street.



Photo provided by James Garvin

CAPTAIN WILLIAM FIFE HOUSE

386 Pembroke Street - circa 1847

As the Greek Revival style began to lose popularity, an array of romantic styles, inspired by English and European architecture, announced the beginning of the Victorian era. This building is intended to resemble an Italian villa, a style considered appropriate for a prominent member of a community.



HENRY T. SIMPSON HOUSE
422 Pembroke Street - circa 1875

This house was built by a prominent brick manufacturer to display the quality of his products. This is one of several fine brick houses on the road between Concord and Hooksett that demonstrate the wealth and skill of brick manufacturers. This dwelling reflects a later version of the Italianate style, without a tower.



'FRENCH SECOND EMPIRE' STYLE HOUSES
47 through 49 Broadway, Suncook Village

This style is identified by the double-pitched mansard roof as seen on these examples. The style was especially popular in the 1860s and 1870s, mimicking fashionable buildings in the city of Paris.



ELEAZER FRANKLIN BAKER HOUSE
3 Prospect Street, Suncook Village – circa 1894

Baker was a son of the owner of the major department store in the village and became a partner in his father's business. His elegant home on Prospect Street was built in 1894 from plans by Concord architect George W. Cunningham. It represents the "Queen Anne" style of the late 1800s, a fanciful late Victorian style that favored complex floor plans, porches, corner turrets, and varied wall coverings.



JOSIAH FREDERICK BAKER HOUSE

6 Prospect Street (L) & 3 Exchange Street (R), Suncook Village – circa 1894

These houses are mirror images of each other. They represent the use of a mail-order house plan, a popular method of obtaining an attractive house design without hiring an architect. The plans were often reversed, as in these two examples, depending on the wishes of the homeowner.



BUNGALOW

90 Broadway – circa 1915

The bungalow was a highly popular house style of the early 1900s. It was a small, one-story house with broad, sweeping roof surfaces, a porch, simple detailing, and usually a fireplace.



DUTCH COLONIAL HOUSE

207 Pembroke Street – circa 1925

Houses of this style, with a gambrel roof and, often, a porch at one end, were popular throughout the first half of the twentieth century. Some houses of this type were prefabricated and marketed through catalogues by Sears, Roebuck and Company and a number of competing manufacturers. Simpler versions of “colonial” houses remain popular.

Commercial and Industrial Buildings

One of the richest portions of Pembroke's architectural legacy is the center of Suncook Village. Here, in a constrained area a few blocks in extent, is one of the finest concentrations of masonry commercial, residential, and manufacturing buildings to be found in New Hampshire. These structures exhibit excellent design and detailing, displaying a highly skillful use of locally manufactured bricks and locally quarried granite. Because its buildings, formerly of wood, were reconstructed following several fires, lower Main Street in Suncook is largely composed of structures that were built within a ten-year period, between 1876 and 1886.



Photo provided by James Galloway
MAIN STREET IN SUNCOOK VILLAGE, LOOKING SOUTHWEST

School buildings

Pembroke retains a number of early school buildings that provide a physical record of the evolution of education in the community from the mid-nineteenth century. These buildings may be separated into three groups: district or one-room schoolhouses; consolidated or multi-room school buildings; and Pembroke Academy, which served the town as a high school from 1818.

Until after the Civil War, all elementary education in Pembroke was provided in district schoolhouses that were located throughout the township at sites that were convenient for the children of various neighborhoods. An excellent example of a model one-room schoolhouse is the brick District No.1 School on Pembroke Street.

The rapid growth of Suncook Village after 1860 increased the need for a village school. The first consolidated or graded village school was built on the crest of the hill at the junction of Main Street and the Chester Turnpike in 1872. This large brick building (the property of the Pembroke Water Works since 1951) followed a well-recognized urban model of the period.

In 1907, the town appointed a building committee to construct a modern school in Suncook Village. The committee hired Chase R. Witcher (1876-1940) one of the most experienced and prolific New Hampshire architects of the early twentieth century, as architect of the new building, which stands on High Street opposite Pine Street.

Education at the high school level in Pembroke has been provided since 1819 by Pembroke Academy. The first academy building was a brick structure that was dedicated in May, 1819. This building burned on June 21, 1900, and was replaced in 1904 by a brick structure that was comparable in size and appearance to the Suncook Village School. The 1904 building, in turn, was gutted by fire in 1936. It was then remodeled within its brick walls and enlarged at the rear, assuming the appearance of a typical high school building of that era. This building remains in use, but it has been surrounded by a number of other structures that have accompanied the dramatic growth of the student population from Pembroke and neighboring towns.