

THE BALLARDVALE GAZETTE

NEWSLETTER OF THE BALLARDVALE HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION

Vol. 13, No. 1

BallardVale, Massachusetts

Spring 2016

An Anniversary Stroll — See what makes BallardVale special on a neighborhood walk

In celebration of the 20th anniversary of the BallardVale Historic District, the commission thought it would be interesting to “take a walk” highlighting some of the many projects that have helped maintain the historic character of our neighborhood. Through the collaborative efforts of residents and the commission, numerous projects — large and small — have been achieved with creativity and vision.

Renovation of homes in the Vale is often necessary, and homeowners have been creative and innovative. Owners of 154 Andover St. — formerly the German Social Club, a cultural center for 19th-century mill employees — were able to expand their home while retaining its Greek Revival character. Renovations of 33 Marland, 14 and 21 Chester, 12 Tewksbury, and 250 and 264 Andover Streets also include well-considered additions. The single family dwelling at 197 Andover St. and the duplex at 242–244 Andover St., both un-lived in for a time, have been carefully renovated. When owners of 139 Andover St. renovated their 1857 Greek Revival home, a farmer’s porch was added and wood windows restored. A separate garden shed and one-car garage with swing-out carriage doors were built the style of the house.

It may come as a surprise that there has been new construction in BallardVale. Several new homes have been built in the past few years, and because their design and scale are in keeping with the historic character of the Vale, they are seamlessly integrated into the neighborhood. Construction was required to rebuild after a fire at 22 Marland St. Other new homes can be seen at 9 Chester St., 9 Clark Rd., and 267 Andover St.

In addition to houses, several barns have been restored or built in the Vale. A collapsed barn

Celebrating 20 Years of Historic Preservation in the Vale

was rebuilt at 12 High Vale Ln.; a new barn was built at 63 Center St. in the style of the 1850s house; and a new barn-style structure was built at 17 Tewksbury St. to function as a garage and office. Careful attention to architectural details — molding, overhangs, corner boards, doors, windows and siding — has resulted in buildings that have presence while blending into their surroundings.

Other projects that maintain the historic character of the neighborhood include the addition of beautiful wood fences at 42 and 48 Tewksbury St. and at 183–187 Andover St., the restoration of a side door at 27 Center St., and renovations of 200 Andover St. in BallardVale center. The brick mill building was renovated and later an extension, appropriate in design to the original building, was added. The building now houses thriving businesses.

Current restoration projects underway can also be seen throughout the Vale. The remaining half of the former train depot at 174–176 Andover St. (not its original site) is being restored. The Italianate structure was built in 1850 by the Boston and Maine Railroad and was one of two train stations in BallardVale. Owners are using original 19th century architectural plans to guide their work — significant will be the retention of the building’s wide eaves, brackets, siding details, arched second floor windows, and tall, slender first floor windows. Construction of 211 Andover St. in BallardVale center is well underway, requiring house renovations as well as extensive stabilization of the slope behind the house. And while not historic, the redesign of BallardVale Park playground and ball field has made the destination more popular than ever!

All these projects and more have been completed by residents of the Vale in conjunction

with the BVHDC. Homes, barns, sheds, porches, garages, doors, and windows have been restored and constructed with a sensitivity to the historic district's character. So take a walk around BallardVale and enjoy. You'll see some wonderful projects that you may not have been aware of! They are the result of the efforts of all who've worked to retain what makes BallardVale special — its charm, scale, history, warmth, and neighborliness.

— *M.P. Bogan, former BVHDC member and editor of the BallardVale Gazette*

BallardVale Historic District Commission (BVHDC) meeting dates and agendas are posted at andover.ma.gov. All are welcome.

The BallardVale Story: A Unique Planned Mill Village

The BallardVale Historic District encompasses a tightly knit, though highly diverse community that has significantly retained its 19th century characteristics. BallardVale, the first of Andover's planned mill villages, is located on the banks of the Shawsheen River. Waterpower was first harnessed by Timothy Ballard, who operated grist and sawmills, and then by the BallardVale Manufacturing Company that built a 200-foot long dam.

The Historic District boundaries circle central BallardVale, with Andover St. as the main street and Center, Marland, Dale and High Sts. laid out with comfortable house lots in an 1848 subdivision. Portions of High Vale Lane, Chester, Oak and Tewksbury Streets and Clark Road are included. The original BallardVale Manufacturing Company (est. 1836) sits on the Shawsheen River and is a four-story brick structure with granite trim and a gable roof.

The early employees of the factories were skilled Scotch, English, Irish and German craftsmen. The mills become world renowned, producing flannels, worsted goods and delaines. Other industries that operated in the center of the village included the BallardVale Machine Shop Company (est. 1848), which manufactured locomotives; Whipple File Company (est. 1860), the world's first

firm to machine cut files successfully; Abbot Hat Factory; Craighead and Kintz (est. 1883), which produced "art" metalwork lamps, plaques and figures; and the Willard and BallardVale Potteries. By the 1860s, BallardVale bustled with industrial and commercial activities supported by the railroad depot, post office, millinery shop, shoe shops, poolroom, barbershop, bowling alley, tailor, blacksmith, tavern and several general stores. Andover's first public library, two churches and an entertainment hall contributed to the cultural life of the villagers.

Single, multi-family and boarding houses were built in the popular styles of the time. The buildings at 6–8 Dale and 21 Tewksbury Streets represent the Greek Revival style, although the former is a brick duplex and the latter a wooden cottage. The picturesque Gothic Revival style is depicted at both 14 High Vale Lane and 51 Center St., whereas 174–176 Andover St. (formerly the railroad depot) and 228 Andover St. illustrate Italianate architecture. BallardVale was added to the National Register of Historic Districts in 1987.

— *Andover Historic Preservation website: preservation.mhl.org*

Benefits of the Historic District

In 1995 the Study Committee compiled the following reasons why creating a historic district would benefit Ballardvale.

- Increase awareness of and appreciation for Ballardvale as a unique and historically significant village.
- Ensure preservation of the architecture, the village, and the special quality of Ballardvale for future generations.
- Ensure that new residential and commercial building designs will be compatible with existing architecture.
- Prevent property devaluation caused by incompatible development or government intrusion.
- Give the people of Ballardvale another reason to be proud of their community.

— *Final Report, Ballardvale Historic District Study Committee, May 1, 1995*



154 Andover St.



197 Andover St.



264 Andover St.



242-244 Andover St.



14 Chester St.



200 Andover St.



63 Center St.



211 Andover St.



139 Andover St.



BallardVale Park



174-176 Andover St.

FAQs

Ask the BVHD (BallardVale Historic District Commission) . . .

Do I need BVHDC approval to install solar panels on my house?

Solar panels do require commission review, and homeowners are generally encouraged to install them as unobtrusively as possible.

Questions? Suggestions? Feedback?

If you have a question for the BallardVale Historic District Commission or a suggestion for a topic you'd like to see covered in a future issue of the BallardVale Gazette, please contact the editors:

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BallardVale Historic District Commission

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To receive the next issue of the BallardVale Gazette via email, send your name, address, and email to Karen English: kfeenglish@gmail.com.

CALENDAR

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| July 13 | BallardVale Historic District Commission Monthly Meeting
Town offices, second floor conference room — 7:00 p.m. |
| August 3 | BallardVale Historic District Commission Monthly Meeting
Town offices, second floor conference room — 7:00 p.m. |
| Sept. 14 | BallardVale Historic District Commission Monthly Meeting
Location TBD — 7:00 p.m. |
| Oct. 5 | BallardVale Historic District Commission Monthly Meeting
Town offices, second floor conference room — 7:00 p.m. |