This professional assessment of the character of the Greenfield Village District was created as part of Community Planning Grant, Round #2, sponsored by The New Hampshire Housing Finance Authority and was prepared by:

**ELIZABETH DURFEE HENGEN**

***CONSULTANT IN HISTORIC PRESERVATION***

**25 RIDGE ROAD**

**CONCORD, NEW HAMPSHIRE 03301**

**603-225-7977**

**ehengen@gmail.com**

**August 26, 2013**

**DEFINING FEATURES OF BUSINESS DISTRICT**

**AND CENTER VILLAGE DISTRICT**

**STATEMENT OF PURPOSE**

To ensure new construction, additions, alterations or demolitions preserve the traditional scale and appearance of Greenfield’s town center.

**BRIEF HISTORICAL OVERVIEW**

The Town of Greenfield was founded in 1791. From its inception, Greenfield Village has

served as the center of town affairs.

The town’s second meeting house, built in 1795, still anchors the village, and two years later, the town laid out an adjacent cemetery. The village has also been home to a school since its early years.

After eighty years as a largely rural community, the railroad arrived in 1874, boosting the importance of the village and its economy. Shortly after its arrival, the town’s population reached its height, not to be surpassed until the 1970s. An early saw/grist mill evolved into a larger steam-powered mill, and a large grain mill, E.C. & W.L. Hopkins, Inc., was located near the railroad crossing on Slip Road. (That mill operated until it was destroyed by fire in 1976.) Among the other mills was a soapstone factory.

In addition to industry, the railroad brought summer visitors to the town’s three large lakes and pastoral landscape of farms and surrounding mountains. Though a tavern existed in the village as early as 1824, additional hotels sprouted up, and nearby farms took in boarders. In the 1930s snow trains brought skiers from Boston to Greenfield’s slopes. At its height, five daily trains ran through the village en route to Boston, including two milk runs.

Just west of the village, the town hosted the Hillsborough County Fair for several decades in the early 20th century. Soon thereafter, the Depression, coupled with increased reliance on automobiles and trucks, brought the railroad to its demise, and Greenfield’s population and economy fell into decline.

Today, the village serves primarily as a bedroom community that commutes elsewhere to work. Its customer base swells during the summer months when many visit Greenfield State Park, which has been located just west of the village since 1964.

**CHARACTER-DEFINING FEATURES**

***General***

The majority of the buildings and structures in Greenfield village in 2013 are at least 100 years old, and most date from the 19th century. The village district is exclusively residential use, while commercial use, in both modern, purpose-built buildings and older, converted buildings prevails in the business district.

***Streetscape***

* Fairly consistent setbacks, scale and density along road sides
* Larger buildings, such as meeting house, new elementary school, firehouse, elderly housing, day care

center, have deep setbacks—lessens impact of large buildings or clusters

* Garages usually tucked behind houses and never set in front of building facade
* Dwellings sited both parallel and angled to road, but angled orientations more common on rural fringes of

district

* Wide range of architectural styles and periods—no one “look”
* All residential buildings are wood frame
* Only three buildings, all non-residential, are brick: telephone company building, library, post office
* Nearly all buildings have front lawns
* At foot and along the building, driveways are narrow
* Stonewalls edge roads in much of village district
* Sidewalks and roads lack curbs in village district

***Business District***

* Thoughtful redevelopment of historic buildings for new uses

***Scale/massing***

* Residential buildings range from 1 ½ -2 ½ stories
* Commercial buildings range from 1-2 ½ stories
* 18th & 19th c. houses have traditional physical hierarchy—main house-ell-shed-barn—with descending

rooflines. Facade of main house is in most forward plane and other masses are usually staggered or offset.

***Character-defining Building Details***

* Traditionally sized and spaced window and door openings
* Porches located on both front and side elevations
* Front entrance marked with portico or door hood
* Gable roofs are prevalent; hip, mansard and gambrel roofs are few
* Roof dormers and wall gables
* Bay windows on front and side elevations

***Landscape Features***

* Mature trees throughout Village District
* Roadside trees throughout Village district
* Wooden fences (picket, split rail, rails supported by granite posts); no evidence of stockade or chain link

fences or fences exceeding 4’ in height.

* Stone walls (roadside and retaining walls)
* Buildings with deep setbacks have landscape features, such as mature trees and lawn, between building and

sidewalk or road

* Open space and elevated site make the Meeting House the focal point of the village center
* A grass strip between the sidewalk and road, as well as between the edge of a parking lot and the sidewalk

or road, throughout most of the Village District

* Roadside fields on district fringes
* Viewsheds
* Year-round views of Mt. Monadnock, North Pack Monadnock and Crotched Mountain
* Views between buildings of rear fields and open spaces