

Central Business District and Lower Village

(Entered onto National Register of Historic Resources 2/21/1978)

This area occupies the portion of the city earliest developed as the city grew from a late 18th century center village to an urbanized industrial community. It is located in a valley through which the Sugar River flows, with the Monadnock Mills Historic District (also on the National Register) to the north, a steep rise of land north of Main Street to the west, another rise along Central Street to the south and the concentration of commercial and industrial resources occupying “the plain” bounded by Sullivan, Pleasant, Pine (now Glidden) and Broad Streets.

This area contains an historic district of 54 structures and two public spaces as well as 19 individual properties of outstanding architectural or historical significance.

The downtown historic district is primarily commercial and public in character retaining the late 19th- and early 20th century scale from which its significance is derived. The Claremont City Hall and Opera House, previously listed on the National Register, is a central focus of the district. It acts as the terminus of one major avenue with its old town common as well as one corner of Tremont (now Opera House) Square’s commercial center.

While the land of this district reflects the street pattern established when a smaller rural village-center clustered around the town-common on the plain, the existing streetscape is the product of a general rebuilding which established a new commercial core along Pleasant Street and Tremont Square at the height of the City’s industrial prosperity in the last quarter of the 19th century and the first decades of the 20th century. Combining a variety of eclectic Victorian and Neo-Colonial designs, these predominantly brick buildings share common façade lines and elevations ranging from two to four stories. Public and religious buildings surrounding the common (late called Broad Street Park) are more widely spaced on open lots and set back from the street. Thus while less than a quarter of the buildings are used for industrial purposes they occupy roughly half of the land area in the district. Fully three quarters of the buildings are used commercially and share the remaining land area with a thin scattering of domestic properties.