

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**National Register of Historic Places Registration Form**

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.

1. Name of PropertyHistoric name: Highgate ManorOther names/site number: Keyes Homestead, Baxter Homestead, Manor Mayfair

Name of related multiple property listing:

N/A

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

2. LocationStreet & number: 464 Highgate RoadCity or town: Highgate State: VT County: FranklinNot For Publication: ☐Vicinity: ☐**3. State/Federal Agency Certification**

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this ___ nomination ___ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

___ national ___ statewide ___ local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

___ A ___ B ___ C ___ D

Signature of certifying official/Title:_____
Date_____
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

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In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official:

Date

Title :

State or Federal agency/bureau
or Tribal Government

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- ___ entered in the National Register
___ determined eligible for the National Register
___ determined not eligible for the National Register
___ removed from the National Register
___ other (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

Private:

☒

Public – Local

☐

Public – State

☐

Public – Federal

☐

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Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

Building(s) ☒

District ☐

Site ☐

Structure ☐

Object ☐

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	buildings
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	sites
<u> </u>	<u>1</u>	structures
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	objects
<u>1</u>	<u>3</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC: single dwelling

DOMESTIC: hotel

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC: single dwelling

OTHER: event hall

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7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

LATE VICTORIAN: Second Empire

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: Foundation: STONE, CONCRETE; Walls: BRICK, WOOD; Roof: ASPHALT (shingle), STONE (shingle); Other: WOOD (extensive decorative architectural detailing and bracketing); BRICK (multiple chimneys); METAL (chimney cap detailing and finials).

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

Summary Paragraph

Highgate Manor is an emphatic Second Empire house located within the Village of Highgate Falls, Highgate, Franklin County, Vermont. The expansive high-style brick residence is defined by a complex form that reflects multiple periods of development and occupational use, with portions developed circa (c.) 1819; an exuberant and dominant Second Empire main body dating to c. 1870; and a single-story "Dance Hall" wing dating to 1951. The building is located just south of Highgate falls and dam at a bend of the Missisquoi River. The property is an approximately six-acre lot with mature trees, standing as a striking architectural composition within the surrounding riparian and rural village setting of Highgate Falls. Highgate Manor features a sophisticated and architecturally ambitious form, standing as an archetype of the Second Empire style, expressed by a concave slate mansard roof surmounted by a soaring centered belvedere; anchoring centered bellcast wall dormer with arched window and balconette; orderly fenestration accentuated with heightened detailing including hooded arched windows; and extensive bracketing and scroll-work. In keeping with the exterior, the interior form and arrangement of Highgate Manor is reflective of both the stylistic ambition of the property's development and the property's multiple periods of occupation and use. The interior of the c. 1870 Second Empire main body is the architectural and aesthetic focal point of the property, with a balanced and richly detailed form featuring heightened architectural ornamentation and finishes, and a formal center hall plan and spatial arrangement. Extending from this dominant stylistic axis, subservient spaces extend from the main body, including the c. 1819 house now functioning as a rear ell, and 1951 Dance Hall wing to the north. While ongoing occupation and

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the early twentieth century conversion from private residential use to tourist-hotel functions has introduced minor material alteration to portions of the exterior and interior of the property, Highgate Manor retains strong and cohesive physical and associational integrity to its nineteenth century construction period and is a significant reflection of evolving Victorian stylistic ideals in residential architecture and domestic design in Vermont.

Narrative Description

Contextual Site Overview

Highgate Manor is located on an approximately six-acre parcel in the rural Northern Vermont village of Highgate Falls, standing just below the curve of the Missisquoi River as it flows through Highgate Falls Dam. The residence stands close to the Highgate Road (VT 207) street frontage, framed by several mature trees, decorative shrubs, and perennial plantings, with a spacious open lawn surrounding. At the rear, west, of the property, successional Northern forest frames the rear periphery of the lot. A gravel drive enters the property just south of the house and wraps around to a large gravel parking area behind the house. A gazebo anchors the southern edge of the lawn and two sheds are behind the house to the north. The surrounding Highgate Falls Village is modest and heterogeneous in form, with a generally nineteenth and early twentieth century assemblage of primarily residential forms in vernacular Greek Revival and Italianate styles, exhibiting a wide array of integrity and material condition. Directly across from the Highgate Manor, the Highgate Falls Common (Park) extends as an undeveloped linear grass expanse. To the north, the rocky watercourse of Highgate Falls is developed with the Swanton Hydroelectric Generating Plant and Dam, developed at the former site of a succession of grist and saw mills that predicated development of the Highgate Falls Village, and in turn the foundational origins of the Highgate Manor itself.

Exterior Description

The Highgate Manor house is defined by a complex form that reflects multiple periods of development and occupational use, with portions developed c. 1819; an exuberant Second Empire main body dating to c. 1870; and a single-story "Dance Hall" wing dating to 1951, reflecting the property's conversion from residential to hotel functions. Within this composition, the c. 1870 Second Empire main body is the architectural and stylistic anchor, reflecting a unified and sophisticated street-front presentation that stands as an exemplar of the Second Empire form, with an anchoring concave mansard roof structure, harmonious fenestration and detailing, and a balanced and compact massing framed by subservient extensions.

The main body of the residence stands on a rough-cut mortared stone block foundation, with the 1951 Dance Hall wing and other minor extensions standing on concrete foundations. The main body of the residence is solid brick masonry brick, with weatherboard cladding on the 1951 Dance Hall and on areas of the rear (west) wall. Symmetrical fenestration is elevated with exuberant detailing on the primary street frontage (east elevation) and slightly restrained details on the remainder of the elevations. A surmounting slate mansard roof defines the Highgate Manor's architectural form, with a concave profile, scrolled arch dormers, airy belvedere with

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arched windows, and centered bellcast wall dormer presenting an imposing and stylistically confident visage. Multiple corbelled chimneys with decorative metal cresting rise from the roofline. The main mansard body is sheathed in fish-scale slate roof tiles, with secondary areas in replacement asphalt shingle. As a whole, the building is in excellent material condition and exhibits a well-maintained physical form with strong material and design integrity.

East Elevation (primary Highgate Road fronting facade)

The east elevation of Highgate Manor is the stylistic focal point of the property, with an imposing Second Empire form that rises above the street frontage. The primary three bay body of the building is at the southern end, with a recessed two bay Second Empire wing extending to the north connecting to the low-slung five bay 1951 Dance Hall. The main block is three levels, with two stories surmounted by a prominent mansard with centered bellcast wall dormer flanked by ornately detailed segmental arch dormers. While expansive in scale and detailing, the physical composition of the main block is compact and centered, with a central covered entry porch on the first level, a projecting and richly detailed bellcast wall dormer with balconette above, and a soaring belvedere lined with expansive arched windows and rich bracketing. Fenestration is symmetrical and highly stylized, with an ascending stylistic complexity rising from the lower to upper levels of the building. At the first level, a pair of two-over-two double-hung wood windows in simple brick segmental arch surrounds flank a central entry protected by the porch, consisting of a pair of double-leaf half-light wood doors with round arch banded molding.¹ At the second level, a pair of round arch hooded four light wood casement windows with drop finials are centered upon the building, flanked by a pair of two-over-two double-hung wood windows with segmental arch hoods with drop finials. The third level at the mansard roofline reflects the most heightened treatment. A projecting bellcast wall dormer is centered upon the building at this level, with a round-arched glazed two leaf door with hood molding, underlain by a delicate balconette with flat-sawn balustrade and rounded finials, supported by scrolled brackets. The mansard roofline, sheathed in fish-scale slate, is punctuated by arched dormer windows, framed in richly composed ribboning-scrolled surrounds. The dormer window sash are round arch two light fixed sash above two light casement that give the impression of a double-hung window when viewed from the exterior. Muscular scrolled brackets with ribboned extensions at the corners demarcate the eaves of the main roof and the bellcast dormer. Projecting above the mansard, a square belvedere faced with round arch four light windows presents a lofty crowning vantage, alternating scrolled brackets with scrolled and ribboned brackets and pilasters under the wide terminating eaves. As a composition, the sophisticated Second Empire form conveys both solidity and loftiness, with the opulence of the upper-level forms suggestive of an ascending grandeur anchored by a rooted foundation.

As developed c. 1870, a recessed one and a half story wing extends to the north along the building's east-side street frontage, with a diminutive mansard roof that draws upon the stylistic framework of the main body. A covered wood porch runs along the extent of the wing's east facade. While the building was originally developed with a porch, the present porch is of recent

¹ Historic Photographs indicate that the first level windows originally featured segmental arch hoods, removed at an unknown date.

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construction. The porch shelters two, two-over-two double-hung windows and a two light paneled door. The window on the north elevation of the main body features a segmental arch brick lintel and the window on the wing wall a brick jack arch lintel. The wing's entry door features a blind transom and segmental arch brick lintel. Two round-arch dormers punctuate the mansard roof slope, featuring a deep hooded surround with drop finials fully in the round.

A single-story side-gable Dance Hall addition extends to the north along the east-facing road frontage, adjoined to the c. 1870 mansard wing. The dance hall was constructed in 1951, developed to replace a Dance Hall that was part of the then-named Manor Mayfair that had stood across the road and burned in 1950. The addition is modest in form, standing on a concrete foundation and sided in weatherboard. While subservient and modest in design, the Dance Hall conveys subtle echoes of the Second Empire main body, with four six-over-six windows in arched surrounds running along the east side of the building and a centered entrance vestibule extension featuring a concave roof mimicking the bellcast dormer on the main block, oversized drop finials, a two leaf door with round arch lights and panels, and a round arch two-light window in the entry gable.

North Elevation

The north elevation fronts the property's lot line and is stepped and irregular in form. The northerly wall of the Dance Hall is sided in weatherboard, with a concrete block chimney rising along the wall and a small louver vent in the gable peak. The stylized mansard forms of the wing and main block rise above the Dance Hall, with the northerly-facing mansard rooflines punctuated with a corbelled brick chimney in the wing roof and a single round-arch bay window with hooded surround and ribboned brackets in the main mansard roof. A multipart one story shed roof addition extends to the west of the Dance Hall and above that is the upper story of the cross-gable rear ell with eaves ornamented with scrolled brackets.

West Elevation (rear lot facing)

The west, rear, facing elevation fronts a gravel parking lot and the rear of the lot, framed by grassy open space ceding to successional forested surrounds. This elevation, which is secondary in nature, presents the most altered form, with multiple minor modern additions augmenting the original plan and configuration. As detailed in the descriptive summary, in the nineteenth century the residence featured a generally two-part form, with an original c. 1819 side gable brick residence expanded with the major Second Empire addition c. 1870. The west elevation is defined by this original c. 1819 two-story building, with steeply pitched gable roof, deep eaves, and a centered corbelled brick chimney. Architectural detailing is reflective of the Second Empire style, added at the time the building was enlarged c. 1870, with ribbon bracketing that is in keeping with the remainder of the residence. Several key alterations characterize this section of the building, with removed and altered fenestration on the west wall, areas of wood weatherboard siding replacing areas of original brick, an accessible entry ramp, and multiple minor shed roof extensions housing kitchen and storage spaces that were developed during the twentieth century period of development as a hotel and restaurant. These extensions present a complex and multi-component single-story roofline that is embedded between the main

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nineteenth century body of the building and the extending 1951 Dance Hall, largely obscuring the earlier stylistic and functional intent of the building on this rear-facing secondary elevation. Just above all of this is the main mansard roof and belvedere. The mansard roof has a centered round arch dormer flanked by two corbelled brick chimneys. Reflecting the secondary-facing location of this area, the arched dormer is of a lower stylistic order devoid of the ribbon detailing and bracketing found on the other areas of the mansard roofline.

South Elevation

The south elevation is framed by lawn and a row of ornamental trees, conveying an imposing form that unites the c. 1819 residence with the c. 1870 Second Empire form through a recessed hyphen. As originally developed, the hyphen featured a two-story porch featuring elaborate scroll-sawn posts, balustrade, and detailing. The first level porch was infilled c. 1921, when the building was converted to use as a hotel and is now characterized by an enclosed sun porch lined with oversize two-over-one windows. The second floor of the porch is intact and shelters two windows and a door, all accentuated with round-arch flared lintels framing vine detailing. The c. 1870 Second Empire single bay portion of the south elevation is characterized by treatment that is in keeping with the east-facing façade, with a three-part bracketed bay window surmounted by a pair of windows in round-arch hooded surrounds. A single round arch hooded dormer extends from the mansard roofline and above that the bracketed belvedere with two round arch windows. At the southeast base of the building a small non-historic period bulkhead accesses the basement level. The c. 1819 two bay rear portion of the residence features four symmetrically-placed windows on the south wall, accentuated with round-arch flared lintels framing vine detailing. In keeping with the remainder of the historic form, scrolled brackets demarcate the eave line.

Interior Description

In keeping with the exterior of the Highgate Manor, the interior conveys both the underlying architectural ambitions of the property owners and its multiple periods of development, with a strong and intact nineteenth century form framed by areas of alteration associated with ongoing use in the twentieth century as a hotel and event venue. The c. 1870 Second Empire portion of the interior presents the most heightened and intact form, with a formal and cohesive layout and material composition that conveys very high integrity to the period of development. Other secondary spaces present simpler form and details, and reflect a range of material conditions and integrity. Substantial timber framing members are exposed in the basement, with the framing structure of the main body concealed by the finished interior.

First Floor

Entrance Hall

As designed, the primary entry to the Highgate Manor is through the central entrance on the east, street fronting, façade. The entry, through double-leaf paneled doors with arched half-lights, opens to a formal central entry hall. While compact in scale, the hall features heightened detailing including marble tile floors and extensive wood molding and millwork, with banded

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casing with curved corners framing the entries to the flanking parlors and dining room. A straight stair rises from the hall to the second level, featuring a turned spindled balustrade and newel post and a delicate arched spandrel that opens to a nook below the stair. A crystal chandelier lights the hall and non-historic period wall papering covers the plaster walls.

Parlors

The entrance hall is flanked by two parlors to the left and right of the hall, both accessed by double-leaf panel doors in cased openings. The doors and window surrounds in both parlors are defined by substantial banded molding with curved corners.

The south parlor features wide plank wood floors, picture rail molding, plaster walls with panel molding, and an expansive south-facing three-part bay window featuring the characteristic banded surrounds and arched window sashes. Woodwork and walls in this parlor are all painted. A marble fireplace anchors the west wall of the room, featuring a round-arch form with scrolled keystone and banded paneling. A bronze and etched crystal suspended six-light chandelier hangs from the center of the room, set in a banded ceiling medallion.

The north parlor features much the same form and material composition as the south, with wide plank floors, generous windows with banded molding surrounds and arched sashes, and an anchoring marble fireplace featuring inset paneling, shield, and rosettes. A suspended bronze and glass chandelier hangs from the center of the room, encircled by an acanthus leaf ceiling medallion. In contrast to the south parlor, the north parlor features dark wood grain molding and wall-papered walls, lending a heavier and darker sense to the northerly room.

Study

A small study fills the interior of the mansard north wing. The room has medium plank wood floors, simple built-in book shelves with wood casing and corner medallions, and a centered fireplace with scrolled wood mantle. A modern light fixture is suspended from the ceiling. A paneled half-light door accesses the east-facing porch.

Dining Room and Sun Room

The dining room occupies a large portion of the building's ell. The east wall of the dining room has three cased openings, with banded molding simpler than that of the front rooms, providing circulation from the entrance hall and both of the parlors. The room is characterized by wood plank floors with wood wainscoting surrounding much of the room. Plaster walls are papered with non-historic papering. A newer bronze chandelier light fixture is centered upon the ceiling. A built-in cupboard with banded molding lines the west wall. As originally designed, the room opened to an open-air porch that lined the west-running ell of the building. This porch was filled in c. 1921 following the conversion of the property from residence to hotel and guest resort, converted to a sun room. The sun room opens from the south wall of the dining room, accessed by French doors with sidelights and a transom with ribbon light. The sun room features nearly full wall-height two-over-one windows with plain board surrounds, unfinished floors, and a stained bead board ceiling, with a white glass suspended light fixture featuring swags, beading, and scrolled detailing. A half-light wood panel exterior door lines the west wall.

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Kitchen and Rear Entry Hall

The kitchen is located in the c. 1819 portion of the building. While some original elements remain intact, namely original wide plank wood floors and areas of banded wood casing, built-ins, and wood panel doors, the kitchen reflects modern finishes, features, cabinetry, and light fixtures. A small rear entry vestibule extends from the kitchen at the building's southwest corner, featuring wood wainscoting and wide plank wood floors. The vestibule opens to a non-historic period door and accessible ramp.

Dance Hall and Secondary Support Spaces

The Dance Hall, added in 1951, is accessed through multiple entries, with the main entrance on the east, road-facing, side and a secondary rear entrance through the west side. In addition, the hall is accessed through an interior service entry from the house kitchen. The hall is open in plan with a lofty aspect characterized by exposed dimensional rafter trusses. Floors are narrow wood strip planks. Newer finishes include a bar and ornate glass chandeliers. Several later additions extend from the rear main body of the dance hall, housing a service-kitchen, bathrooms, storage areas, and an accessible covered entrance. Of note, a sloped tunneled-passage connects the dance hall to the basement of the main house, developed in the mid-twentieth century to access a basement tavern named "Henry Baxter's Tavern." The tunnel is arched in form, with concrete coating and decorative areas of brick facing.

Second Floor

Stairs and Hall

The upper levels of the residence are accessed through the straight stair that ascends from the front entry hall, opening to an expansive second level hall featuring wide plank wood floors, and substantial millwork including banded baseboards and casing with rounded corners. The east-facing area of the upper hall, fronting Highgate Road, is an architectural focal point, with a pair of expansive arched windows centered upon the façade of the building. The hall opens to five bedrooms, two flanking the north and south of the hall fronting Highgate Road on the building's east side, one in the north wing, and two extending west from the hall through the hyphen and into the c. 1819 portion of the house. A door on the south wall of the hall opens to the second level porch. Doors accessing the bedrooms are generally original, with a solid wood panel form and framing millwork featuring the banded molding design found throughout the residence. The door leading to the balcony is of a heavy wood panel incised by a pair of arched half-lights, original to development.

Bedrooms

The five second-level bedrooms have a mixture of original materials and limited areas of new finishes. All bedrooms are united by their millwork, with banded baseboards, casing, window framing, and built-ins reflecting the Highgate Manor's heightened Second Empire design. A few of the bedrooms have small modern bathrooms attached.

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The northeast bedroom is highly intact from the period of development, with wide plank floors, banded baseboards and door casing, a brick fireplace with delicate wood mantle featuring scroll-cut millwork, and a suspended brass light fixture with an acanthus leaf motif. The room opens to expansive vistas facing the road frontage, with delicate 2/2 original arched glass windows. The southwest corner has a sloping bump out for the underside of the stairs leading to the third floor. Plaster walls are papered in non-historic period wall papering.

The southeast bedroom shares the same wide plank floors, banded casework and arched windows. Setting this room apart are thicker walls and deep paneled casing around the windows. Modifications include a non-historic period light fixture centered on the ceiling and modern wall-papering.

The north wing bedroom is accessed by a rear hallway that also provides access to the third floor staircase. The bedroom features wide plank wood floors, with casing and millwork that is of a far simpler form, reflecting a less heightened, though original, design. The intimate bedroom is framed by the defining Mansard, which envelopes the room with a sloped wall plane, with arched dormer windows with deep sills projecting from the east and west walls. A brick chimney lines the north wall, with original stove removed. A small porcelain rosette light fixture is centered upon the ceiling. Several built-in shelves and cupboards, of a simple and substantial design, line the wall.

The northwest rear bedroom is accessed through a small hall and sitting room, while the hall features original wide plank wood floors, the bedroom's floors are vinyl wood tile. Banded baseboards and casing are found throughout, with a small bronze and frosted glass pendant suspended over the bedroom. Walls are plaster with non-historic period wall papering.

The southwest rear bedroom features original wide plank wood floors, with the characteristic banded casing and millwork. A small bronze light fixture is suspended from the ceiling. Non-historic period papering covers the plaster walls.

Third Floor

The third level is accessed by a steep set of straight wood stairs accessed through a wood panel door in the second-floor hallway. The intimate form of the third level is defined by the framing mansard sloped walls, with a small sitting room/hall that opens to the upper-level balconette centered in the bellcast wall dormer and two small flanking bedrooms, with the segmental arch dormer windows with deep window wells. Throughout the third level, floors are wide wood planks, with plaster walls that are painted in the sitting area and south bedroom and papered in the north bedroom. Plain board baseboards and casing with corner blocks, while intact and original, reflect a simpler design hierarchy of the third floor. A modern light fixture with fan is suspended from the southerly bedroom, with a porcelain and brass fixture in the northerly bedroom. The seating area in the center is defined by the expansive exposure from the paired arched glazed doors centered on the wall dormer, opening to the delicate balustrade of the balconette and expansive views across Highgate Falls Common.

Belvedere

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The crowning belvedere is accessed by a narrow winder staircase from the third level. The small space is entirely framed in arched windows lining each face and imparts a lofty expansive view over Highgate Falls. The scale of the window extends over much of the wall surface. The floor is wood plank. The majority of the windows feature operable hinges and are in-swinging.

Basement

The basement is accessed through interior stairs descending from the kitchen area as well as from the “tunnel” leading from the Dance Hall. As a utilitarian area, the basement reflects multiple eras of development and ongoing evolution of utility and mechanical systems. The unfinished basement ceiling affords visual access to the residence’s original framing members, with original joists and flooring evident. Basement walls are rough-cut stone, with areas obscured by spray foam insulation. Brick chimney foundations and several brick partition walls divide the space. Of note, a corner of the basement has been partitioned off with an iron-barred cell, possibly developed in association with storage for Dr. Henry Baxter’s largescale patent medicine business, operating at the time of development of this property, though research did not confirm this assumption.²

Non-Contributing Storage Sheds and Gazebo

Two small wood-frame storage sheds stand to the rear of the Highgate Manor. One stands adjacent to the building and is an open-bay wood weatherboard storage garage. The other is located at the western rear of the lot and is a simple prefabricated wood-framed gable shed with double doors on a concrete foundation. Both buildings were added post-2000, and neither are contributing to the significance of the property. A gazebo stands at the southern edge of the lot. While historic images depict a gazebo at the general location during the period of occupation as the Manor Mayfair, the gazebo is of c. 2020s construction, though of a compatible design, with millwork and decorative flat-sawn balusters. Because of its recent construction, the gazebo is documented as non-contributing.

Integrity

The physical and associational integrity of Highgate Manor is very high, and the building readily conveys its identity as a largely intact and architecturally ambitious nineteenth century Second Empire residence converted to public-facing hotel and guest functions. The setting and Highgate Falls Village location of the property is a key facet of this integrity, reflecting an embedded rural village context. At a broad level, the design and plan of the building is reflective of the period of significance, c. 1819 - 1956, with the form, massing, stylistic aims, and materials largely intact. Materials throughout the property are largely original to construction, with the foundation, wood-frame structural systems, brick walls, sophisticated fenestration and interior finish work, and heightened design elements almost entirely materially reflective of the construction period, particularly in key heightened spaces. Workmanship is readily discerned through both the overall design and form of the property and the numerous representatives of heightened design detailing

² “Sale of Baxter’s Medicines,” *The St. Albans Daily Messenger*, February 20, 1872.

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on both the exterior and interior of the property, most notably the expansive mansard design, rich millwork throughout, fireplaces, light fixtures, and composed fenestration detailing. Through this material and design integrity, the Highgate Manor's feeling and association retains strong links to the period of significance and the property is readily able to convey its significant architectural and stylistic associations to both the initial nineteenth century development period and the subsequent evolution to hotel functions.

Character Defining Features

The Highgate Manor retains a number of key physical and associational characteristics that allow the property to convey its essential form and identity as a stylized nineteenth century residence adapted to a public-facing function. These features are considered character defining and allow the property to convey significance within its defined historic context and period of significance.

- *Embedded location within the Village of Highgate Falls:* As a residence developed within the nineteenth century core of the rural village of Highgate Falls, the Highgate Manor derives significance from its established village context. The residence is framed within the village core, including adjacent dwellings, the Common, and the framing watercourse of the Missisquoi River.
- *Complex and elaborate Second Empire form:* The Highgate Manor is an exemplar of the Second Empire form, with a balanced and symmetrical mansard form characterized by exuberant and unrestrained architectural embellishment. The massing, detailing, and material and decorative composition of this heightened form is character defining.
- *Elements of Multiple Periods of Development:* While anchored by the c. 1870 Second Empire construction, the property is defined by multiple period of development, with a rear element that dates to a c. 1819 period of development and the 1951 dance hall. This stylistic and material amalgamation is character defining, though additions and alterations that post-date 1956, in particular minor rear service additions, do not contribute to this design significance and are not considered character defining. Additionally, the minor sheds and gazebo are not considered contributing though they are generally compatible in form and materials.
- *Heightened Interior Design Decorative Finishes:* Extant design finishes, including wood trim, paneling, casing, fireplaces and mantles, light fixtures, and other *in-situ* decorative finishes from the historic period of development are character defining.
- *Framing Lawn Surround:* As a nineteenth century residence and twentieth century tourist resort, the contextual lawn surrounds of the property are character defining, with the grass expanse and associated vegetative landscaping contributing to the significance of the property.

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8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- ☒ A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- ☐ B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- ☒ C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- ☐ D. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

- ☐ A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- ☐ B. Removed from its original location
- ☐ C. A birthplace or grave
- ☐ D. A cemetery
- ☐ E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- ☐ F. A commemorative property
- ☐ G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

ARCHITECTURE
ENTERTAINMENT

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Period of Significance

c. 1819-1956

Significant Dates

c. 1870

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

The Highgate Manor is significant at the Local Level under Criterion A as a hotel and event venue that contributed to the cultural and physical development of the Village of Highgate and shaped its evolution from a largely extractionary rural settlement to a village defined by tourism and entertainment/recreation-related themes. The property is also significant at the Local Level under Criterion C as a highly expressive and archetypal representative of the Second Empire architectural style, with the exuberant and unrestrained materials and design of the property reflecting the ascendance of Second Empire design in high-style architectural development in mid-nineteenth century Vermont communities. The period of significance for the Highgate Manor extends from its initial c. 1819 construction period to 1956, when the property's early twentieth century identity as a tourist enclave began a gradual ebbing in local prominence through the latter decades of the twentieth century.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

Analysis under NRHP Criterion A

Under Criterion A, the development and occupational evolution of the Highgate Manor is reflective of a broad sweep of community development within the Village of Highgate Falls. Constructed in the formative years of village development c. 1819 by lumber-magnate Stephen Sheldon Keyes, the property was a defining element of the nascent village settlement, located in

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the immediate environs of the village's anchoring mills, owned by the Keyes family. Acquired by Dr. Henry Baxter c. 1870, the property was transformed in plan, design, and architectural intent, representing a rapidly changing village context and economy, with the formative extractionary-based settlement context ceding to a diversified and interconnected framework exemplified by Baxter's high-profile and lucrative proprietary medicine empire, which connected Highgate Falls to a far-flung economic and cultural network and provided the economic heft for the Manor's Second Empire construction. The 1921 conversion from expansive family residence to tourist hotel and retreat, Highgate Manor is highly reflective of Highgate Falls', and in turn Vermont's, steady evolution in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century to a tourist enclave, with its small-scale largely nineteenth century village settings and naturalistic pastoral framework increasingly enmeshed in—and integral to—a beckoning tourist economy. This evolution, embodied within the striking architectural form of Highgate Manor with the 1951 Dance Hall addition, reflects a defining sweep of local entertainment and recreation development within Highgate Falls and conveys significance under Criterion A at the Local Level with a Period of Significance spanning from the 1819 construction to 1956, when the Highgate Manor's defining role as a tourist enclave began to wane through the latter decades of the twentieth century.

Analysis under NRHP Criterion C

Under Criterion C, Highgate Manor is an expressive and emphatic representative of the Second Empire form that is significant at the Local Level, reflecting an exceedingly ambitious architectural composition that stands as a locally-significant exemplar of both the execution of the Second Empire form as well as the underlying social precepts that fueled the design's popularity. Augmenting an earlier c. 1819 "substantial brick" village dwelling, the c. 1870 development of the Highgate Manor by prominent Highgate Falls resident Dr. Henry Baxter was intended to convey rarified notions of style, taste, and wealth, through the defined material and design lens of the Second Empire architectural form. Such development occurred in villages across the State of Vermont during the period, with lofty and ambitious Second Empire expressions through the 1860s to 1880s of varying scale and composition reflecting both the salience of the design and the maturation of Vermont regional economies and village streetscapes. Within this portfolio, the Highgate Manor presents an arresting and singular statement within the context of Highgate Falls and its rural and agricultural surrounds, dripping with archetypal Second Empire stylings in a manner that is distinctly emblematic of the form and highly intact. Within the low-slung vernacular village context of Highgate Falls, Highgate Manor was designed and developed to stop traffic, both then and now. It continues to present a riveting form along the rural roadside today, an ostentatious and highly effective ode to the Second Empire form. Within this context, the property is locally significant under Criterion C with a period of significance spanning from its c. 1819 construction to 1956, the period in which the Second Empire form was augmented by the placement of a subservient dance hall, reflecting the multi-faceted entertainment and tourist-related functions of the originally residential form.

Discussion of Additional Criteria

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The property is not being nominated under Criterion B or D. Under Criterion B, while Highgate Manor bears associations to prominent local figures including the Keyes and Baxter families, the property does not convey specific associations to significant aspects of their life and work and is better interpreted through the lenses of entertainment and architectural development, as detailed in relation to criteria A and C. Under Criterion D, this documentation did not include analysis that would determine the information potential associated with the property, though archival research has documented a long period of settlement focused on the falls and village surrounds. In addition, local oral traditions have asserted that Highgate Manor was associated in some manner with the Underground Railroad during the period of ownership by the Keyes family. While the location of the residence on the northern border of the United States, only miles from Quebec, Canada, lends depth to this assertion, archival research did not reveal any information regarding this oral tradition, and it is unknown whether there is additional information contained within the property that would elucidate this claim.³

Overview Contextual Development Narrative

*S.S. Keyes built a substantial brick residence in 1819 or 1820 on the west side of the road, some 20 rods south of the brick store now owned and occupied by Henry Baxter as a drug store, probably built the same time as the house. In a few years S.W. Keyes built a good brick house upon the east side of the green opposite. The buildings were ornamented with shade trees, had capacious yards, good out-buildings and were a handsome addition to the little village.*⁴

Abby Maria Hemenway, *The Vermont Historical Gazetteer*, 1871

Dr. Baxter has built a magnificent residence at a cost of \$30,000, its imposin' appearance reminds one of the palaces we read of on the Rhine.

The St. Albans Transcript, March 23, 1872

The Manor: Nature's Ideal Vacation Spot. *Nowhere has nature created a more beautiful vacation paradise than The Manor, a Colonial brick mansion, set amid the most gorgeous surroundings created by nature. Located opposite the park, overlooking Highgate Falls and the Missisquoi River, and most beautiful scenery in the east. Within you will find comfortable parlors, rest-rooms, bedrooms, etc. The kind of modern conveniences you would expect in the more pretentious*

³ As part of this research, the author contacted the Rokeby Museum in Ferrisburgh, Vermont to coordinate regarding any records held by the museum in relation to the Underground Railroad and any associations with the Highgate Manor. While Museum curators were not aware of any records that would provide information, the lack of records does not preclude further documentation, as records were and are scant relating to the Underground Railroad because of the necessary nature of secrecy and the corresponding lack of written accounts related to use over time within the context of the Underground Railroad. For more information regarding this research context, see National Underground Railroad Freedom Center, [Tips for Researching the Underground Railroad – National Underground Railroad Freedom Center](#).

⁴ Abby Maria Hemenway. *The Vermont Historical Gazetteer: Volume II*. (Burlington, VT: 1871, 255).

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hotels. Large spacious verandas. The dining room is large and beautifully decorated, where the quantity and the quality of the cuisine is unexcelled...

The Manor Tourist Brochure, c. 1940

Embedded within the rural Northern Vermont Village of Highgate Falls, the expansive Second Empire Highgate Manor stands as a striking departure from the generally modest and vernacular framing village context. Initially developed c. 1819 in the earliest decades of Highgate's development, and expanded to its current heightened form and design c. 1870, the expansive and idiosyncratic Highgate Manor is reflective of a wide breadth of community development in Highgate and Franklin County, with the building's form and evolving program and design reflective of Highgate's evolving economy and cultural context and the maturing relationship between architecture, culture, and aspiration in Vermont.

Development of Highgate Falls: A Picturesque Pine Plain Upon the Best Falls in the State

Located in the northwestern corner of Vermont, with the Missisquoi River flowing through the heart of it, the land that is now called Highgate was central to Native lifeways from the Paleoindian period through to and after European contact. Indeed, over 20 Native archaeological sites have been located along or near the Missisquoi River in Highgate. The Town of Highgate was chartered in 1763, with only scattered Euro-American settlement in the township through 1800. By 1797, Rhode-Island born settler Andrew Potter had constructed a grist mill at the rocky falls of the Missisquoi River in the center of town, forming the economic and material nucleus of what would become Highgate Falls. By the first decades of the nineteenth century, the lands around the then-named "Potters Falls" were developed with additional mills, a dam, and a compact scattering of village development, with the population of Highgate exploding from 437 in 1800 to nearly 1400 by 1810, with this number nearly doubling by 1830. While spread across the Highgate Township, much of this development centered upon the productive watercourse of Highgate Falls (Potter's Falls) with a village assemblage developed on the plain just south of the falls (current Village of Highgate Falls) and development radiating upslope to the north in the present-day Village of Highgate Center.⁵

By the early 1810s, ownership of the water privileges at Potter's Falls had shifted to Heman Allen, brother of the renowned revolutionary and Vermont farmer Ethan Allen, who constructed a series of mills at Highgate Falls, as well as the village's first bridge, a wood trestle bridge located near the foot of the falls. Against this burgeoning infrastructural and economic expansion, brothers Stephen Sheldon (S.S.) Keyes and Samuel Willard (S.W.) Keyes acquired much of the milling complex and water privileges at the site in 1819, ushering in an extended period of development in Highgate Falls at what would become known during the period as "Keyes Falls," as detailed by A.M. Hemenway:

⁵ Abby Maria Hemenway. *The Vermont Historical Gazetteer: Volume II*, 255; Vermont Historical Society, Vermont History Explorer: *Franklin County Historical Population Statistics*, accessed online at franklincountycensus.pdf, April 8, 2026.

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In 1819, Heman Allen sold out the water privilege to S.W. and S.S. Keyes... When in 1819 they established themselves at Highgate Village, no one dreamed there would ever be an end to pine timber; but they were indefatigable in the lumber business, and in less than 20 years, swept almost the entire forests of pine from the face of the town. Our pine is gone and our hemlock fast disappearing... The Keyes firm, for some years, rafted pine in the shape of mast, spars, and deal plank to Quebec, which was shipped for England; hence King George's subjects had the privilege of using some of the pine reserved by his much-beloved Gov. B. Wentworth—by paying for it.⁶

Fueled by this Missisquoi River-based natural resource processing, the Keyes family initiated notable development on the lightly developed plain south of the falls, constructing several dwellings and commercial buildings between 1819 and 1830, including the foundational core of the subject Highgate Manor:

S.S. Keyes built a substantial brick residence in 1819 or '20 on the west side of the road, some 20 rods south of the brick store now owned and occupied by Henry Baxter as a drug store, probably built the same time as the house. In a few years S.W. Keyes built a good brick house upon the east side of the green opposite. The buildings were ornamented with shade trees, had capacious yards, good out-buildings, and were a handsome addition to the little village.⁷

Period mapping from the mid-nineteenth century depicts Highgate Falls as a diversified compact village, with a scattering of residences—including that of S.S. Keyes—a commodious Town Common, Episcopal Church, Village School, and scattering of commercial functions including a store, hotel, blacksmith shop, and Customs and Post Office. On the banks of the Missisquoi River at Highgate Falls, immediately north of the Village, the Keyes Company grist and saw mills stood surrounded by a machine shop and foundry, with the economic engine for the community fueled by the ready availability of mechanical hydro-power and associated burgeoning industrial processing capabilities (see **Figure 1**). An 1850 description of Highgate Falls in *The St. Albans Daily Messenger* provides an evocative portrait of the tenor of Highgate Falls industrial heft, with the village a key processing arena for Franklin County:

What's at Highgate Falls? *Firstly then, a water power unsurpassed by any other in Vermont. The whole of Missisquoi River can easily be employed in turning machinery, and at great advantage on account of the great fall which the water here makes over the rocks. Two saw mills, owned by S.W. and S.S. Keyes, running a gang of thirty-four saws each, "go it" night and day. These mills, of course, saw out a large amount of pine, spruce, & hemlock boards, scantling, &c. The grist mill of Messrs. Keyes does the grist-grinding for nearly one-fourth of the County. A large iron foundry, carried on by Messrs. Mallory & Kellogg, is doing a brisk business. Mr. Wm. Robinson has recently set in operation an*

⁶ Abby Maria Hemenway. *The Vermont Historical Gazetteer: Volume II*, 258-259.

⁷ *Ibid*, 260.

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establishment for the manufacture of all kinds of Farm Forks...Mr. J. Tift is doing a bristling business in the manufacture of all kinds of brushes, which are well made and at a fair price. Messrs. Mason & Jennison are Wagon-Makers, none of your bungling pod-auger fellows, but who know how to make with skill and taste, a wagon that is a wagon, and they will do it. Ergo, Highgate Falls, having besides the usual appendages of other villages, is bound to go ahead...⁸

Dr. Henry Baxter and an Evolving Highgate Falls: A Cure for What Ails You

Against this primarily natural resource-based industrial development, by 1842 Norwich, Vermont-born Dr. Henry Baxter had settled in Highgate Falls, living on present-day Brosseau Road with wife Adelia (Woodruff) Baxter (see **Figure 1**). Born in 1821 to first-generation Vermonters Ira and Arsena (Sprague) Baxter, the life and career of Henry Baxter was in many senses emblematic of the state's first waves of economic diversification in the early nineteenth century, as the primary early settlement drivers of agriculture, localized subsistence processing, and timber extraction ceded to a more complex and mature social and economic context. By the early 1850s, Baxter had established himself as a key professional fixture in the burgeoning rural village of Highgate Falls, first renting and subsequently purchasing the large "brick store" in the center of the village from S.S. Keyes, located directly north of the documented Highgate Manor. Through the second half of the nineteenth century, "Dr. Baxter's Store," would become the center of a growing Baxter business empire, selling furniture, groceries, undertaking and embalming services, caskets, and—most importantly—patent and proprietary medicines to an increasingly consumer-oriented regional public.⁹

By the late 1850s, Baxter was manufacturing and marketing the first of several proprietary medicines he would develop through the period, "Dr. N.G. White's Pulmonary Elixir," advertised widely across Vermont and New York as, "Warranted to relieve the croup in 30 minutes, a common cold immediately, asthma at once, to cure all coughs before ulceration, cure soar throats and throat distemper, cure hoarseness of singers and speakers, always cause the patient to raise freely, and always produce rest at night." Newspapers across the region carried broad testimonials of the product through the period, as exemplified by Jason H. Knappen, of Plattsburgh, New York:

Dr. Baxter, Dear Sir: This is to certify that I have used Dr. White's elixir prepared by you in my family in very obstinate cases of coughs and colds which it cured immediately. I can recommend it to the public as the very best medicine I have ever used for the disease...¹⁰

⁸ Henry Francis Walling. *A Map of the Counties of Franklin and Grand Isle, Vermont* (Boston: Baker, Tilden & Co., 1857); "What's at Highgate Falls?" *The St. Albans Weekly Messenger*, August 1, 1850.

⁹ Vermont Historical Society, Baxter Family of Swanton & Highgate Falls, Vermont, Papers, 1821-1983, Document 682: 05; Highgate Historical Society, Baxter Family Collections, "H.W. Baxter & Co., Highgate, Vermont (ephemera and advertisements); Town of Highgate Land Records, Warranty Deed, Stephen Keyes to Henry Baxter, "Brick Store," February 10, 1866; "Highgate," *Swanton Courier*, February 9, 1894.

¹⁰ "Dr. N.G. White's Pulmonary Elixir," *The Plattsburgh Republican*, August 18, 1860.

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The commercial rise of Baxter's "N.G. White's Pulmonary Elixir," was representative of a broad strand of pharmacological development in the mid-nineteenth century, as increasing access to popular media, medical and scientific specialization, and commercial marketing coalesced into a booming patent and proprietary medicine industry. As detailed by scholars of the period, the industry in many ways supplanted—and benefitted from—a paucity of professionalization across the nation's established medical fields, with general access to sound medical practice limited in breadth and reach to masses of Americans:

To the busy American, with little time and small means, these ready-made, and not too highly priced remedies seemed to solve at once all of the problems of medical and pharmaceutical help, of convenience and even of finance arising in case of sickness while the daring advertising of that time appealed to his optimistic mind. During the nineteenth century medicine made considerable progress but still remained largely a mixture of science, quackery, and tradition. In spite of the importance of achievements in sanitary reform, the public was not inspired with any great confidence in medical science and attributed the reforms more to engineering improvements than to the practice of medicine. In the early decades of the nineteenth century learned physicians relied on the favorite remedies and cures that had been used in the past. Fear of "evening damp" and "twilight chill" prevented enjoyment of the night air; newly plowed lands were thought to cause fevers; and the common custom of bleeding patients usually sapped their remaining strength. Calomel and Peruvian Bark (quinine) were favorite and often used remedies. The Americans, thus, in their desire for relief and in their ignorance, were highly susceptible to all forms of medical propaganda...advertising left the field open to quacks, faddists, and patent-medicine manufacturers to exploit the public with all sorts of "fake-cures" and nostrums. It was very natural for the ailing pioneer, not obtaining help from home remedies or local physicians, to turn to the nostrums and place his trust in the certain promises of the marvelous elixirs, extracts and balms, and bottle and pills.¹¹

In an intriguing historical aside, too, Dr. Baxter's development of the Pulmonary Elixir in particular may have related to his lived experience. The elixir was heavily marketed to parents as a cure-all for childhood respiratory ailments, with period advertisements imploring "Fathers and Mothers with children that are subject to Croup and all parents that value the lives of their children to procure at once a bottle of this elixir which has never yet failed of curing this terrific and frightful disorder." The Baxter family had first-hand experience with the "frightful," plight of severe childhood illness, with the death of two of their children in February and March of 1854 from Scarlet Fever only weeks apart, Charles Edward Baxter (1848-1854) and George Henry Baxter (1846-1854). The Pulmonary Elixir appears to have been developed in the years

¹¹ David L. Dykstra. The Medical Profession and Patent and Proprietary Medicines During the Nineteenth Century. *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 29, no. 5 (1955): 401–19.

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directly following this family loss, with its promises to cure the helpless constraints of parents in the face of childhood mortality.¹²

By the early 1870s, Baxter had developed another “block-buster” medicine, which would be sold across the New-England region through the close of the nineteenth century. The eponymously-named “Baxter’s Mandrake Bitters,” were vaunted as a strengthening cure-all, addressing, “Jaundice Dyspepsia, Liver Complaint, and all diseases arising from biliousness.” As circulated in wide-reaching advertisements, the bitters acted as “Nature’s Own Restorer,” for a host of complaints:

*These bitters are purely vegetable, the products of the hills and valleys, they are nature’s own restorer, acting upon the stomach, liver, bowels, by removing all morbid secretions, purifying the blood and invigorating the digestive organs, they not only cure diseases that already exist, but also fortify the system against attacks of disease.*¹³

By the mid-1870s, Baxter’s Mandrake bitters were sold widely around Vermont and surrounding states, with a brisk business of both direct sales and bulk pharmacy shipments from his Highgate Drug Store. Supplementing this mainstay, Baxter marketed and sold an array of complementary treatments, including “Baxter’s Worm Lozenges, Pain Extractor and Fly Paper,” with much of his business developed in partnership with the Burlington-based Johnson & Lord Manufacturers of Proprietary Medicines.¹⁴

With both an expansive commercial profile, and increasingly significant wealth derived from his proprietary medicines, by the 1860s Baxter had emerged as one of Highgate’s most prominent residents, as opined by the Franklin County *Democrat* in 1859:

*Dr. N.G. White’s Pulmonary Elixir has been before the public only four or five years and has already become one of the standard remedies for lung disease...It is manufactured by Dr. Henry Baxter of Highgate, Vermont. We have long known the Doctor as a thorough-going and scientific physician, and has had an extensive practice in this county for the last fifteen years. He is not only a gentleman and a scholar, but a “real live Democrat,” as such he has represented his town in the State Legislature, and was one of the Senatorial candidates last year. We understand that his Elixir is having an immense sale, and that he has already realized quite a fortune from it...*¹⁵

Through the period, Baxter’s “proprietary medicine fortune” fueled a substantive episode of real estate acquisition in Highgate Falls and the surrounding region, with Baxter ultimately acquiring much of the former land and property of the Keyes family, including the Keyes’ mills and water

¹² “Died,” *The St. Albans Weekly Messenger*, March 9, 1854.

¹³ Henry, Johnson & Lord Book Mark (front & back). Dr. Henry Baxter’s Mandrake Bitters noted on reverse – Joe Gourd Collection, accessed April 15, 2026 at [Dr. Henry Baxter’s Mandrake Bitters – Vermont | P E A C H R I D G E](#)

¹⁴ “Sale of Baxter’s Mandrake Bitters,” *The Saint Albans Weekly Messenger*, February 23, 1872.

¹⁵ “Dr. Henry Baxter,” *The Democrat*, October 25, 1859.

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privileges, large brick store, and—most importantly for this documentation—the “substantial brick residence of S.S. Keyes,” site of the present-day Highgate Manor. Baxter acquired the residence in 1869, following the death of Stephen Keyes in 1866 and wife Deborah (Sherman) Keyes in 1868. Of note, Baxter purchased the substantive property from the Keyes’ minor daughter—Laura Barlow Keyes—while simultaneously serving as her Probate Guardian.¹⁶

A Palace We Read of on the Rhine: The Rise of the Dr. Henry Baxter Homestead

With his 1869 purchase of the S.S. Keyes residence and much of the surrounding industrial base of the Village of Highgate Falls, Henry Baxter was in many senses supplanting the village’s foundational settlement era with his own epoch of commercial success and corresponding wealth. The ostentatious Second Empire form of the Highgate Manor that rose in the early 1870s was in a very real sense the ultimate material embodiment of this transition, with its stylized and “*au courant*,” form, placed emphatically in front of S.S. Keyes c. 1820 residence, a remarkable architectural, social, and economic statement within the framing rural village of Highgate Falls. While review of period press and Baxter Family Archival Records revealed little information pertaining to the construction period, by 1872 a small note in *The Saint Albans Transcript* documents both the completion and underlying pretensions of the Baxter Residence, noting that, “Dr. Baxter has built a magnificent residence at a cost of \$30,000, its imposin’ appearance reminds one of the palaces we read of on the Rhine.” With its “imposin’ appearance,” the stylized form in many senses eclipsed the stolid mass of the early nineteenth century Keyes homestead, subsuming the early residence in its ostentatious Second Empire design.¹⁷

While the late nineteenth century development and evolution of the Highgate Manor was a reflection of the particular arc of one northern Vermont family, the stylistic and cultural underpinnings of the residence arose from a complex array of factors that were shaping both design aspirations and social frameworks during the period. At a base level, this broadly defined “Victorian Era” was a period of immense societal change. As summarized by Daniel Walker Howe in his essay, *American Victorianism as a Culture*, “The period marked a crucial—probably the crucial—transformation of the United States; it was a time of industrialization, knowledge explosion, immigration and vast population growth, urbanization, geographical expansion, changing race relationships, and the greatest armed conflict on American soil.” The effects of this churning and comprehensive societal change shaped community development across the United States, and in turn the nation’s architectural and built environment form. Within this context of riotous change, architecture took on an expansive and ponderous form, with extensive adaptation of a range of traditional and idealized forms that was both deeply rooted in a search for cultural continuity and predicated by an unprecedented advancement in

¹⁶ Town of Highgate Land Records, Warranty Deed, Stephen Keyes to Henry Baxter, “Brick Store,” February 10, 1866; Town of Highgate Land Records, Laura B. Keyes to Henry Baxter, Volume 20, Page 240-242. This is an intriguing historical complexity that begs a host of ethical and motivational questions—which remain unanswered by the land and probate records available to the researcher’s eye.

¹⁷ “Highgate,” *The Saint Albans Transcript*, March 23, 1872.

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industrial, commercial, and economic capacity. Development of the Highgate Manor is a direct reflection of this complex amalgam of forces.¹⁸

Described by the *Saint Albans Transcript* as a “Palace,” the Highgate Manor was expressive of a distinct strand of material wealth and cultural fluency arising in late nineteenth century Vermont. Bolstered by substantial wealth derived from his proprietary medicine empire and associated investments, Baxter developed the residence as an architectural statement of ideals, drawing from an increasingly available palette of designs and material forms. This linkage between architecture and overarching character statements relating to civic, social, and economic identity was a hallmark of the Victorian period, with the various forms adopted during the era expressive of a host of underlying social statements. As summarized by John Maas in his preface to *Victorian Architecture: Two Pattern Books* by A.J. Bicknell & W.T. Comstock:

For most of the nineteenth century, architectural styles were not a mere matter of aesthetics or taste. All the different styles of the Victorian era—Greek Revival, Roman Revival, Gothic Revival—have a common denominator...the principle of borrowing forms from past styles because of their association with certain given ideas. Roman building types were revived primarily because of their association with republicanism and civic virtue, Greek for association with liberty, Egyptian for associations with permanence and wisdom. Moorish for exoticism...A French-style house proclaimed, ‘this is a stylish and fashionable home,’... and so on—the choice in any given case being determined by what sort of symbolic imagery social circumstances seem to call for. Thus, each style carried a distinct message.¹⁹

Within this symbolic design context, the emphatic Second Empire form of the Baxter residence spoke a complex social language that utilized the built form to convey particular facets of social identity and community standing: namely wealth, power, and an unabashed vision of heightened taste and culture. The distinctive mansard form, with its lofty belvedere, arched windows dripping with ribboning scrolls, and prominent bellcast wall dormer was representative of the apogee of domestic taste in the period, with the Second Empire form described by the trade journal *The Architect* during the period succinctly—“It must not be forgotten that in all things that concern artistic felicity, it is idle to dispute the French.” As detailed by Architectural Historian Dell Upton, the precepts of this “Social Structure of Taste,” were broadly woven within the architectural form—particularly of the wealthy:

In houses and landscaped grounds, many believed the rich had the opportunity to show the way to their neighbors. It was the obligation of the lover of beauty to

¹⁸ Howe, Daniel Walker. “American Victorianism as a Culture,” *American Quarterly*, Volume 27, No. 5, December 1975.

¹⁹ A.J. Bicknell & W. T. Comstock, *Victorian Architecture: Two Pattern Books* by A.J. Bicknell & W. T. Comstock (with Introduction by John Maass) (Watkins Glen, NY: The American Life Foundation & Study Institute, 1978).

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*disseminate correct architectural information, and to aid every endeavor to render true principles of ornamentation in building popular.*²⁰

This broad cultural dissemination of architectural ideals was afforded by a key advancement of the Victorian era: the rise of the pattern book. Initiated in the United States by the likes of Asher Benjamin in the 1810s and 1820s, and expanded in the 1840s by the broadly influential Andrew Jackson Downing, who further developed a defining philosophy on the civilizing effects of architecture in America through his generalized depictions of romantic revival facades, the pattern book did much to disseminate an idealized set of architectural norms to the American populace, wedding disparate geographies and contexts in a unified design language. By the 1860s and 1870s, a cacophony of pattern books lined the country's shelves, presenting depictions of stylistic façade types as well as granular details including brackets, newel posts, and wainscoting readily adapted by architects, builders, and homeowners. Design features of the Highgate Manor are undoubtedly a reflection of this architectural corpus, with major stylized elements of both the exterior and interior highly reflective of readily available pattern concepts. The complex mansard form, heightened bracketed treatment, rhythmic composition of arched windows and ribboning scrolls, rich interior detailing of trim, surrounds, fireplaces, lighting fixtures, and numerous other details were undoubtedly derived from and inspired by one or multiple pattern books, allowing for an individualized interpretation of broad cultural and architectural aspirations.

By 1871, Frederick W. Beers' *Atlas of Franklin and Grand Isle Counties, Vermont* depicts the complex form of the Highgate Manor in place on the site, with the Baxter "Drug Store" standing directly north. Periodicals from the 1870s provide a modest vantage into the lived experience of the Baxter family, with the *Argus & Patriot* documenting a "refined" gathering held at the "spacious residence in Highgate Falls of the popular and influential Democratic Representative from Highgate Dr. Henry Baxter," and the Highgate Ladies Benevolent Society hosting an "Elegant Lawn Party with the Swanton Cornet Band," at the "grand residence of Dr. H. Baxter." A smattering of family photographs from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries provide an evocative lens into the life of the Baxter family, with an unidentified wedding party standing on the stylized side porch (since-infilled); Henry Baxter's daughter—Marion Baxter—standing in front of the towering façade with grandson George Butler; and a rich array of views of the residence standing along the then-dirt main thoroughfare, shrouded in mature vegetation (see Figures 7-10).

At the time of Henry Baxter's death in 1897, following wife Adelia's in 1887, the "Baxter Homestead" was the centerpiece of an expansive land assemblage, with Baxter holdings across Franklin County, as detailed in probate records documenting his estate:

Whereas it appears by the records and files of said Court, that the Henry Baxter estate, being a large amount of real and personal estate, includes the following real property: the farm in the Town of Sheldon known as the Cassataw Farm,

²⁰ Dell Upton. "Pattern Books and Professionalism: Aspects of the Transformation of Domestic Architecture in America, 1800-1860." *Winterthur Portfolio* 19, no. 2/3 (1984); "On the Renewal of the Study of Greek Architecture," *The Architect*, July 15, 1876.

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*containing sixty-five acres, more or less; also the farm in the Town of Sheldon, known as the L.L. Laughlin Farm, containing 175 acres, more or less; also the following real estate: the Henry Baxter Homestead in Highgate Falls, store, two tenement houses and barn, and lot on South Street; hay scales, and mill lot; Highgate Springs Farm, so-called, containing 105 acres of land, more or less; Land Hill lot, so-called, Maxham Place, so-called; also an undivided half-interest in land up and down the river and back of the foundry...*²¹

Through the following decades, Baxter's expansive holdings were apportioned to heirs and sold. While his homestead at Highgate Falls remained under Baxter family ownership through the first decades of the twentieth century, on July 5, 1921, his grandchildren—Marion C. Baxter, Harry Baxter, and Harriet M. Ide—sold the property to John (Philip) Schmitt of Yonkers New York:

*The real property being the Dr. Henry Baxter Homestead, consisting of six acres of land more or less with large brick mansion and several outbuildings thereon... Together with certain articles of household effects being all the household furniture, except those particularly mentioned in a schedule being reserved by Mrs. Marion C. Baxter.*²²

The sale of the Baxter residence marked the end of the family's defining period of development in Highgate Falls, a period that had seen the village transition from its earliest settlement stages driven by the industrial processing of the Keyes family to an increasingly modern and interconnected village. Of note, by the mid-1890s, prior to Henry Baxter's death, the family had also sold their industrial holdings along the Missisquoi River in the Village, selling the hydro-powered grist and sawmill sites to the Village of Swanton—forming the foundation for what would become the Swanton Hydroelectric Electrical Generating Plant, which remains in operation providing regional supplies of power to the present.²³

Beautiful Highgate: The Manor Mayfair is Born

With the 1921 sale of the Baxter Homestead to Philip Schmitt, the property transitioned from private residential functions to a public-facing identity, anchored by the promotion of Highgate Falls—and the Town of Highgate at large—as a restorative rural retreat in the Northwestern corner of Vermont. In actuality, the roots of this transition wound through the nineteenth century development of the Highgate Manor property, with both S.S. Keyes and Henry Baxter acting as key promoters of Highgate as a naturalistic retreat and enclave—in large driven by the town's noted springs. By the 1840s, S.S. Keyes and brother S.W. Keyes had developed the "Franklin House" on the shores of Lake Champlain, in present-day Highgate Springs, a "large and commodious hotel," with a "steadily increasing business," in travelers seeking the curative properties of the village's springs. The Franklin House, and other hydropathic resorts developed during the period—notably Clarendon Springs, Sheldon Springs, Brattleboro Springs, and other

²¹ Highgate Town Land Records, Volume 33, Page 400.

²² Highgate Land Records, Volume 38, Page 529-530; "Highgate Center," *Richford Journal and Gazette*, May 27, 1921.

²³ "The Special Village Meeting," *Swanton Courier*, February 9, 1894.

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smaller ventures, represented the state's first forays into tourism-related development, uniting pseudo-scientific strands of medical and scientific theories around water's curative properties with hospitality and leisure:

Vermont's earliest resorts were literally watering holes. According to the first owner of the Clarendon Mineral Springs, George Round, a dream led him to these springs in 1776. In 1798 he replaced his log-home hostelry with a frame hotel capable of accommodating 100 visitors. Clarendon flourished. The early nineteenth century visitor couldn't seem to get enough of its health-giving water (20 glasses per day was the recommended dose)...A number of other health resorts shared Clarendon's success. If anything, the Sheldon and Highgate Mineral Springs were even more popular. The waters of Sheldon, claimed The "American Botanist and Family Physician" (1824) would "promote digestion and prove diuretic . . . cure the itch and other cutaneous eruptions" as well as restore hair, and relieve problems of the blood and the liver.²⁴

By the 1860s, as Henry Baxter was amassing his fortune with development of Dr. N.G. White's Pulmonary Elixir, he was also promoting the curative properties of Champlain Springs, located in the Village of Highgate Falls north of present-day Brosseau Road. As noted in period press, the springs were "steadily increasing in favor," through the period, in large driven by widely circulated scientific testimonials from Dr. Baxter that found the waters to cure a gamut of maladies, from kidney afflictions and consumption, to palsied hands and nervousness. Within this broader context of medically-driven tourism, Baxter and others laid the foundations for the Town of Highgate as a resort enclave, a place of respite built upon the curing waters of the town's springs, as detailed in an 1860s pamphlet detailing Champlain Springs:

Champlain Springs is situated ½ mile east of the Village of Highgate Falls, from which Lake Champlain is visible, and near the south bank of the Missisquoi River. The distance from Saint Albans is eight miles, over an excellent road in summer, and amid delightful scenery. The village of Swanton is four miles distant, and is the nearest point upon the railroad. The Village of Highgate Falls is one of the most charming for summer resort...It has some of the pleasantest walks and drives in its immediate vicinity, and also some of the finest scenery in Vermont...²⁵

While the allure of Champlain Springs and other hydropathic resorts across the state had waned as a primary tourism driver by the 1920s, the earliest advertisements for "The Manor," incorporated these established strands of development, with Phillip Schmitt touting the resort's proximity to the springs, as relayed in the *Montreal Star* in 1923:

²⁴ Louise B. Roomet. "Vermont as a Resort Area in the Nineteenth Century." *Vermont History*, Winter 1976, Volume 44, No. 1; Paul Carnahan. "Vermont's Hydropathic Resorts." *Vermont History*, May/June 2016; "Highgate Springs Hotel to Let," *Burlington Weekly Free Press*, May 21, 1847.

²⁵ "Champlain Spring, Highgate Falls, Vermont," Pamphlet on file with the Highgate Historical Society.

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*VERMONT: Beautiful Highgate Falls, 60 miles from Montreal, cities, amusements nearby, most healthful climate, no humidity, unexcelled scenery surroundings, good fishing, games, tennis, beautiful mansion, electricity improvements, best wholesome cooking. Champlain Spring Water served free. Rates \$15.00 up, special rates long season, Schmitt, Proprietor, 63 Park Row, New York.*²⁶

Through the 1920s, the Manor was advertised across the northeast's urban centers—New York, Boston, Montreal, as a family-focused rural retreat for the well-heeled. By 1928, *The Burlington Free Press* reported improvements and expansions at The Manor, with “Phillip Schmitt making extensive repairs on the Manor, enlarging the dining room, and putting in additional rooms in the “Annex.” In addition to guest-related improvements of the Manor, the *Free Press* also noted that Schmitt would be “renting the Dr. Sweatt Place of C.W. Steele and using that in connection with the Manor for the accommodation of his summer guests.” The “C.W. Steele House,” standing across the Green from The Manor, had originally been the residence of S.W. Keyes, built c. 1820 as the Keyes Brothers were defining the commercial and economic development of Highgate Falls. The imposing Federal-style brick residence would become a key element of the Highgate Manor as it developed through the 1930s and 1940s, housing additional guest rooms as well as an expansive addition with dance hall and reception room.²⁷

Period brochures give an evocative verbal and pictorial lens into the Highgate Manor as a resort through the period:

Nowhere has nature created a more beautiful vacation paradise than the Manor—a Colonial brick mansion, with Annex and Cottages, set amid the most gorgeous surroundings created by nature. Located opposite the Park, overlooking Highgate Falls and Missisquoi River, and most beautiful scenery in the east. Within you will find comfortable parlors, rest-rooms, bedrooms, etc.—the kind of modern conveniences you would expect in the more pretentious hotels. Large spacious verandas. The dining room is large and beautifully decorated, where the quantity and quality of cuisine is unexcelled.

The Manor is an ideal place to spend a pleasant, happy vacation, for health, rest, recreation, sports, amusements, etc.—as you may choose... There are beautiful gardens containing the most exquisite blooms. Acres of delicious vegetables and fruit; everbearing berries served daily from June to October. There are nice shaded walks, electrically lighted at night. The climate is clear, cool, healthful; no humidity.

The MANOR is five miles to Quebec Canadian border and 60 miles to Montreal. Five minutes drive to Swanton and 15 minutes to the City of St. Albans. All games—tennis, dancing, swimming, bathing, boating (boats free), fishing, golf nearby; also hiking, climbing, roaming amidst wonderful romantic scenery, all right on and within the Manor Islands and grounds fronting the Missisquoi River.

²⁶ “VERMONT: Beautiful Highgate Falls,” *Montreal Star*, June 19, 1923.

²⁷ “Highgate,” *The Burlington Free Press*, June 30, 1928.

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*Daily trips by the Manor Auto over the border, Montreal, Ausable Chasm, Green and Adirondack Mountains, and many historic places of interest, etc.*²⁸

The Manor was advertised heavily around urban New England, appearing in *The Philadelphia Inquirer* under the banner “Unspoiled Vermont,” the resort section of *The Delaware News-Journal*—which boasted “Dancing nightly at Mayfair’s largest, best dance hall in Vt. And the north, with roller skating, shuffle board, tennis, boats, and all games free,” as well as periodicals across the northeastern seaboard including Camden, New Jersey’s *Courier Post*, *The Jersey Journal*, *Brooklyn Eagle*, *The Boston Globe*, *Springfield Daily Republican*, and *Hartford Courant*.²⁹

With its urban-centric advertising promoting the “unspoiled” beauty of Northern Vermont, The Manor was reflective of a cohort of inns and resorts that expanded or emerged in the period—with the Woodstock Inn, Fairlee’s Lake Morey Resort, and a host of other enclaves presenting Vermont as an idealized pastoral and recreational canvas for both summer and winter sojourns. In many senses, this early twentieth century strand of development built upon the nineteenth century foundations laid by the state’s “curative resorts,” including the Franklin House and Champlain Springs, packaging the state’s natural landscape and village settlement patterns as a restful retreat for city-worn visitors. By the 1910s and 1920s, tourism had emerged as a key area of the state’s development, with lush pictorials including Mortimer Proctor’s 1915, *Vermont: The Unspoiled Land*, Wallace Nutting’s 1922, *Vermont Beautiful*, and an array of state-sponsored circulars and pamphlets presenting an idealized portrait of Vermont as a “charming, friendly pleasure ground of wondrous natural beauty.” With its focus upon introducing the urban corridors of New England to Vermont’s abundant natural and cultural wealth, The Manor sat squarely in the state’s burgeoning tourism realm that did much to define development in the first half of the twentieth century as traditional industries and small-scale agriculture yielded in importance, a “selling of Vermont,” well detailed by historian Andrea Rebek:

*Today Vermont is a mecca, the last “unspoiled land.” Vermont evokes images of white church spires in the midst of rustic villages, tidy farms dotting rolling, verdant countryside, rivers and lakes of pristine beauty. Each season brings with it a different crop of visitors, eager to breathe the fresh air, take in the magnificent fall foliage, ski the slopes of Mansfield, or to hike on the Long Trail. To hear what is said about the state gives the distinct impression that Vermont is unique, a world apart from sister regions in New England. One gathers that Vermont has been ever blessed as the site of idyllic vacations and as one of the prime centers of scenic splendor in the Northeast...*³⁰

²⁸ “The Manor, Highgate, VT. Nature’s Ideal Vacation Spot.” Pamphlet, c. 1929. On file with the Highgate Historical Society.

²⁹ “The Manor: Unspoiled Vermont, *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, June 19, 1940; “The Manor and Mayfair,” *The News Journal*, July 9, 1941; “The Manor and Mayfair,” *Courier-Post*, July 20, 1938; “The Manor,” *Brooklyn Eagle*, July 14, 1935; “The Manor Mayfair,” *The Boston Globe*, June 12, 1949; “Attention Vacation Seeker,” *The Springfield Daily Republican*, July 7, 1932; “The Manor Mayfair,” *Hartford Courant*, May 22, 1949.

³⁰ Andrea Rebek. “The Selling of Vermont: From Agriculture to Tourism, 1860-1910.” *Vermont History*, Winter 1976, Volume 44, No. 1; Mortimer R. Proctor and Roderic M. Olzendam. *Vermont: The Unspoiled Land* (Rutland,

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As recreational and leisure growth surged in the post-World War II period, the Manor remained a central strand of Northwestern Vermont's tourist-based identity. In 1950, then long-term proprietors Phillip and Emma Schmitt "expected their biggest summer ever." In late May, however, as the couple was preparing the Manor for summer guests after the winter season, a burn pile surged in the spring winds, burning the brick residence of S.W. Keyes and its attached annex and dance hall—standing across the Common from the Manor—in a fire that threatened to engulf the Village of Highgate Falls and was ultimately suppressed by multiple town fire departments through the night:

Manor Mayfair, summer hotel resort, was swept this afternoon in a blaze. Only a few brick walls of the century-old landmark were left standing tonight after fire gutted the main hotel structure and leveled the annex, dance pavilion, and garage...The Schmitts only recently came back from winter in Florida and were preparing the resort for the summer season...A strong wind which fanned the flames carried burning embers across the Missisquoi River into Highgate Center, threatening homes and buildings...The Old Manor House and other buildings on the west side of the road were untouched. The Schmitts, who usually accommodate 100 guests, will continue operation on a curtailed schedule.³¹

While the Schmitt's initially vowed to continue operation in the remaining Highgate Manor, by August of 1950, the couple, both in their 70s, had sold the property to Harold A. and Bridgett Cust, also of New York. By early 1951, Cust was circulating lush brochures, enticing would-be guests to "make the Mayfair Manor the spot where your vacation dreams come true amidst the beautiful scenery of Northern Vermont."³²

An Evolving Mayfair Manor

With the 1950 fire destroying the large Dance Hall that had stood across Highgate Common, Cust's first major addition to the Highgate Manor was a single-story Dance Hall, constructed in early 1951 and opened for operations the following summer season. The hall was smaller than its predecessor, of a single-story design that extended north from the main body of the Highgate Manor. Like the earlier hall, the new Dance Hall was simple and lofty in form, with exposed rafters and an open floor-plan framing a reception hall and dance floor. The hall played a prominent role in early 1950s advertising, as detailed in a brochure circulated in 1951:

THE MANOR HOUSE AND NEW DANCE HALL: We have started construction of our Recreation Hall. Nightly dances will be held until 12. Popular local bands

VT: The Tuttle Company, 1915); Wallace Nutting. *Vermont Beautiful* (Framingham and Boston, MA: Old America Company Publishers, 1922).

³¹ "Manor Mayfair, Summer Hotel in Highgate, Burns: Loss \$90,000," clipping (newspaper unknown) on file with the Highgate Historical Society; "Gone with the Wind...Flame," May 25, 1950, clipping (newspaper unknown) on file with the Highgate Historical Society; "Highgate Falls Landmark Swept by \$90,000 Blaze," *Burlington Daily News*, May 23, 1950.

³² Town of Highgate Land Records, Book 49, Page 172; "The Manor Mayfair, Highgate Falls, Vermont, 1951" Pamphlet on file with the Highgate Historical Society.

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*and callers. Round and square dances. For a convivial evening, visit the Manor's new Tavern and Cocktail Lounge. Popular prices. Guests admitted free to dance hall.*³³

By May 1951, local periodicals were advertising regular dances at the Mayfair Manor, as detailed in *The St. Albans Daily Messenger* on May 25 which announced "SKILLY WILLIAMS: his drums and his orchestra, with lower prices in our "teen-age corner," on May 26.³⁴

While the early 1950s was characterized by operational continuity at the Highgate Manor, by 1956 owner Harold Cust had died, leaving resort management in limbo. By the late 1950s, the property was shuttered and under foreclosure, presenting a troubling portrait of decline for residents of Highgate Falls, as detailed in *The St. Albans Daily Messenger* in 1958:

They Could Dance Once More at Manor Mayfair, Stoutly Assert Highgate Falls People: residents of this settlement are convinced that the Manor Mayfair, the Old Baxter House, or whatever one chooses to call it, could again be a center of social activity which would draw people from many miles around. The house opposite the green on the main road to Highgate Center, still retains its grand style except for the For Sale sign on the front porch. And time and the weather are taking their toll of chipped paint and discolored wood.³⁵

In 1959, Paul and Mary Marquis purchased the shuttered Highgate Manor from Peoples Trust Company, returning the Manor to public operation, albeit in a more locally-focused form. As detailed in *The Saint Albans Daily Messenger*, "The old manor was a summer resort accommodating over 100 persons. Paul Marquis, the new owner, said recently he spent a year restoring the Manor, he plans to keep the place open all year." By 1962, the Manor was once again advertised locally, for "luncheon, dinner, cocktails, and dancing every Saturday night until 12."³⁶

In many senses, the transition of the Highgate Manor from a summer resort enclave targeted toward those from "away" to a more locally-focused entertainment and hospitality establishment reflected changing societal mores and mandates in the period. While the resort had risen in the interstitial period between the railroad and auto era, by the 1960s America was defined by evolving post-World War II realities, with interstate highways, increased affluence, and broadened cultural horizons, altering the scope and tenor of tourism and travel. Where once families may have summered for longer periods on the comfortable grounds of the Highgate Manor, America's post-war families may have at once journeyed to Yellowstone, or the Coast,

³³ "Mayfair Manor, Highgate, VT. Harold Cust, Proprietor." Pamphlet, c. 1951. On file with the Highgate Historical Society.

³⁴ "Dance at Mayfair Manor," *St. Albans Daily Messenger*, May 25, 1951.

³⁵ "They Could Dance Once More," *The St. Albans Daily Messenger*, January 17, 1958; "Highgate Highlights," *Swanton Courier*, November 8, 1956.

³⁶ "The exciting Manor Mayfair, *The Saint Albans Daily Messenger*, October 30, 1962; "Highgate Resort Reopens," *The Saint Albans Daily Messenger*, June 07, 1960.

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or skipped summer's in Vermont altogether in favor of Vermont's beckoning winter Alpine ski areas that rose steadily through the 1950s and 1960s.

By the late 1960s, this cultural attrition was increasingly evident, with the prized dance hall leased to the Highgate School District for use as overflow student space, with the lease consisting of "the unlimited use of the dance hall, also two rooms in the main building, heretofore called the television room and the cocktail lounge." As reminisced by Dennis Nolan, who attended Highgate High School in the 1960s, the students would walk from the school to the Manor for lunch and other gatherings, as their surging post-war numbers were outgrowing the early twentieth century school buildings.³⁷

Through the 1970s and 1980s, the Highgate Manor was stewarded by a succession of owners, with periods of closure ceding to isolated eras of revival. By the 1980s, then-owner William F. Hill of Hardwick, Vermont had converted the residence into "five large apartments," with the Dance Hall used as a "Discotheque and Lounge," and the "Cellar—called the Cave, a barroom." In the early 1990s, then-owners Mike Perry and Jeff Gonyaw managed the Manor as a reception hall for weddings and private parties, rehabilitating many of the historic features of the property obscured over decades of successional use. Of the effort, Gonyaw reflected, "A lot of people have worked on it, but no one has ever really brought it back to the way it was," with Perry continuing, "We both really enjoy taking something that has potential but has been neglected and making it good again."³⁸

Current owners Sharone Perlman and Jim Schmidt, who purchased the property in 2023 following another period of vacancy, represent one more link in this powerful chain, with the couple operating the Highgate Manor as a wedding venue, event space, and—fundamentally—as a community resource for Highgate and its environs. "People in the area have a connection to the Manor in one way or another, either their parents worked here, lived here, got married here or partied here..." mused Perlman to *The St. Albans Messenger*, I really want people to be able to enjoy the Manor again, I was really worried that if we didn't do this, another generation would go by without it."³⁹

As spring returns to Highgate Falls in 2026, the lilacs bloom in front of the Highgate Manor, its soaring brick form painted yellow and intricate molding a lofty white. On Wednesday nights, the doors of the Dance Hall are open, with line dancers stomping their boots on the hardwood floor as a Caller guides the whirl. Weddings are planned for the summer and fall seasons, with the parlors in quiet repose and prepared for events. The Manor, reflective of the "pine-studded plain" of the Keyes era, the grandiose possibilities of the Baxter ascendancy, and the beckoning reach of pastoral Vermont in a modernizing era—continuing onward.

³⁷ Town of Highgate Land Records. Book 54, Page 453; Personal Correspondence with Dennis Nolan, March 9, 2026.

³⁸ "Lords of the Manor," *The St. Albans Messenger*, April 2, 1994; "1818 Manor," *The Burlington Free Press*, September 17, 1981.

³⁹ "Outlived Us All: Historic Highgate Manor Reopens to Community," *The St. Albans Messenger*, July 11, 2024.

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9. Major Bibliographical References

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The Joe Gourd Collection, accessed at [Dr. Henry Baxter's Mandrake Bitters – Vermont | P E A C H R I D G E](#).

Archives of the Vermont Historical Society

Personal Correspondence, Dennis Nolan, March 2026

Town of Highgate Land Records

Vermont Historical Society: Vermont History Explorer, Vermont Population Statistics

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Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- ☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
☐ previously listed in the National Register
☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register
☐ designated a National Historic Landmark
☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____
☐ recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- ☒ State Historic Preservation Office
☐ Other State agency
☐ Federal agency
☐ Local government
☐ University
☐ Other
Name of repository:

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): The Highgate Manor was documented as eligible for listing in the Vermont State Register (0609-31) in 1982 (listed in the VSR 5/26/1994). It is important to note that the VSR listing incorrectly identified the construction date as 1870, rather than the foundational 1819 period.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 1.62 acres

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: _____
(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

1. Latitude: 44.932351

Longitude: -73.049152

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Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The historic property boundary includes the Highgate Manor building as well as its contextual surrounds consisting of the framing open lawn and vegetative landscaping. The property is a portion of SPAN 291-092-11110.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The selected boundary includes the historic building and its immediate contextual surrounds that reflects the building and domestic and tourist use of the site through development and the period of significance.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Polly Seddon Allen
organization: Independent Consulting Senior Architectural Historian
street & number: P.O. Box 215 / 69 Common Loop
city or town: Craftsbury Common state: Vermont zip code: 05827
e-mail: polly.s.allen@gmail.com
telephone: 916.201.1855
date: July 29, 2026

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A USGS map or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

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Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Photo Log

Name of Property: Highgate Manor

City or Vicinity: Town of Highgate, Village of Highgate Falls

County: Franklin State: Vermont

Photographer: Polly Seddon Allen

Date Photographed: February 17, 2026 and May 20, 2026

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

- 1 of 30: Overview of Highgate Manor from Highgate Road, facing northwest.
- 2 of 30: Overview of Highgate Manor Second Empire form, facing southwest.
- 3 of 30: Overview of Highgate Manor façade from Highgate Road, facing west.
- 4 of 30: Highgate Manor complex mansard form and bracketing, framed in May lilacs, facing southwest.
- 5 of 30: Modified rear portions of Highgate Manor. Original c. 1819 Federal main body modified with dance hall functions at rear, Second Empire form running to the roadway, facing northeast.
- 6 of 30: Road-fronting Second Empire form with belvedere, adjoined with rear c. 1819 residence and 1951 dance hall, facing southeast.
- 7 of 30: Overview of Highgate Manor facade from Highgate Road in winter, facing west.
- 8 of 30: Overview of Highgate Manor from Highgate Road in winter, facing southwest.
- 9 of 30: Overview of Highgate Manor facing north from lawn. Second empire form with hyphen adjoined to c. 1819 original construction.
- 10 of 30: Overview of Highgate Manor in winter, facing northwest. Note extensive bracketing, molding, and arched forms.

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- 11 of 30: Highgate Manor from framing lawn, facing north.
- 12 of 30: Highgate Manor from Highgate Road primary entry, facing west toward main door to hall and parlors.
- 13 of 30: Highgate Manor central entry hall, parlors flanking, dining room ahead.
- 14 of 30: Highgate Manor south parlor, facing toward dining room and marble fireplace.
- 15 of 30: Facing across hall from Highgate Manor south parlor to north parlor.
- 16 of 30: Highgate Manor north parlor, with marble fireplace, facing toward study in secondary wing of mansard main body.
- 17 of 30: Highgate Manor dining room facing toward hall and parlors.
- 18 of 30: Highgate Manor second level hall, with bedrooms flanking.
- 19 of 30: Highgate Manor second level hall seating area, north and south bedrooms flanking.
- 20 of 30: Highgate Manor north bedroom with fireplace.
- 21 of 30: Highgate Manor bedroom in secondary mansard wing, note deep window frames in concave mansard form.
- 22 of 30: Highgate Manor mansard window detail.
- 23 of 30: Highgate Manor stairs to the third level, simple and utilitarian in form.
- 24 of 30: Highgate Manor third level south bedroom comparatively simple in form and detailing reflecting the upper-level secondary status.
- 25 of 30: Highgate Manor third level north bedroom window detail.
- 26 of 30: Highgate Manor, stairs to belvedere.
- 27 of 30: Highgate Manor lofty belvedere, facing south
- 28 of 30: Highgate Manor dance hall, placed in 1951.
- 29 of 30: Tunnel connecting dance hall to main body basement, placed in mid-twentieth century c. 1970.
- 30 of 30: Overview of Highgate Manor basement with brick foundation walls, exposed timber, and iron storage cage.

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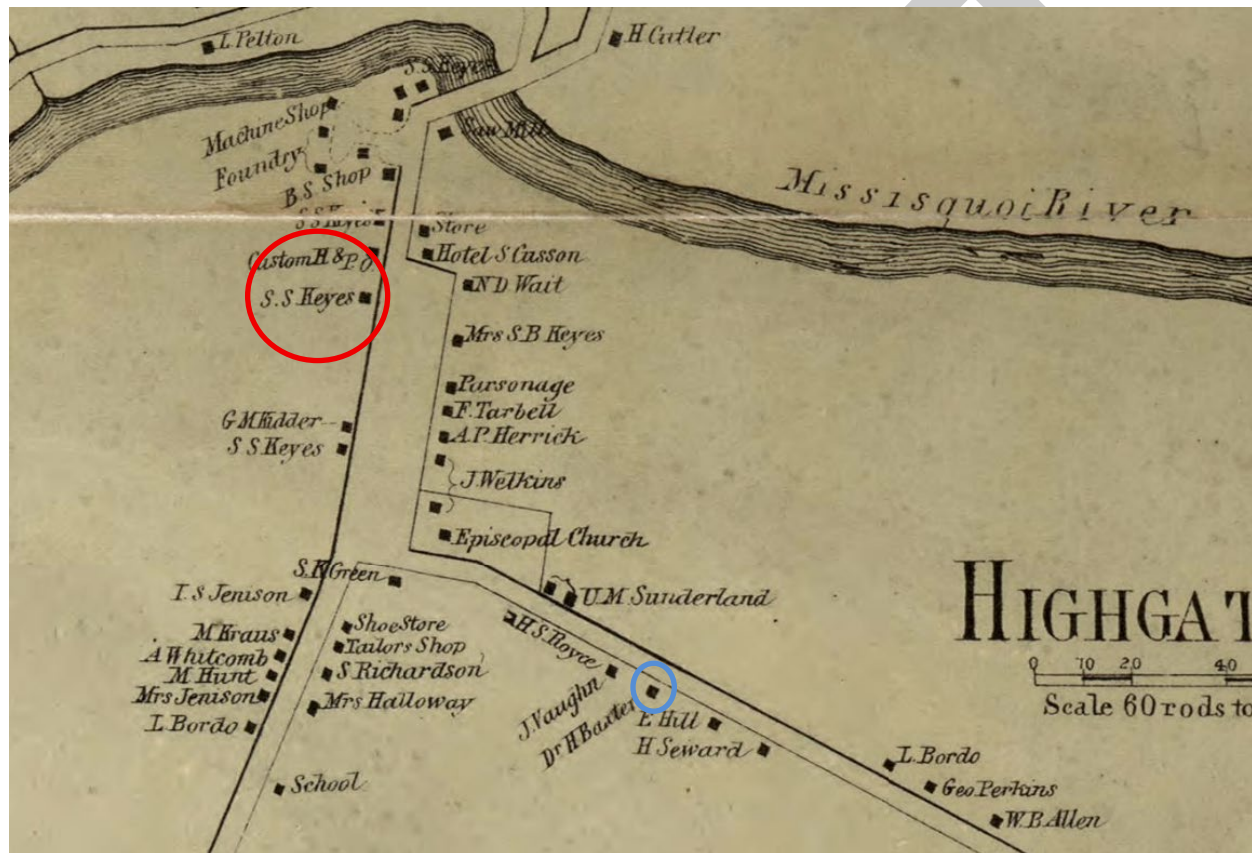
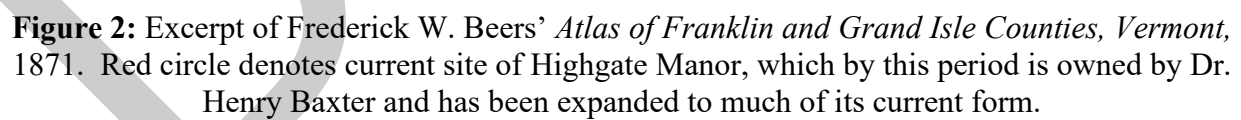


Figure 1: Excerpt of Henry Francis Walling's *Map of the counties of Franklin and Grand Isle, Vermont, 1857*. Red circle denotes current site of Highgate Manor and residence of Stephen Keyes in the period. Blue circle indicates residence of Dr. Henry Baxter prior to his purchase of current Highgate Manor.



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**DR. N. G. WHITE'S
PULMONARY
ELIXIR**
— FOR —
**Coughs, Colds, Croup, Asthma,
Whooping Cough,
And other Lung Affections.**

THIS ELIXIR IS WARRANTED
To Relieve the Croup in thirty minutes.
To Relieve a Common Cold immediately.
To Relieve the Asthma at once.
To Cure all Coughs before ulceration.
To Cure Sore Throat and Throat Distemper.
To Cure Hoarseness of Singers or Speakers.
To always Loosen a Cough.
To always cause the Patient to Breathe Freely.
To always produce Rest at Night.

The astonishing success of this Elixir, and the unparalleled sale are sufficient evidence of its superiority over all other remedies of the kind, for

Lung and Throat Affections.
IMPORTANT TO
FATHERS AND MOTHERS
That have children subject to
CROUP.

Dr. N. G. White's Elixir has never yet failed of curing this terrible and frightful disorder. Let all parents that value the lives of their children, procure a bottle of this Elixir, and keep it in the house, ready to give at a moment's warning.

Croup Cured.
My child is subject to attacks of the croup; it cured it at once. H. JENSON, St. Albans, Vt.
I have used Dr. N. G. White's Elixir in a violent case of croup; it proved a most effectual remedy. F. HIGGS, Wesleyan Minister, Phillipsburgh, C. E.
HIGGINS, Vt. Jan. 2, 1860.
My little boy had a violent attack of croup last week. We cured him in 30 minutes by a free use of Dr. N. G. White's Elixir. WM. MARTIN, Merchant.

Asthma Cured.
I have had the Asthma 25 years, and for months in succession have not been able to lie in bed or go from my house to the barn. I tried it and found immediate relief, and have been well ever since. ARAD BAKER, Moristown, Vt.
My wife is troubled with the asthma. We find nothing that gives the relief like your Elixir. T. H. COOPER, Rochester, Vt.

Incipient Consumption Cured.
I have much reason to believe that through the blessing of God, Dr. N. G. White's Elixir saved me from confirmed Pulmonary consumption. D. MARVIN, Minister of the Gospel, Alburgh, Vt.
It cured me when the physician pronounced me in the first stage of consumption. C. RENTZ, Merchant, Highgate, Vt.
PAXTON HILL, C. E. Aug. 15, 1857.
My wife had a severe cough for over a year, and all the symptoms of consumption. I commenced giving her Dr. N. G. White's Elixir, and before the second bottle was gone she was entirely well. JOHN M. SAGGIN.

Coughs and Colds Cured.
ROUSE POINT, Feb. 18th, 1860.
Dr. Baxter—Dear Sir: I have much pleasure in adding my testimony to the value of Dr. N. G. White's Pulmonary Elixir, manufactured by you. Having recently been subject to a severe cough, accompanied by considerable pain in the lungs, I obtained two bottles of your Elixir, from which I found almost immediate relief. A. H. PIKE.
(From Rev. J. W. Woodward.)
WESTFORD, Vt. June 22, 1858.
This certifies that N. G. White's pulmonary Elixir has been used in my family, in cases of severe cold, attended with sore throat, and has been found a reliable medicine in these cases. J. W. HOWARD.
Manufactured by HENRY BAXTER, M. D. Highgate, Vt. 7 and Phillipsburgh C. E. For sale by all dealers in medicine.
PLATTSBURGH, Feb. 25, 1860.
Dr. Baxter Dear Sir:—This is to certify that I have, used Dr. White's Elixir prepared by you in my family in very obstinate cases of coughs and colds which it cured immediately. I can recommend it to the public as the very best medicine I have ever used for this disease. JASON H. KNAPPEN.

Figure 3: Proprietary Medicines underlay much of the wealth that built the palatial homestead of Dr. Henry Baxter c. 1870.
(*The Burlington Times*, April 10, 1860)

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Figure 4: By the late 1860s, Dr. Baxter's Mandrake Bitters had emerged as a popular cure-all across Vermont and areas of the northeast.
(Joe Gourd Collection)

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Figure 5: With its soaring Second Empire Form built directly in front of Stephen Keyes “substantial brick dwelling,” the Baxter residence was a decided statement on wealth and ascendancy.

(Vermont Historical Society: Baxter Family of Swanton & Highgate Falls, Vt., Papers, Doc. 683, 1-22)

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Figure 6: The Baxter Homestead, c. 1900.
(Vermont Historical Society: Baxter Family of Swanton & Highgate Falls, Vt., Papers, Doc. 683, 1-22)

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Figure 7: Through much of the late nineteenth century, the Baxter residence and adjacent Baxter Store dominated the Highgate Road frontage in Highgate Falls.
(Highgate Historical Society, Highgate Manor Folder)

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Figure 8: A Baxter wedding party on the side porch (n.d.), now filled in with sunroom (c. 1921).
(Vermont Historical Society: Baxter Family of Swanton & Highgate Falls, Vt., Papers, Doc. 683, 1-22)

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Figure 9: Marion Barney Baxter and Grandson, George Butler, 1904.
(Highgate Historical Society, Highgate Manor Folder)

Highgate Manor
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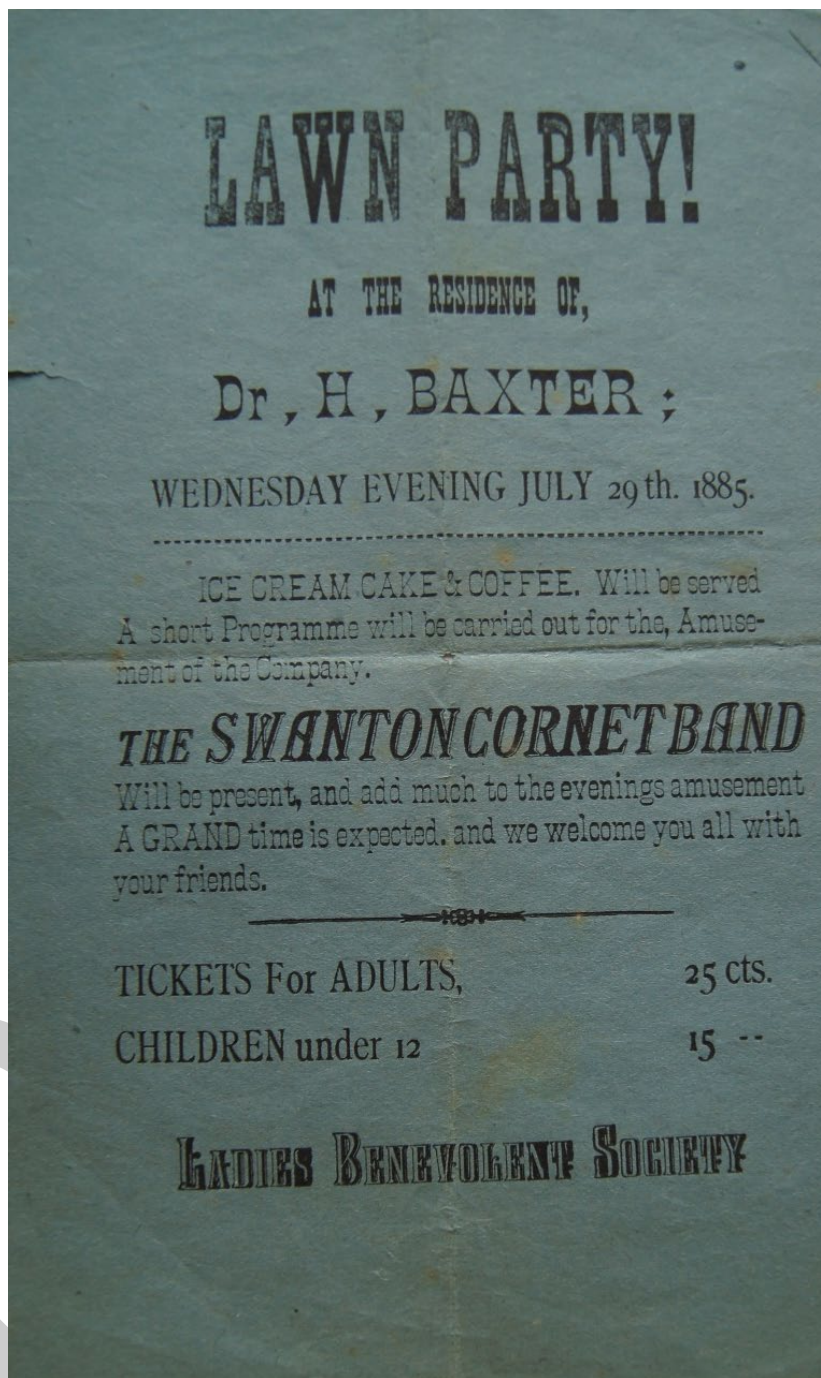


Figure 10: As Highgate's most opulent residence, the Baxter Homestead was site of steady gatherings and occasions, including this event held by the Ladies Benevolent Society in 1885 .
(Vermont Historical Society: Baxter Family of Swanton & Highgate Falls, Vt., Papers, Doc 682, 17)

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Figure 11: With the 1921 sale of the residence from the Baxter family, the Highgate Manor was born, depicted in this 1920s brochure.
(Highgate Historical Society, Highgate Manor Folder)

Highgate Manor
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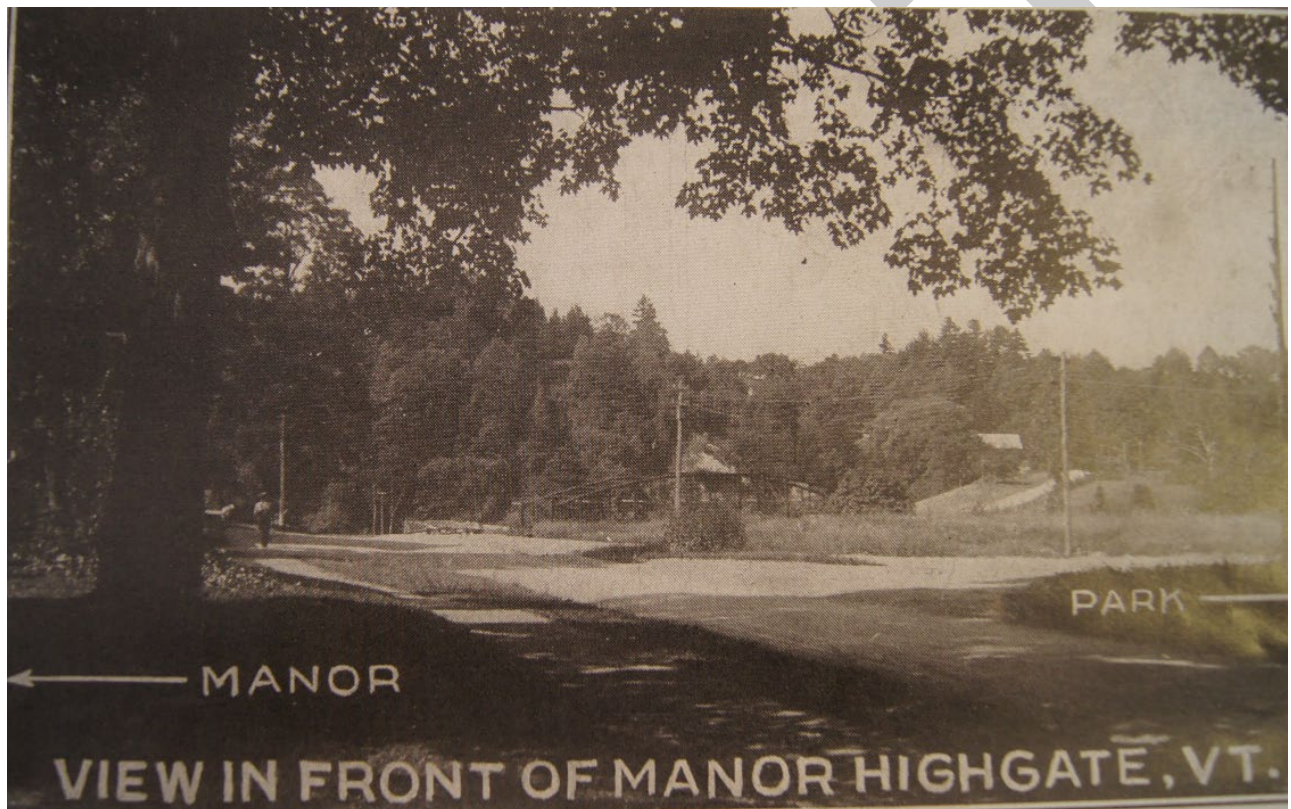


Figure 12: The pastoral surrounds of Highgate figured prominently in early advertising, depicted in this 1920s brochure.
(Highgate Historical Society, Highgate Manor Folder)

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Figure 13: The Highgate Manor advertised numerous framing activities including tennis, depicted in this 1920s brochure.
(Highgate Historical Society, Highgate Manor Folder)

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Figure 14: By the early 1920s, the Highgate Falls surrounds presented a lush and verdant picture, with towering Elms along the street frontage.
(Highgate Historical Society, Highgate Manor Folder)

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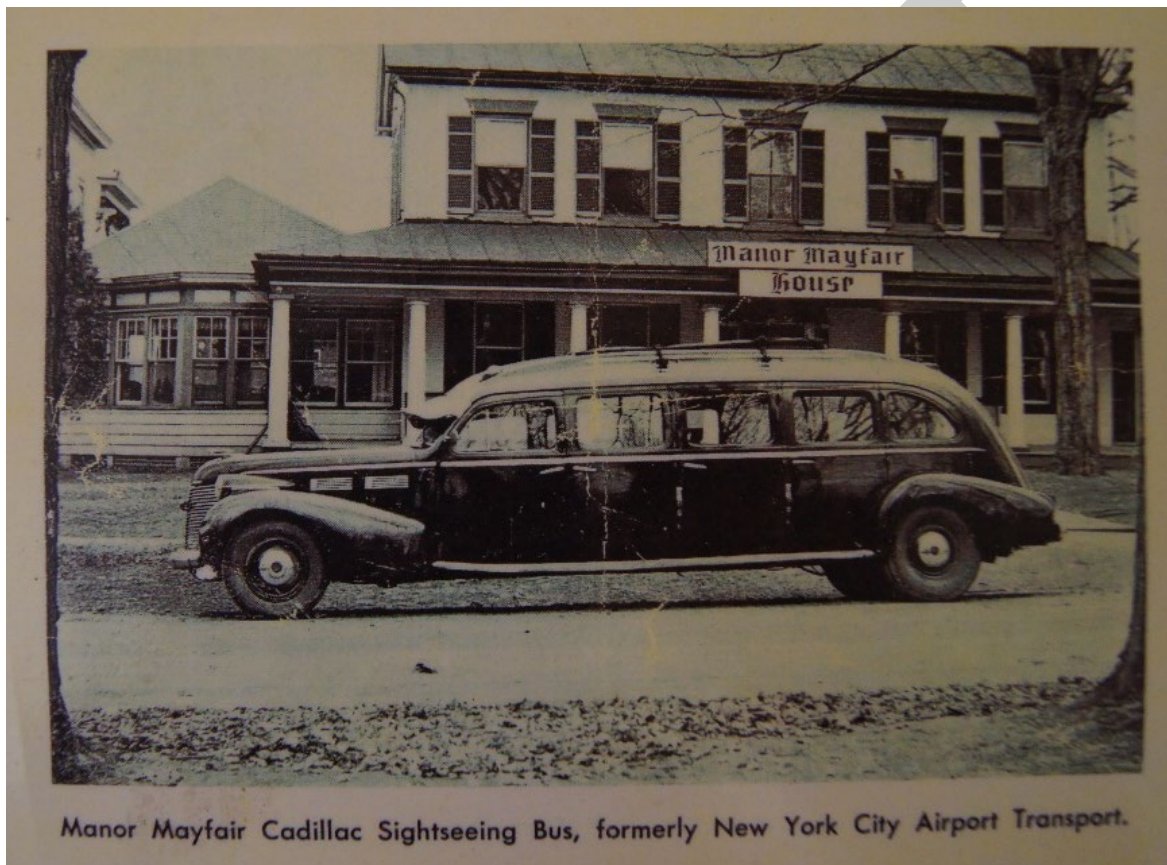


Figure 15: Guests were invited to tour scenic sites in the “Sightseeing Bus,” which included jaunts to Montreal, Hazen’s Notch, Quechee Gorge, and a range of the state’s scenic and cultural locales. Bus shown in front of the S.W. Keyes House, across the Common from the Manor and burned in 1950.
(Highgate Historical Society, Highgate Manor Folder)

Highgate Manor
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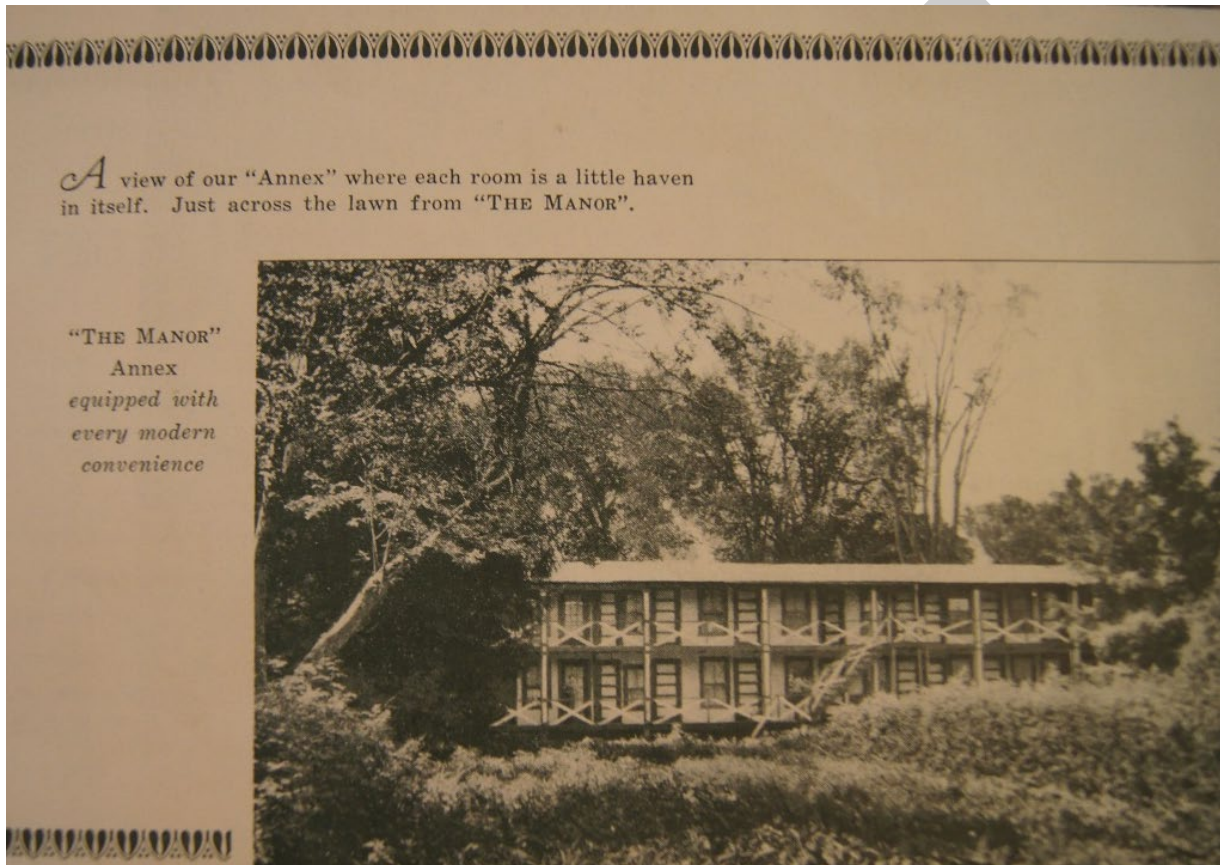


Figure 16: As business grew, the Manor added the “Annex,” for additional guests, since removed.
(Highgate Historical Society, Highgate Manor Folder)

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Figure 17: Summer festivities at the Manor, c. 1920s. While this gazebo is gone, a modern gazebo stands on the site in much the same form.
(Highgate Historical Society, Highgate Manor Folder)

Highgate Manor
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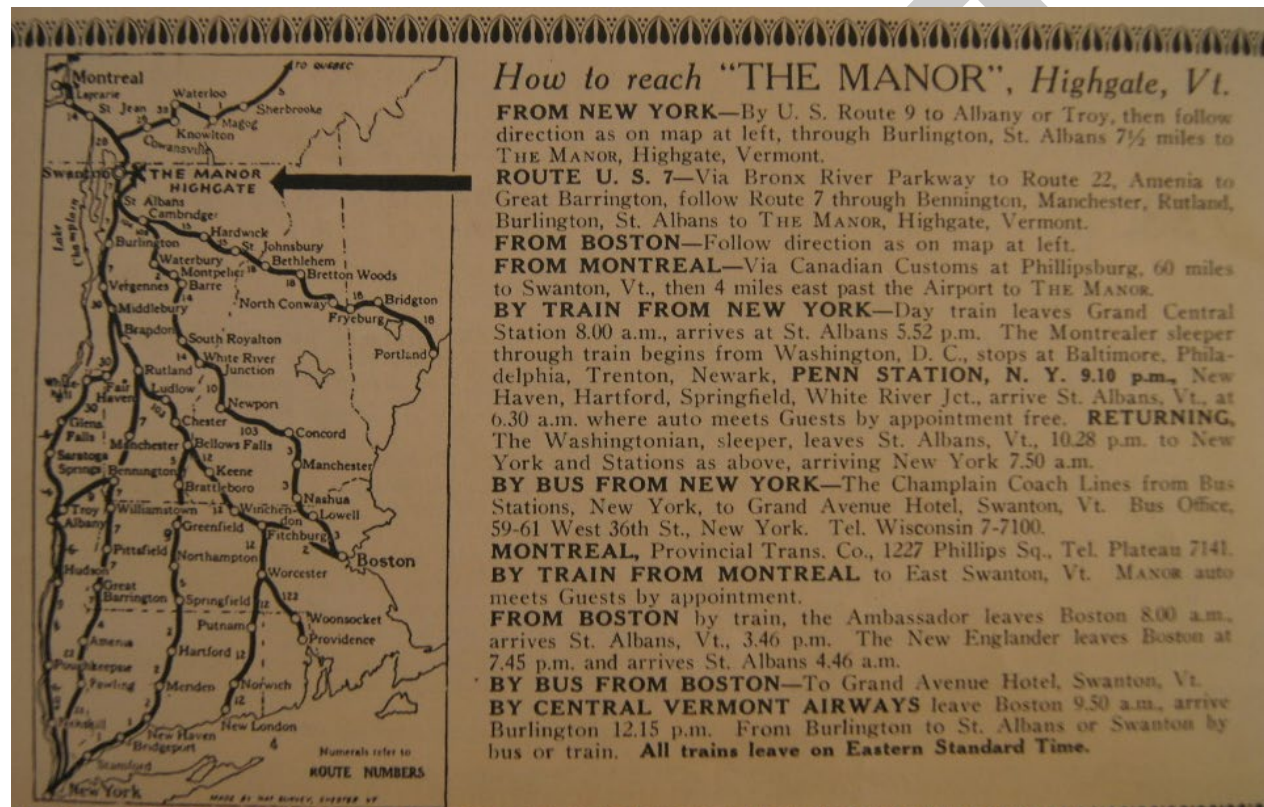


Figure 18: This c. 1950 brochure is an illustrative reflection of the target demographic for the Manor, with directions from Boston, New York, Montreal, and points beyond.
(Highgate Historical Society, Highgate Manor Folder)

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Figure 19: A summer band concert at The Manor, 1930.
(Highgate Historical Society, Highgate Manor Folder)

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Figure 20: With its imposing presence and summer activities, The Manor stood as a defining element of Highgate Falls village streetscape.
(Highgate Historical Society, Highgate Manor Folder)

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Figure 21: The May 22, 1950 fire that destroyed the former S.W. Keyes House and Annex, part of the Highgate Manor assemblage and standing directly across the Common, was a traumatic rupture in operational continuity of the resort and signaled the end of the ownership era of Phillip and Emma Schmitt.

(Highgate Historical Society, Highgate Manor Folder)

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Figure 22: By 1951, new owners Phillip and Bridgett Cust had erected a new Dance Hall, adjoined to the north side of the Highgate Manor.
(Highgate Historical Society, Highgate Manor Folder)

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LONELY MANSION—One of Franklin County's largest disused dwellings, Manor Mayfair in Highgate Falls, stands empty waiting for buyer. Will it be dancehall again or white elephant? Local residents say it could succeed as former.

Figure 23: Despite initial optimism, by the late 1950s The Manor was in foreclosure and shuttered, ushering in a period of intermittent operations through much of the twentieth century.
(*St. Albans Daily Messenger*, 1958)

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Figure 24: By 1962, The Manor Mayfair had reopened, though catering to a more local clientele with “luncheon, dinner, and cocktails.”
(*St. Albans Daily Messenger*, 1962)

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1818 MANOR
Real Estate
AUCTION

Date: Monday, September 28, 1981
Time: 11:00 A.M.
Preview: Wednesday, September 15, from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m. Saturday, September 19, from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. or by contacting the Auctioneer or Vermont Business Brokers
Location: Highgate Falls, Vt. East of Swanton on Rte. 78 to Highgate then South on Rte. 207 or north on 207 from St. Albans.



This is an old manor which was recently converted into five (5) large apartments. All have modern kitchens and baths. All have wall to wall carpeting. The heating is by a nearly new hot water boiler with five (5) separate zones. There is a 36 foot by 66 foot hall previously used as a discotheque and lounge. It is all complete with hardwood dance floor. There are adjoining men's and ladies' rooms. There is a separate kitchen for this hall plus a walk-in cooler.

Also there is a cellar area that was called the Cave. This was a barroom. The front of the manor has a large 16 foot by 60 foot porch. There is a 6.5 acre lot with large lawn and trees plus plenty of parking space.

Terms: \$5,000 Cash or Cashier's Check
Deposit day of Auction,
Balance at closing within 15 days.

For Information On Possible Financing
Call: Mr. Robert Burnell or Mr. Al Whiton at
The Chittenden Trust Company (802) 658-4000

For Further Information
Contact: Vermont Business Brokers
Tafts Corners, Williston, Vermont
Telephone: (802) 879-0400

or
AUCTIONEER
William F. Hill
Hardwick, Vermont 05843
Telephone: (802) 472-6308 or (802) 472-5023

Sale subject to confirmation. All announcements at time of sale take precedent over any advertising.

Figure 25: By the early 1980s, then owner William F. Hill had converted the building into five apartments, with a "Discotheque" in the Dance Hall. Hill attempted to auction the building in 1981, with few bids.
(*The Burlington Free Press*, 1981)

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Figure 26: The 2023 purchase of the Highgate Manor by Sharone Perlman and Jim Schmidt has returned the Manor to community use, with a Community Memorial Day celebration filling the Dance Hall in 2024.
(Courtesy Sharone Perlman)

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for nominations to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 460 et seq.). We may not conduct or sponsor and you are not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number.

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for each response using this form is estimated to be between the Tier 1 and Tier 4 levels with the estimate of the time for each tier as follows:

- Tier 1 – 60-100 hours
- Tier 2 – 120 hours
- Tier 3 – 230 hours
- Tier 4 – 280 hours

The above estimates include time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and preparing and transmitting nominations. Send comments regarding these estimates or any other aspect of the requirement(s) to the Service Information Collection Clearance Officer, National Park Service, 1201 Oakridge Drive Fort Collins, CO 80525.



LEGEND

-  Airports
-  Mountains and Hills
-  US Highways
-  State Highways
- Roads - Public (VTrans)**
 -  Interstate Highway
 -  US Highway
 -  State Highway
 -  Local road
 -  Other road
 -  Legal trail
- Roads - Private (E911)**
 -  Driveways
-  Rail Lines
-  Town Boundaries
-  County Boundaries

Historic Property Boundary, Portion of SPAN 291-092-11110, app. 1.62 acres.

NOTES

This map was created with the VT Interactive Map Viewer.

0.06 0 0.03 0.06 Miles

WGS_1984_Web_Mercator_Auxiliary_Sphere 1" = 147 Ft. 1cm = 18 Meters
THIS MAP IS NOT TO BE USED FOR NAVIGATION

1:1,768

May 27, 2026



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