

Danish Village Arch

Memorial Park, Scarborough



Significance

The Danish Village was a popular roadside accommodation and attraction on Route 1 in Maine. Built in 1929 by Boston architect Peter Holdensen and hotelier Henry P. Rines, it was one of the earliest American motels. The architecture authentically replicated that of the Danish town of Ribe, including a town hall and 100 tourist cottages, as well as employees dressed in period costumes. The Danish Village was popular through the 1930s, until auto tourism's decline during World War II. Over the next several decades, the Village saw a variety of uses and suffered two fires before it was demolished in 1976.

Project Scope

A brick arch was one of the only remaining structures at the Village's former site, which is now undergoing redevelopment. Scarborough's Historic Preservation Committee worked with the developers to acquire whatever could be saved from the site.

The Town Council decided to relocate the arch to Memorial Park at the corner of Route 1 and Sawyer Road, a popular park entrance. The decision received approval from the Planning Board in summer 2014, with an estimated \$21,000 budget. The arch was relocated in the fall 2015 with new masonry work, restored roof tiles, and lighting. Interpretive signage was installed and a public dedication was held in spring 2016.

Recognition

Although until recently Scarborough had no historic preservation committee, the relocation of the Danish Village Arch signifies the town's renewed efforts to recognize the significance of its historic resources.

The arch represents an interesting aspect of Scarborough's tourism history that many residents may still remember. Through their investment in restoring the arch in a location where it could be enjoyed by residents, Scarborough has demonstrated a commitment to preserving its history.