

Garland Mill Timberframes

What's the relevance of a 165-year-old water-powered sawmill in this era of cloud-based storage and virtual reality? For us it's the pre-Civil War cornerstone of our timber framing business. The Garland Mill, listed on the National Register of Historic Places, has been in continuous commercial operation since it was built in 1856 and produces timbers and boards much the same as it did five years before Abraham Lincoln became president.

Timber framing came as a natural complement to the mill's traditional processes. The design and construction of post and beam buildings was added to the mill's sawing activity in 1986. More than a century earlier the Garland Mill provided heavy timbers for local builders who routinely used mortise and tenon joinery in their construction. Today the mill saws timbers from native species to meet the needs of our building company.

The layout and notching have remained true to the craft since timber framing operations began at the mill 35 years ago—traditional mortise and tenon joinery cut by hand, one frame at a time in the shop. The timbers get marked, checked, notched, checked again, stored under cover, then planed and oiled just before delivery to the site. The bents are then pegged together and raised, mainly by crane but sometimes by hand—as houses, barns, pavilions, saunas, cabins, etc.

It might be argued that the tireless sawmill is the tail wagging the dog. However, sitting astride the Garland Brook that we also harness to generate electricity to run shop tools and design software, the mill remains the heart and soul of the business. It has supplied numerous hard-to-source specialty timbers and captivated the imaginations of several generations of family owners grateful for, and appreciative of their local history.



Photo of The Garland Mill circa 1880

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