

PH0355194

DATA SHEET

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

FEB 24 1976

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

SEP 28 1976

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORMSEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS**1 NAME**

HISTORIC

Lawson Tower

AND/OR COMMON

same

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

off First Parish Road

CITY, TOWN

Scituate Center

VICINITY OF

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

12th

STATE

Massachusetts

CODE
025

COUNTY

Plymouth

CODE

023

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

___DISTRICT

___BUILDING(S)

☒STRUCTURE

___SITE

___OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

☒PUBLIC

___PRIVATE

___BOTH

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

___IN PROCESS

___BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

___OCCUPIED

☒UNOCCUPIED

___WORK IN PROGRESS

ACCESSIBLE

___YES: RESTRICTED

___YES: UNRESTRICTED

☒NO

PRESENT USE

___AGRICULTURE

___MUSEUM

___COMMERCIAL

___PARK

___EDUCATIONAL

___PRIVATE RESIDENCE

___ENTERTAINMENT

___RELIGIOUS

___GOVERNMENT

___SCIENTIFIC

___INDUSTRIAL

___TRANSPORTATION

___MILITARY

☒OTHER: water tower**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

Town of Scituate, Department of Public Works

STREET & NUMBER

600 Chief Justice Cushing Way

CITY, TOWN

Scituate

VICINITY OF

STATE

Massachusetts 02066

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTIONCOURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Plymouth County Registry of Deeds

STREET & NUMBER

Russell Street

CITY, TOWN

Plymouth

STATE

Massachusetts

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

Inventory of the Historic Assets of the Commonwealth

DATE

1972

___FEDERAL ☒STATE ___COUNTY ___LOCALDEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

Massachusetts Historical Commission

CITY, TOWN

Boston

STATE

Massachusetts

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

☒ EXCELLENT
☐ GOOD
☐ FAIR

☐ DETERIORATED
☐ RUINS
☐ UNEXPOSED

CHECK ONE

☒ UNALTERED
☐ ALTERED

CHECK ONE

☒ ORIGINAL SITE
☐ MOVED DATE _____

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Lawson Tower stands on a slight rise in a large expanse of lawn near the Scituate Common. A large modern school building is located just north of the tower and a church, directly south of the tower, faces onto Parish Road.

The tower as originally built in 1900 was a wrought iron standpipe, seventy-five feet high and twenty-five feet in diameter. It was altered considerably in 1902 when the standpipe was completely covered with a wood and shingle cladding and superstructure in a high eclectic revival style. The tower now stands 153 feet high and is a striking visual landmark for miles around. The base of the tower is slightly curved out and then rises, interrupted only by window slits, to the top of the wrought iron tank that the tower encloses. A massive bracketed band encircles the tower at this point, and supports the bell room, the clock room, and the flared conical roof. The rafter ends under the eaves of the roof of the tower are exposed, adding a decorative touch to the cornice. There are four dormers with pagoda-like roofs topped with small spires on the steeply pitched shingled roof, and a weather vane supported by a decorated pole completes the tower. A turret, attached to the side of the tower and extending up to the cornice, contains a spiral staircase with 123 steps which rise to the bell room. The ground floor entrance to the turret has a pointed arch door, with massive curvilinear hinges. A graceful shingled portico leads into the tower structure itself.

The interior of the tower has circumferential landings at fifteen foot intervals to facilitate the cleaning and painting of the wrought iron water tank. The bell room floor, which also serves as the cover of the water tank, is zinc covered to prevent air-born bacteria and dust from entering the water supply. Eleven open ports, each six feet square, look out over the landscape. Rain water, which is sometimes forced into the open ports by high winds in the area, runs off through scuppers similar to those in a boat, at the bell room floor level. The ten bells in the room, which were cast especially for the tower by the Mensely Co. of West Troy, N.Y., are connected by steel cables to a keyboard in the music room at the ground level. Above the bell room is the clock room, containing a huge clock which strikes the hour and automatically plays the Angelus on the chimes at 7:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m.

A chain link fence, 300 feet in circumference, has been installed around the tower, and the area enclosed by the fence covered with bituminous concrete in order to reduce the fire hazard. The tower has recently been completely re-shingled by the Town of Scituate, and is still in active use as the town's water supply.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD		AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW				
☐ PREHISTORIC	☐ ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	☐ COMMUNITY PLANNING	☐ LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	☐ RELIGION		
☐ 1400-1499	☐ ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	☐ CONSERVATION	☐ LAW	☐ SCIENCE		
☐ 1500-1599	☐ AGRICULTURE	☐ ECONOMICS	☐ LITERATURE	☐ SCULPTURE		
☐ 1600-1699	☒ ARCHITECTURE	☐ EDUCATION	☐ MILITARY	☒ SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN		
☐ 1700-1799	☐ ART	☐ ENGINEERING	☐ MUSIC	☐ THEATER		
☐ 1800-1899	☐ COMMERCE	☐ EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	☐ PHILOSOPHY	☐ TRANSPORTATION		
☒ 1900-	☐ COMMUNICATIONS	☐ INDUSTRY	☐ POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	☐ OTHER (SPECIFY)		
		☐ INVENTION				

SPECIFIC DATES 1902 BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Lawson Tower, a significant architectural landmark in Scituate, is a fascinating example of what one man's impact on a community can be. As such, the tower stands today as a memorial to Thomas Lawson, the "Copper King", who did so much for the town of Scituate.

Thomas Lawson, a self-made man, was a wealthy Wall Street magnate with a decided flair for attracting attention. When the original wrought iron standpipe was constructed in 1900 Lawson was in the process of building his home, Dreamwold, which stands across the open lawn north of the tower. Lawson spent close to a million dollars on his estate, and when it was finished in 1901 he was not at all pleased to have to look at the unadorned tank from his bedroom window. He met with the owners of the private water company that had just erected the standpipe, and obtained permission to enclose the tank in a tower which would be more pleasing to his eye. Lawson hired an architect to travel to Europe to sketch designs of interesting and unusual towers in England, the continent, and as far east as Constantinople. On his return Lawson picked the design of the present tower, said to be from a fifteenth century 'Roman' structure. Lawson then paid to have the tank enclosed by this tower, at a cost of \$60,000. At the present cost of materials and labor the tower would cost about \$370,000 to replace.

The tower, with its shingle covering and architectural detail, may be unique in Massachusetts. The town takes great pride in the structure, and the community's image is closely linked with this distinctive architectural landmark.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Lawson Scrapbook and Other Scituate History, Pierce Library, Scituate
Sherman, William T., "Scituate's Unusual Water Tower", unpublished manuscript

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY $\frac{1}{4}$ acre

UTM REFERENCES

A

1	9
---	---

3	5	5	0	3	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

4	6	7	3	3	0	0
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

ZONE EASTING NORTHING

B

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--	--	--	--	--	--

ZONE EASTING NORTHING

C

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--	--	--	--	--	--

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D

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VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Christine Boulding, Assistant Survey Director

ORGANIZATION

Massachusetts Historical Commission

DATE

February 11, 1976

STREET & NUMBER

294 Washington Street

TELEPHONE

617-727-8470

CITY OR TOWN

Boston

STATE

Massachusetts 02108

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL ☐

STATE ☐

LOCAL ☒

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

Elizabeth Reed Amden

TITLE Executive Director, Mass. Historical Commission

DATE 2/17/76

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

Acting DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST:

DATE

9/28/96

DATE

9/27/76

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

Property Lawson James

State Mass.

Working Number 2.24.76.2593

Plymouth

TECHNICAL

Photos 3

Maps 1

CONTROL

CM

OK 3.9.76

HISTORIAN

Accept

E. Smith

5-21-76

ARCHITECTURAL HISTORIAN

Accept

W. Cole

5.26.76

ARCHEOLOGIST

OTHER

HAER

Inventory

Review

REVIEW UNIT CHIEF

Accept

W. R. Luce

9/17/76

BRANCH CHIEF

act Hung

9.20.76

KEEPER

Wm

9/27/76

National Register Write-up

Send-back

Entered SEP 28 1976

Federal Register Entry 11-2-76

Re-submit

INT:2106-74



Lawson Tower

ENTRANCE TO WATER TOWER FRAME

EASTERN FACADE

ATHLETIC GROUNDS, CENTRAL SCHOOL, SCITUATE, MASS.

Plymouth Co, Mass.

NICK MILLS, PHOTOGRAPHER

Feb., 1975

NEGATIVES WITH:

MRS. ELIOT LAIDLAW

121 MAPLE ST.

SCITUATE, MASS.

NPS Number 9.28.76

Title: *Lawson Tower*

Plymouth Co, Mass.

Loc.

detail of masonry

on N.W. corner of

tower

1 of 3

PROPERTY OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER



Form No. 10-301a
(Rev. 10-75)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
PROPERTY PHOTOGRAPH FORM

FOR NPS USE ONLY

FEB 24 1976

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

SEP 28 1976

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES ENCLOSE WITH PHOTOGRAPH

1 NAME

HISTORIC Lawson Tower

AND/OR COMMON

same

2 LOCATION

CITY, TOWN Scituate

— VICINITY OF

COUNTY

Plymouth

STATE

MA

3 PHOTO REFERENCE

PHOTO CREDIT Mick Mills

DATE OF PHOTO

1975

NEGATIVE FILED AT

121 Maple Street, Scituate, MA

4 IDENTIFICATION

DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC. IF DISTRICT. GIVE BUILDING NAME & STREET

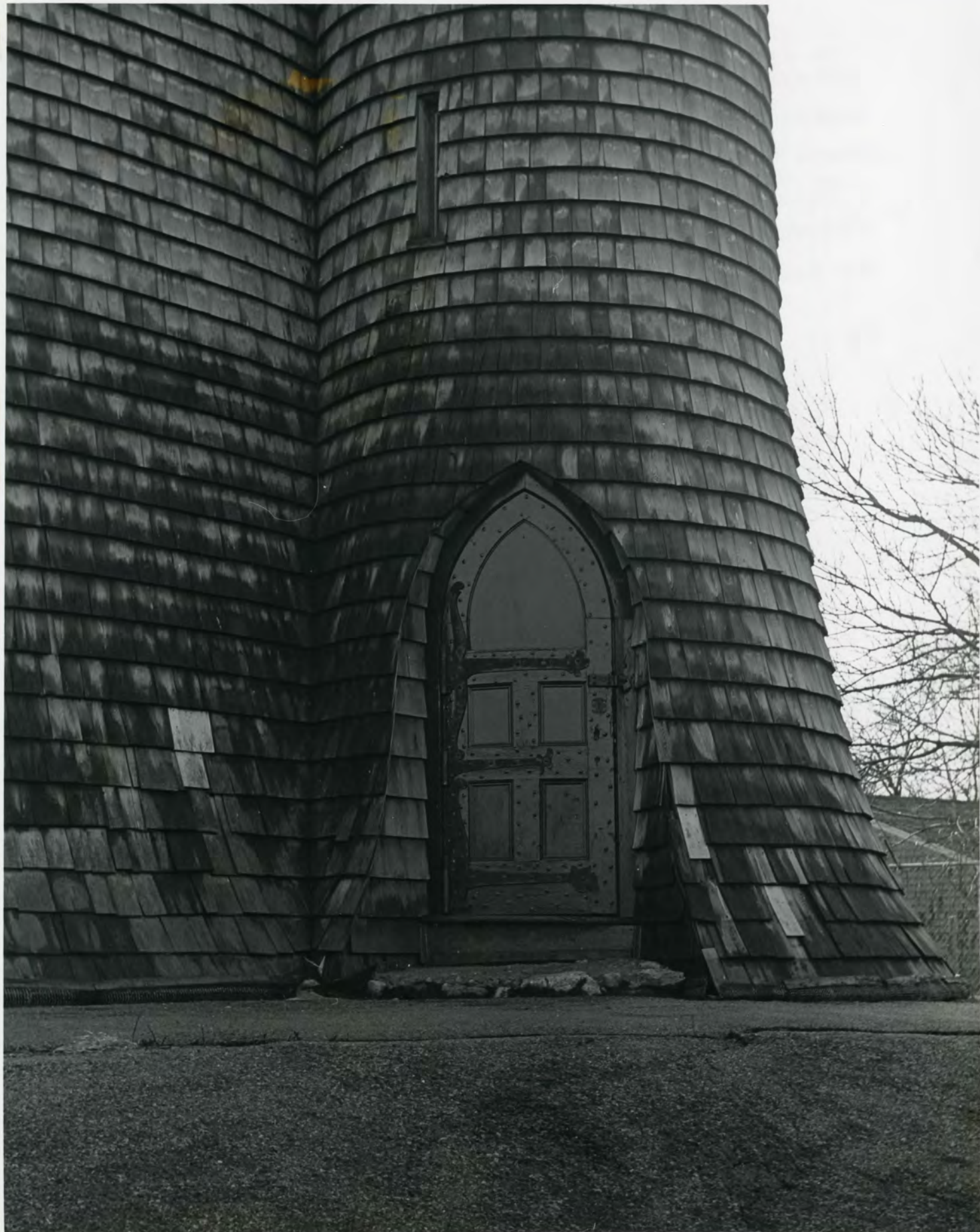
detail of music room, on north western elevation of tower

PHOTO NO

2

M36

Lawson Tower
Neg: Mrs. Nick M
Feb, 1975
121
Scit
Athletic
EAST
Hill



Lawson Tower

ENTRANCE TO TURRET STAIRCASE

LAWSON WATER TOWER

Athletic Grounds, Central School, Scituate, Mass.

Plymouth

Nick Mills, Photo

Feb. 1975

Neg.:

Mrs Eliot L. ADLAW

121 MAPLE ST.

Scituate, Mass.

NPS Number

9.28.76

Title:

Lawson Tower

Plymouth, Mass.

Loc.

detail of entrance to
turret staircase

3 of 3



Scituate, Lawson Tower
UTM reference:
19/355030/4673300

Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey
Control by USGS, USC&GS, and Massachusetts Geodetic Survey
Planimetry in part by photogrammetric methods from aerial
photographs. Topography by planimetric surveys 1935-1936
Revised 1961

Selected hydrographic data compiled from USC&GS Chart 244 (1960)
This information is not intended for navigational purposes

Polyconic projection. 1927 North American datum
10,000-foot grid based on Massachusetts coordinate system,
mainland zone
1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks,
zone 19, shown in blue

Boundaries in tidewater areas from information furnished
by Massachusetts Department of Public Works



CONTOUR INTERVAL 10 FEET
DATUM IS MEAN SEA LEVEL
DEPTH CURVES AND SOUNDINGS IN FEET—DATUM IS MEAN LOW WATER
SHORELINE SHOWN REPRESENTS THE APPROXIMATE LINE OF MEAN HIGH WATER
THE MEAN RANGE OF TIDE IS APPROXIMATELY 8.8 FEET

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS
FOR SALE BY U. S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, WASHINGTON, D. C. 20242
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST



ROAD CLASSIFICATION
Heavy-duty ——— Light-duty ———
Medium-duty ——— Unimproved dirt ———
State Route ———

COHASSET, MASS.
N4207.5—W7045/7.5

1961

AMS 6868 III NE—SERIES V814

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
PROPERTY MAP FORM

FOR NPS USE ONLY
FEB 24 1978
RECEIVED
DATE ENTERED SEP 28 1976

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- ENCLOSE WITH MAP

1 NAME

HISTORIC Lawson Tower

AND/OR COMMON same

2 LOCATION

CITY/TOWN Scituate VICINITY OF COUNTY Plymouth STATE MA

3 MAP REFERENCE

SOURCE U.S.G.S., Cohasset, Mass. quadrangle

SCALE 1:24,000 DATE 1961

4 REQUIREMENTS

- TO BE INCLUDED ON ALL MAPS
1. PROPERTY BOUNDARIES
 2. NORTH ARROW
 3. UTM REFERENCES



PAUL GUZZI

*Secretary of the
Commonwealth*

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Office of the Secretary
Massachusetts Historical Commission
294 Washington Street Boston, Massachusetts 02108
(617) 727-8470

February 18, 1976

Mr. Charles Herrington
Chief, Registration
National Register
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C. 20240



Dear Charles:

Enclosed please find three nomination forms for the following properties:

1. Concord, Thoreau-Alcott House
2. Sandwich, Wing Fort House
3. Scituate, Lawson Tower

These properties have been voted eligible for submission by the Massachusetts Historical Commission (State Review Board) and have been signed by the State Historic Preservation Officer, Elizabeth Reed Amadon.

Sincerely yours,

Pat

Patricia L. Weslowski
Survey Director
Massachusetts Historical Commission

PLW/mw
Enclosures

ENTRIES IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

STATE **MASSACHUSETTS**

Date Entered **SEP 28 1976**

Name

Location

Lawson Tower

**Scituate Center
Plymouth County**

Also Notified

Hon. Edward M. Kennedy
Hon. Edward W. Brooke
Hon. Gerry E. Studds
Regional Director, North
Atlantic Region

State Historic Preservation Officer
Mrs. Elizabeth R. Amadon
Executive Director
Massachusetts Historical Commission
294 Washington Street
Boston, Massachusetts 02108

PR MMott/row 9/30/76

SOUTH SHORE NEWS
ROCKLAND, MA.
W. 58,000

Nov 5
1976

New
England
Newsclip

Plymouth

NOV 5 1976

Lawson Tower now officially a historic place

SCITUATE — Lawson Tower, off First Parish Road in Scituate, nominated for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places by the Massachusetts Historical Commission, has been accepted. State Secretary — Paul Guzzi, Chairman of the Commission, was informed of this last week by Gary Everhardt, Director of the National Park Service in the United States Department of the Interior.

The Lawson Tower, a significant architectural landmark in Scituate, is a memorial to Thomas Lawson the "Copper King." Thomas Lawson, a self-made man, was a wealthy Wall Street magnate with a decided flair for attracting attention. When the original wrought iron standpipe was

constructed in 1900, Lawson was in the process of building his home, Dreamwold, which stands across the open lawn north of the tower.

Lawson spent close to \$1 million on his estate, and when it was finished in 1901, he was not at all pleased to have to look at the unadorned tank from his bedroom window. He met with the owners of the private water company that had just erected the standpipe, and obtained permission to enclose the tank in a tower more pleasing to his eye.

Lawson hired an architect to travel to Europe to sketch designs of interesting and unusual towers in England, the continent, and as far East as Constantinople. On his return, Lawson selected

the design of the present tower, said to be from a 15th century 'Roman' structure. At the present cost of materials and labor the tower would cost about \$370,000 to replace.

The tower stands 153 feet high and is a striking visual landmark for miles around. The clock room contains a

huge clock which strikes the hour and automatically plays "The Angelus" on the chimes at 7 a.m. and 7 p.m. Below the clock room is the bell room floor, which also serves as the cover of the water tank. It is zinc covered to prevent air-borne bacteria and dust from

entering the water supply. Eleven open ports, each six feet square, look out over the landscape. Rain water, which is sometimes forced into the open ports by high winds in the area, runs off through scuppers similar to those in a boat, at the bell

room floor level. The ten bells in the room, which were cast especially for the tower by the Mensely Company of West Troy, New York, are connected by steel cables to a keyboard in the music room at the ground level.

A turret, attached to the side of the tower and extending up to the cornice, contains a spiral staircase with 123 steps which rise to the bell room. The ground floor entrance to the turret has a pointed arch door with massive curvilinear hinges. A graceful shingled portico leads into the tower structure itself.

A chain link fence, 300 feet in circumference has been installed around the tower, and the area enclosed by the fence covered with bituminous concrete in order to reduce the fire hazard.

NR Data Sheet

DATE: 5-21-76
Reviewer: INITIALS: EHS

NR

DOE

SEP 28 1976
9-

NAME AS IT APPEARS IN FEDERAL REGISTER: Lawson Tower

OTHER NAMES:

LOCATION:

STREET & NUMBER Off Forest Parish Road

CITY, TOWN Scituate Center

STATE Massachusetts

VICINITY OF

025

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT 12th

COUNTY Plymouth

code 023

OWNER OF PROPERTY:

(Circle)

PRIVATE

STATE

LOCAL GOV'T

MUNICIPAL

COUNTY

OTHER

ADMINISTRATOR (underline)

FEDERAL (AGENCY NAME):

NPS REGION: (CIRCLE) N. ATLANTIC

MID ATLANTIC

SOUTHEAST

MIDWEST

SOUTHWEST

ROCKY MOUNTAIN

WEST

PACIFIC NORTHWEST

FEATURES:

INTERIOR

☒ Substantially intact-1

☐ unknown - 4

☐ not applicable - 7

EXTERIOR

☒ Substantially intact-2

☐ unknown - 5

☐ not applicable - 8

ENVIRONS

☒ Substantially intact-3

☐ unknown - 6

☐ Not applicable-9

☐ Interior, exterior, environs not intact-0

CONDITION -

☒ EXCELLENT

☐ GOOD

☐ FAIR

☐ DETERIORATED

☐ RUINS

☐ UNEXPOSED

☐ Unexcavated

☒ UNALTERED

☐ ALTERED

☐ Reconstructed

☐ Excavated

☒ ORIGINAL SITE

☐ MOVED

☐ Unknown

ACCESS -

Yes-restricted

Yes-unrestricted

No access

Unknown

historic district?

YES

NO

WITHIN NATIONAL REGISTER HISTORIC DISTRICT?

YES

NO

IF YES, NAME:

WITHIN NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK?

YES

NO

IF YES, NAME:

ADAPTIVE USE:

YES

NO

Saved ?

YES

NO

FUNCTION(S): (use vocabulary words)

then- Water Tower

now- Water Tower

SIGNIFICANCE:

☐ ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC

☐ ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC

☐ AGRICULTURE

☒ ARCHITECTURE

☐ ART

☐ COMMERCE

☐ COMMUNICATIONS

☐ CONSERVATION

☐ ECONOMICS

☐ EDUCATION

☐ ENGINEERING

☐ EXPLORATION

☐ INDUSTRY

☐ INVENTION

☐ LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE

☐ LAW/Gov't/politics

☐ LITERATURE

☐ MILITARY

☐ MUSIC

☐ PHILOSOPHY

☐ POLITICS/GOVERNMENT

☐ RELIGION

☐ SCIENCE

☒ SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN

☐ TRANSPORTATION

☐ OTHER (SPECIFY)

☐ entertainment

☐ health

☐ recreation

☐ settlement

☐ socio/cultural

☐ urban & commun

☐ planning

Claims

"first"

YES

NO

"oldest"

YES

NO

"only"

YES

NO

ARCHITECTURAL STYLE: *Eclectic*

architect/m.builder:

landscape/garden designer:

interior decorator:

engineer:

artist/artisan:

builder/contractor:

ETHNIC GROUP:

NAMES:

(label role
&
appropriate date)

personal

events

*Thomas Lawson, late 19th and early 20th
Century Wall Street magnate had this tower
~~built in 1902~~. Covered in 1902.*

institutional

DATES:

DATE OF CONSTRUCTION (Specific date or 1/4 of century): *1900-1902*

DATE(S) OF "MAJOR" ALTERATIONS: *1902*

HISTORICALLY SIGNIFICANT DATE(S): *1902*

SOURCE:

(OF NOMINATION)

PRIVATE

STATE

LOCAL GOV'T

MUNICIPAL

COUNTY

OTHER

FEDERAL AGENCY:

ACREAGE:

(to nearest tenth of an acre) *.3*

COMMENTS: (include architectural information here)

*As originally built in 1900 this tower was a wrought iron
standpipe. In 1902 Thomas Lawson had it enclosed with
wood and shingles ~~and a superstructure~~
in a high eclectic revival style.*

Wrought-iron standpipe covered by wood and shingles

75' wrought-iron standpipe altered in 1902

*75' wrought-iron standpipe enclosed
within a frame and shingled tower
surmounted by windowed
bell room and conical roof; pipe still*

*functions in town's water system. Structure
Built by Thomas Lawson, wealthy Wall Street
magnate, to hide pipe which was in view of his estate.*

SIGNIFICANCE: (maximum two sentences)

*The Lawson Tower is a significant architectural landmark
in Scituate. Its shingle covering and architectural
detail may be unique in Massachusetts.*

*Original 1900 wrought 75' wrought-iron standpipe covered with frame and shingled
structure, 153' high; features entrance vestibule, small pointed
arched opening, band of windows beneath conical cap roof, bell room.*