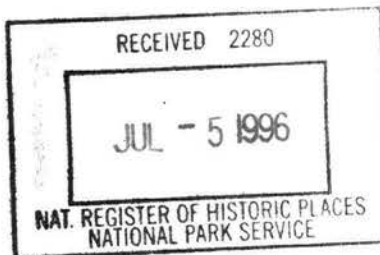


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**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**



**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 How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. 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. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Attleborough Falls Gasholder Building

other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number 380 Elm Street N/A not for publication

city or town North Attleborough N/A vicinity

state Massachusetts code MA county Bristol code 005 zip code 02760

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, 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 nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Judith B. McDonough
Signature of certifying official/Title Judith B. McDonough, Executive Director
Massachusetts Historical Commission, State Historic Preservation Officer

6/28/96
Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional Comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:
 entered in the National Register
 See continuation sheet.
 determined eligible for the National Register
 See continuation sheet.
 determined not eligible for the National Register
 removed from the National Register
 other (explain): _____

Signature of the Keeper

Edson B. Beall

Date of Action

8-1-96

Entered in the
National Register

Attleborough Falls Gasholder Building
Name of Property

Bristol County, Massachusetts
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

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	
1		building
		sites
		structures
		objects
1		Total

Name of related multiple property listing

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

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Industry/Energy Facility

Industrial Storage

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Vacant/Not In Use

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

Other: Panel Brick

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Granite

walls Brick

roof Slate

other

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

See Attached

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Attleborough Falls Gasholder Building
North Attleborough (Bristol County),
Massachusetts

Section number 7 Page 1

7. DESCRIPTION

The Attleborough Falls gasholder building, erected in 1874, is a circular, masonry building located at 380 Elm Street in the industrial village of Attleborough Falls, two miles southwest of the central business district of North Attleborough, Massachusetts. The gasholder building sits at the intersection of Mount Hope and Elm Streets which is also occupied by a gas station, an apartment house and a single family home. The building sits on a 19,249 square-foot excavated lot that slopes to the east and is wooded with tall maple trees to form an attractive setting. A retaining wall begins along the west side of the building and runs diminishing in height along the Elm Street (southern) boundary toward the corner of Mount Hope Street. A three foot, retaining wall also denotes the elevated site along the Mount Hope Street (east) boundary. A group of two-family houses occupy the north side of Elm Street west of the gasholder building. An approximately .5 acre parking lot lies immediately to the north of the site.

The twelve-bay, round gasholder building is 67 feet in diameter and rises one, eighteen-foot story from a cut granite foundation to a conical, slate roof centered with an octagonal cupola. The size of the North Attleborough gasholder building is smaller than average for its period. In the 1870s, the typical gasholder was 70 feet in diameter with a height of 60 feet. A well-proportioned, hip-roofed, enclosed entry, detailed in imitation of the main block, faces the intersection.

The one-foot thick, finely-detailed, common bond, masonry walls include corbeled brickwork at the roof line and each of the twelve bays are defined by pilasters which divide the circumference. Alternating bays contain a bay of four, 8/2, double-hung sash, windows with brownstone lintels and a continuous, brownstone sill. On the northern side of the building, the window bay facing northwest includes one bricked-in opening.

On the projecting entry, similarly-configured, but diminutive casement windows provide illumination. The front doorway is recessed behind a brownstone lintel surmounted by corbeled brickwork supported by recessed panels topped with brownstone sections and corbeled capitals. The existing door is a replacement. The size of the opening of the likely original door on the interior suggests the entry previously included sidelights. The exceptional workmanship and detailing enhance the building's compatibility with the largely residential nature of its immediate vicinity.

The massive, conical, roof, covered with common lap slate, rises approximately 30 feet from the top of the side walls to the cupola. It is supported by sixteen, large radial, wooden beams. Iron tie rods, centered on an iron ring in the middle of the building, are in lateral tension. The cupola has a

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
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**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

**Attleborough Falls Gasholder Building
North Attleborough (Bristol County),
Massachusetts**

Section number 7 Page 2

bracketed cornice beneath an octagonal, slate roof and copper weather vane, but its sash has been boarded.

The unpainted brick masonry interior of the building has had little maintenance or alteration since the mid 1950s. The gasholder's cast iron tank and its cape mechanism, was removed in 1951. The 18-foot deep water tank which formed the bottom seal for the gasholder, only partially remains. Interior masonry has deteriorated due to humidity and water damage and requires substantial repair in some areas.

Archaeological Description

While no prehistoric sites are currently recorded in the gasholder property, it is possible that sites are present. Two sites have been recorded in the general area (within one mile). The physical characteristics of the property include well drained, level to moderately sloping terrain in close proximity to wetlands that indicate locational criteria favorable for prehistoric site location. The gasholder building lot, however, has been excavated and contains retaining walls indicating the removal and/or disturbance of surface soil structure in the area. Given the above information, the size of the property (.44 acres), and documented impacts, the probability for significant prehistoric survivals is low.

There is also a low potential for the recovery of significant historic archaeological resources on the property. The gasholder building site was previously occupied by the W. Aldrich residence, and the demolition of that structure, excavation of the lot, and subsequent construction of the gasholder building indicate there is little potential for any archaeological survivals on the property.

(end of section 7)

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.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Industry _____

Architecture _____

Period of Significance

1874-1946 _____

Significant Dates

1874 _____

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Cultural Affiliation

N/A _____

Architect/Builder

Criteria Considerations

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

Property is:

- A** owned by 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 of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

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 # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

Massachusetts Historical Commission _____

Attleborough Falls Gasholder Building
Name of Property

Bristol County, Massachusetts
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property .44 acres 19, 249 SF

UTM References See continuation sheet.

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

1.19 Zone	307800 Easting	4049320 Northing	Zone	3. Easting	Northing
2. Zone	Easting	Northing	4. Zone	Easting	Northing

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Dianne L. Siergiej, Commonwealth Collaborative, Inc., with Betsy Friedberg, National Register Director

organization Massachusetts Historical Commission date March 1996

street & number 220 Morrissey Boulevard telephone 617-727-8470

city or town Boston state MA zip code 02125

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional items (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name

street & number telephone

city or town state zip code

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications 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. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetAttleborough Falls Gasholder Building
North Attleborough (Bristol County),
MassachusettsSection number 8 Page 1**8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE**

The Attleborough Falls Gasholder building, located at 380 Elm Street in the village of Attleborough, is one of only six, documented, intact buildings of its type in Massachusetts. It is one of only twelve such gasholder buildings extant in New England. These industrial buildings housed gasometers or gas holders, storage tanks for coal gas which was manufactured as a popular, industrial and domestic illuminant in the United States during the second half of the nineteenth century. Architecturally, the gasholder building is significant for being among the least altered examples of this rare building form. Historically it is significant for its associations with the North Attleborough Gas Light Company and the development of the Village of Attleborough Falls in the Town of North Attleborough. The Attleborough Falls Gasholder Building retains integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association and meets criteria A and C for listing in the National Register of Historic Places at the local level.

Development of Attleborough Falls

Located thirty miles south of Boston in Bristol County, the Town of North Attleborough was incorporated in 1887 after separation from The Town of Attleborough. The territory of both communities had been part of the Rehoboth North Purchase of 1666 which also included parts of present day Mansfield and Norton, Massachusetts and Cumberland, Rhode Island. The Town of Attleborough focused at the villages of Old Town, North Village and Attleborough Falls. Although the area which became North Attleborough remained primarily agricultural until the middle of the nineteenth century, as early as the Federal Period, North village and Attleborough Falls were increasingly impacted by industrialization along power sources of the Ten Mile River. Old Town (aka. West Attleborough by the late nineteenth century), the earliest center of the original Town of Attleborough, experienced some small-scale, industrial development, but remained the community center. Old Town remained largely unaffected by industrialization and urbanization until the end of the nineteenth century. Change came in 1892 with construction of the Interstate Electric Streetcar Railway between North Attleborough and Pawtucket, Rhode Island which introduced suburbanization to the village.

In 1807, Colonel Obed Robinson and his brother, Otis Robinson, began what is reputed to have been the first jewelry factory in the United States at Attleborough Falls near Robinson Street. In their employ was David Brown who had learned the art of jewelry making from "the Frenchman", an anonymous emigrant who in 1780 had set up a shop in North Village (North Attleborough Center)

(continued)

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**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

**Attleborough Falls Gasholder Building
North Attleborough (Bristol County),
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where he made jewelry and brass hinges. The industry took hold in North Attleborough as he shared his knowledge with many apprentices who later worked in other factories. By the early 1800s, the area that became North Attleborough had nearly a dozen factories employing approximately 100 workers annually producing nearly \$100,000 worth of jewelry for the affluent.

Still, the industry stagnated until mid century. In 1845, eleven factories employed 102 workers to produce \$85,000 worth of jewelry. In the next decade, however, northern Attleborough developed into one of the nation's leading centers of jewelry manufacture. By 1855 the population reached 3,000. Twenty-four jewelry shops with 724 workers created nearly \$1,000,000 in product value. Almost \$1 million dollars worth of jewelry was being produced annually. The development of rolled gold-plated stock and rolled plated curb chains in North Attleborough helped spur this expansion as did improved methods and higher skills among manufacturers. Commercial enterprises for the sale of hardware, dry goods and furniture had also been established.

Attleborough Falls experienced remarkable growth and maintained its new, attractive appearance. H. N. Dagget helped establish a post office and a church for the village. A new Congregational Society, called the Central Congregational, was organized at Attleborough Falls in 1874. The church was completed in May 1875. The Attleborough Falls gasholder, the third in town, was constructed in 1874 to meet increasing demands. The site of the Attleborough Falls gasholder building was previously occupied by the residence of W. Aldrich.

Attleborough Falls assumed an urban character with substantial commercial, institutional and residential growth generated by industrial expansion. The principal manufacturing establishments in the village were: D. Evans and Company, Inc/ (est. 1805, relocated to North Village, 1916), among the earliest jewelry concerns in North Attleborough: V. H. Backinton & Company (est. 1857) which expanded from the manufacture of jet jewelry to become one of the nation's largest producers of society and military metal goods, badges and souvenirs; J. F. Sturd & Sons Company (est. 1865), manufacturer of chains and bracelets; W. H. Bell & Company (est. 1890), maker of bracelets and men's and women's chains; Freeman & Bro./B. S. Freeman & Company (est. 1877), producer of sterling silver, rolled plate and gold springs, swivels and spring rings; Sturdy, Cummings Company; Gold Metal Braid Company (est. c. 1860) the first American fabricator of quality braid and Mason Box Company (est. 1891), maker of all types of boxes, including those used in the jewelry and silverware trade, mailing containers and express boxes, plus paper jewelry display cases and leather novelties as well as operator of a printing plant, which became one of the largest firms of its type in New England.

(continued)

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Attleborough Falls Gasholder Building
North Attleborough (Bristol County),
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In 1890, just after its separation from Attleborough, the town of North Attleborough had a population of more than 6,000. Its industrial output of jewelry and allied manufactures was exported worldwide. By 1894, H. N. Daggett provided gas for all businesses in Attleborough Falls, North Attleborough Center and town street lights. Around 1895, capacity of the works was 100,000 cubic feet per day. Service extended through 10 miles of pipes north to the G.A.R. Hall in Plainville and south through the industrial village of Robinsonville and supplied 327 customers including the shops in Robinsonville, North Attleborough and Attleborough Falls. By 1915, North Attleborough had a population greater than 10,000 and 61 plants for jewelry manufacture and allied industries.

One of three, nineteenth-century centers of jewelry manufacture in the former town of Attleborough before its subdivision, Attleborough Falls retains its identity in the continued operation of the industry albeit on a much smaller scale. The C. Ray Randall Company still manufactures costume jewelry and the Mason Box Company, fabricators of jewelry boxes since 1891, stands across Mount Hope Street from the gasholder building. Also nearby on Mount Hope Street is the 4-story factory, now substantially altered, that was built c. 1850 for Harvey Manning Richards, a local industrialist and real estate entrepreneur who was principally responsible for the organization of the North Attleborough Gas Light Company. Nineteenth century worker duplexes remain on Mount Hope Street along with some small, mid twentieth century houses.

Coal Gas Manufacture

Discovered in the late seventeenth century, manufacture of coal gas began in Europe in the mid eighteenth century. It was well into the nineteenth century, however, before the industry became widely developed in the United States. Coal gas was introduced as an illuminant into New England factories during the War of 1812 and became common by 1840. The first American gas company was formed in Baltimore in 1816. The Gas Light Company of Baltimore first burned pine tar to generate gas for streetlights. The plant converted to coal gas in 1822. In Boston, coal gas lights first illuminated the streets in 1829.

By the 1830s, gas lighting was widely accepted in industrial, commercial and public places. Coal gas became the norm for domestic lighting only after the Civil War. About the same time, Americans began to cook with gas. Other gas products such as water heaters, soldering irons and curling tongs for the hair became available about the same time. The invention of the bunsen burner in this period generated numerous industrial applications for coal gas.

In 1834, Philadelphia was the first American city to establish a municipally-owned gas works. Over

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Continuation Sheet

Attleborough Falls Gasholder Building
North Attleborough (Bristol County),
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the next thirty years, public or private gas works were built in most other major American cities. As mounted by The American Gas Light Journal. The number of gas light companies increased from 183 in 1859 to 971 in 1886, By the first decade of the twentieth century, however, the expansion of the availability of electricity and natural gas initiated a decline in the use of manufactured gas.

Coal gas was manufactured by burning coal. Mined pit or bituminous coal was crushed at the gas works before being fed into an oven or retort and fired to a temperature between 600 and 700 degrees Celsius to create coke in a process called "destructive distillation." This coke was also used to fuel the retort. The burning coal released gases which were funneled into a series of vertical pipes above a pool of water to be cooked to 150 degrees F. Tar and ammonia liquid solidified and fell to the bottom of the piping where it was trapped by the water. Sulfur and other impurities were removed by moving the gas through filters made of coke and peat.

The process of gas manufacture was regularly refined during the nineteenth century. By 1870, the "water gas" process was used. This form of manufacture involved the chemical decomposition of steam. In an oven or retort, coke or anthracite was heated to incandescence then received a blast of air for several minutes. Next steam, introduced to the glowing embers, was reduced by the high heat to its elements of hydrogen and oxygen. The latter combined with carbon emitted by the burning fuel to form carbon monoxide. Since neither hydrogen or carbon monoxide burn with illuminating quality, oil was added to the gas by feeding it through a brick, checker work chamber. Vaporized oil increased both the luminosity and calorific value of the gas.

Initially, when production merely equaled consumption, the gas was directly transported through pipes to its destination for ignition. As market demand increased, the need arose to create storage tanks. Early storage tanks were called "gasometers" because graduated markings on the side allowed the holder also to be used to measure the volume of the gas stored. The first gasholders maintained low pressure, expanding and contracting according to the amount of gas they contained. Two types existed: water-sealed and water-less.

Water-sealed gas, like that in Attleborough Falls, consisted of a cast or wrought-iron tank, called an inverted bell, capsized and partially submerged in a tank or pit of water. The underground tanks or pits were made of stone, concrete, cast or wrought iron. Water-sealed gasholders had either simple (single-lift) or telescopic (multiple-lift) containers. The former variety of iron tank consisted of a solid chamber, like a bell, which rose and fell in the water. The latter kind of tank expanded in sections, like a telescope as more gas entered the assembly. In either case, gas entered the holder from the

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Attleborough Falls Gasholder Building
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bottom through a pipe that extended above the water level. Its natural tendency to rise eliminated the need to pressurize the gas.

The iron tank rose and fell on a set of rollers and tracks according to the amount of gas stored, maintaining greatest pressure at the bottom and decreasing pressure toward the top. The weight of the holder provided pressure for the gas in the mains. Gas was released through pipes also at the bottom of the holder. The iron tank consisted of top and side sheets fastened together by a top curb which was riveted to the side sheets, called the bottom curb or cup channel. Inverted cup rollers were attached to the bottom curb controlling the movement of the tank. Early holders were rectangular in shape, but a cylindrical shape, which more easily allowed for movement of the tank, was quickly adopted.

To protect the apparatus from the elements and to prevent the water, which formed an effective, impermeable seal, from freezing in temperate climates, masonry buildings were added to surround the gasholder. Enclosure also relieved holders of wind pressure, allowing them to be built of thinner plates. Wind pressure, snow loads and icing of the guide and control balance pulleys interfered with free and consistent movement of the gasholder. The gasholder building also added economic value by reducing condensation of the gas in cold weather.

Aesthetically, the gasholder building improved the appearance of the structure. Gasholder buildings were often given detailed exteriors with traditional entries and small windows. The effect was to make the edifice more acceptable and compatible with its environs, especially in residential neighborhoods where gasholders were often located in order to serve the company's clientele. Attention to aesthetic values also helped disguise its dangerous function as a storehouse of explosive gas. Cone-shaped roofs and cupolas were added to ventilate escaping gas.

North Attleborough Gas Light Company

The North Attleborough Gas Light Company was organized in 1855 with capitalization of \$42,500. The plant (demolished in 1987) was located in Attleborough Falls at the intersection of High Street (now Mount Hope Street) and Commonwealth Avenue, about one quarter mile from the Attleborough Falls gasholder building. Coal gas manufacture began at the works in November 1855.

The North Attleborough Gas Light Company was situated at Attleborough Falls, largely through the efforts of Harvey Manning Richards (b. Attleborough, July 1, 1812; d. North Attleborough, July 19, 1886), a wealthy, jewelry manufacturer and real estate magnate who built a stone mill in the village in

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**United States Department of the Interior
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North Attleborough (Bristol County),
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1855. Richards foresaw the potential of Attleborough Falls and purchased all the land lying between the stone mill and the river at the intersection of Chestnut Street. The Panic of 1857 ruined many jewelry manufacturers in the country. H. M. Richards lost his real estate holdings which were subdivided and sold off by the Providence Land Company. The mill was purchased by Handel N. Daggett (b. Attleborough, January 27, 1821; d. Attleborough, February 27, 1894) another local industrialist involved in the manufacture of cotton cloth, shoelaces, stearin candle wicks and sabres and the covering of hoop skirt wires. Daggett began the fabrication of dress and other braids at the site, forming the Gold Metal Braid Company. Operation of his factory was fueled by both water and steam power but lighted by electricity made in the building.

After purchasing the mill, H. N. Daggett also improved the other property at Attleborough Falls which had fallen into disrepair. The dilapidated tenements attracted a number of undesirable occupants who gave the area a bad reputation and threatened other residents of the neighborhood. Daggett established order, improved the holdings and constructed new buildings, including a home for himself. His advancements attracted additional jewelry firms to the Falls and Robinsonville which merged into the single village of Attleborough Falls.

Around 1865, the North Attleborough Gas Light Company erected a second gasholder on East Street in North Attleborough Center. Sold in the 1920's, it remains today, but has been painted and altered by the addition of large garage doors. In 1871, the North Attleborough Gas Light Company works consisted of the processing plant and a larger gasholder. In 1874, \$25,000 was spent to enlarge the plant and construct a new gasholder. By 1876, the estimated value of the company's property was \$80,000.

In 1885, the interconnected plant consisted of two, one-story, coal houses forming a T-shape to surround on two sides the one-story retort house (where the coal was burned to produce crude gas), attached to which was the condensing room (where tar was separated from the crude gas), adjacent to the one-story tar house which abutted a two-story structure with a meter and purifying equipment (which removed sulphur from the gas) on the first level and a pipe shop above. The freestanding, octagonal gasholder was located immediately to the south as was a one-story storehouse for lime, attached to one-story horse sheds sited west of the gasholder.

Gas light proved successful in North Attleborough. The availability of gas lighting and industrial development was mutually supportive. Additional impetus to development came during the Civil War when local firms won government contracts for large quantities of badges and emblems. Growth in North Village was further stimulated in 1870 by improved transportation when completion of the

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**Attleborough Falls Gasholder Building
North Attleborough (Bristol County),
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Attleborough Branch Railroad linked it with East Attleborough (now Attleborough Center) and thereby with Providence, Boston and beyond. Only at the end of the century was North Attleborough surpassed by Attleborough as the foremost focus of the jewelry industry.

The storehouse and horse sheds at the North Attleborough Gas Light Company works were replaced by a new storage shed at the same location before 1889, but thereafter the plant remained unchanged until c. 1911 when the last feature was replaced by a larger 1-story, storage building and an additional, freestanding, 1-story, shed located further south. The octagonal gasholder building was replaced by a modern, steel, exposed tank between 1911 and 1916. The storage building and shed disappeared before 1948, but the plant remained largely intact thereafter until its demise in 1987.

The North Attleborough Gas Company switched from manufacturing to purchasing its gas from the Taunton Gas Company in Attleborough, but is reported to have continued to store gas in the Attleborough Falls gasholder until 1952 when natural gas became available. At that time, the gasholder was removed. Since then, the empty building has stood idle.

In the early twentieth century, the North Attleborough Gas Light Company changed ownership several times between several, out-of-town firms and various holding companies. Between 1931 and 1948, its name was changed to the North Attleborough Gas Company. Roy Underhill, a resident of North Attleborough and an employee of the gas company, purchased the business from the Vermont Light Company in 1940. The Public Utilities Holding Company Act of 1953 forced the divestiture. Roy Underhill's design for the construction of the Attleborough Falls gasholder building are reputed to have been lost in 1940 when the early records of the North Attleborough gas Light Company were destroyed.

Local ownership of the North Attleborough Gas Company helped preserve the Attleborough Falls gasholder building. The Underhills valued the property as one of the company's assets and refused several offers that would have resulted in demolition of the building. The property was sold in 1986 to developers who planned to rehabilitate the property while preserving its historic character. Although the site was rezoned to allow for commercial/industrial use, their plans never materialized and the building remained vacant.

The new owners did provide a deed restriction in 1987 disallowing the razing of the gasholder house for a period of ten years unless the town of North Attleborough was given written notice of their intent to either raze or sell the building without restriction. In the case of an intended free and clear

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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Continuation Sheet

Attleborough Falls Gasholder Building
North Attleborough (Bristol County),
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Section number 8 Page 8

sale, the town was provided a 60-day, first-refusal option to meet any bonafide purchase offer. In the case of intended razing, the town was given an option to purchase the real estate at its full and fair market value.

The Attleborough Falls gasholder building is a rare industrial artifact representative of an era and technology no longer in use. Its prominent location makes it one of the most important local landmarks.

(end of section 8)

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Continuation Sheet

Attleborough Falls Gasholder Building
North Attleborough (Bristol County),
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9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

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- Massachusetts Historical Commission. "Reconnaissance Survey Report: North Attleborough." Boston, 1981.
- North Attleborough Board of Trade. The North Attleborough Book. North Attleborough Board of Trade, 1913.
- North Attleborough, Massachusetts, 1628-1930. North Attleborough: OPS Printing Services, Inc., n.d.
- Pyne, Mary E. "New England' Gasholder Houses". Industrial Archeology.
- _____. Notes on the Description and Significance of the North Attleborough Gas Holder Building, North Attleborough, Massachusetts. North Attleborough Historical Commission.
- Rex, Albert S. "A History of Gas Making in Boston and its Industrial Landscape." unpub. paper for Industrial Archaeology Professor Beaudry, Boston University, Fall 1993.

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

**Attleborough Falls Gasholder Building
North Attleborough (Bristol County),
Massachusetts**

Section number 9, 10 Page 2, 1

Sanborn Fire Insurance Company, "North Attleborough." 1885, 1889, 1894, 1899, 1904, 1911, 1916, 1924, 1931, 1948, and 1965.

Siergiej, Dianne "South Washington Street Historic District." National Register Nomination Form, 1990. Massachusetts Historical Commission, Boston, Massachusetts.

Stone, Orra Laville, History of Massachusetts Industries. Boston: S. J. Clark, 1930.

Taylor, William L. "The Concord (New Hampshire) Gasholder: Last Intact Survivor from the Gas-Making Era." Journal of the Society for Industrial Archeology. Vol. 10, No.1, 1984.

Walling, Henry F. "Map of Bristol County, Massachusetts." New York, 1858.
(end of section 9)

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

With reference to the North Attleborough Assessors' Maps and Lot Numbers, the boundaries of the site of the North Attleborough gas holder building are synonymous with those of Lots 1 and 2 on Map Number 13.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The boundaries of the site of North Attleborough Gasholder Building were selected as being those of the lots retaining the original property lines of the property.

(end)

ATTLEBOROUGH FALLS GASHOLDER BUILDING
 NORTH ATTLEBOROUGH, MASSACHUSETTS
 (BRISTOL COUNTY)

■ SITE



North Attleborough Assessors Map # 13



ATTLEBOROUGH FALLS GASHOLDER BUILDING
380 ELM STREET
NORTH ATLEBOROUGH

BRISTOL COUNTY, MASSACHUSETTS

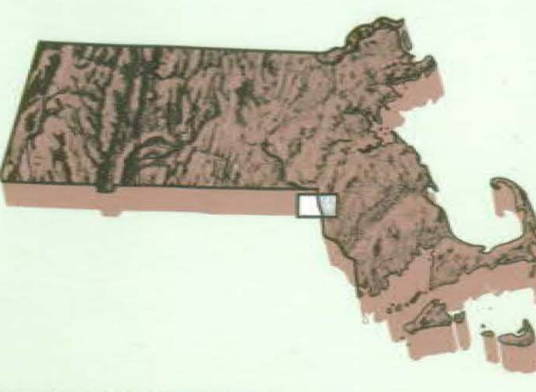
PHOTOGRAPHER: D. L. SIERGIEJ

DATE: OCTOBER 1993

NEGATIVE LOCATION: NORTH ATLEBOROUGH HISTORICAL COMMISSION
NORTH ATLEBOROUGH TOWN HALL

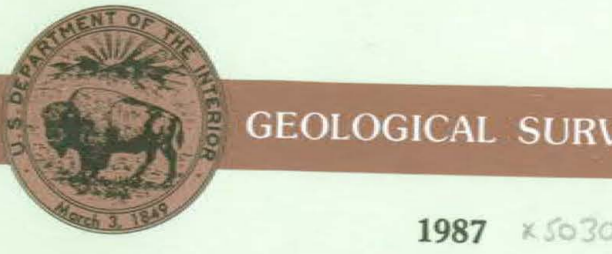
VIEW: FROM MT HOPE STREET LOOKING WEST

Attleboro MASSACHUSETTS—RHODE ISLAND 1:25 000-scale metric topographic map



7.5 X 15 MINUTE QUADRANGLE SHOWING

- Contours and elevations in meters
Highways, roads and other manmade structures
Water features
Woodland areas
Geographic names



Produced by the United States Geological Survey in cooperation with Massachusetts Department of Public Works
Control by USGS, NOS/NOAA, Commonwealth of Massachusetts and State of Rhode Island agencies
Compiled by photogrammetric methods from aerial photographs taken 1981. Field checked 1982. Map revised 1987.

CONTOUR INTERVAL 3 METERS
NATIONAL GEODETIC VERTICAL DATUM OF 1929
CONTROL ELEVATIONS SHOWN TO THE NEAREST 0.1 METER
OTHER ELEVATIONS SHOWN TO THE NEAREST 0.5 METER

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS

Table with 3 columns: Conversion Table (Meters to Feet), Declination Diagram, and Adjoining Maps (Grid numbers 1-8).

FOR SALE BY U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY
DENVER, COLORADO 80225, OR RESTON, VIRGINIA 22092

Topographic Map Symbols

- Primary highway, hard surface
Secondary highway, hard surface
Light-duty road, hard or improved surface
Unimproved road, trail
Route marker: Interstate; U. S.; State
Railroad: standard gage; narrow gage
Bridge: drawbridge
Footbridge; overpass; underpass
Ball-up area: only selected landmark buildings shown
House; farm; church; school; large structure
Boundary: National, with monument; State; County; parish; Civil township, precinct, district; Incorporated city, village, town; National or State reservation; small park; Land grant with monument; food storage center; U. S. public lands survey: range, township; section; Range, township; section line: location approximate; Fence or field line; Power transmission line: located tower; Dam; dam with lock; Cemetery: grave; Campground; picnic area; U. S. location monument; Wooded water with spring; Mine shaft; prospect; adit or cave; Control: horizontal station; vertical station; spot elevation; Contour: index, intermediate; supplementary; depression; Distorted surface: any mine, levee, sand; Bathymetric contours: index, intermediate; Perennial lake and stream; intermittent lake and stream; Rapids, large and small; falls, large and small; Submerged marsh; marsh, swamp; Land subject to controlled inundation; Scrub; mangrove; Orchard; vineyard

A pamphlet describing topographic maps is available on request



National Register of Historic Places

Note to the record

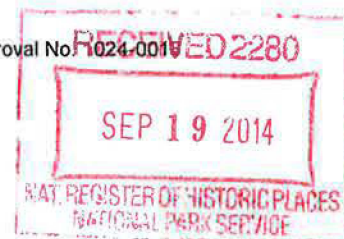
Additional Documentation: 2014

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number ___ Page 1

OMB Approval No. 1024-0018



Attleborough Falls Gasholder Building
North Attleborough (Bristol County), MA

Supplementary research by Ann Chapdelaine of the North Attleborough Historical Commission submitted soon after the nomination of the Attleborough Falls Gasholder Building had been completed, but not incorporated into the final nomination, determined that **the gasholder building was constructed in 1882** rather than 1874 as previously believed. This page, prepared in August 2014, makes the following amendments to the National Register nomination (NR Reference Number 96000848), listed 1 August 1996.

1. Period of Significance revised to 1882-1952
2. Significant Dates, revised to 1882
3. Section 7, page 1, par. 1, line 1 should read: The Attleborough Falls gasholder building, erected in 1882, is a circular ...
4. Section 8, page 6, par. 3, add to the end of the paragraph: The Attleborough Falls gasholder, the third in town, was constructed in 1882 at a cost of about \$25,000 to meet increasing demands.
5. Section 9, page 1, insert a new line 4 to read: "Busy Builders No.2." The Attleboro Chronicle, January 6, 1883.
6. Section 9, page 2, after entry 2 insert: "Sprays from the Falls ." The Attleboro Chronicle, October 21, 1882 and December 9, 1882.

(end)

Attleborough Falls Gasholder Building
Name of Property

Bristol County, Massachusetts
County and State

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.)

Property is:

- A** owned by 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 of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

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 # _____

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Industry

Architecture

Period of Significance

~~1874-1940~~ **1882-1952 ***

Significant Dates

~~1874~~ **1882**

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Bullder

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

Massachusetts Historical Commission

** Corrected August 2014 (see continuation sheet)*

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Attleborough Falls Gasholder Building
North Attleborough (Bristol County),
Massachusetts

Section number 7 Page 1

7. DESCRIPTION

The Attleborough Falls gasholder building, erected in ~~1874~~ ¹⁸⁸², is a circular, masonry building located at 380 Elm Street in the industrial village of Attleborough Falls, two miles southwest of the central business district of North Attleborough, Massachusetts. The gasholder building sits at the intersection of Mount Hope and Elm Streets which is also occupied by a gas station, an apartment house and a single family home. The building sits on a 19,249 square-foot excavated lot that slopes to the east and is wooded with tall maple trees to form an attractive setting. A retaining wall begins along the west side of the building and runs diminishing in height along the Elm Street (southern) boundary toward the corner of Mount Hope Street. A three foot, retaining wall also denotes the elevated site along the Mount Hope Street (east) boundary. A group of two-family houses occupy the north side of Elm Street west of the gasholder building. An approximately .5 acre parking lot lies immediately to the north of the site.

The twelve-bay, round gasholder building is 67 feet in diameter and rises one, eighteen-foot story from a cut granite foundation to a conical, slate roof centered with an octagonal cupola. The size of the North Attleborough gasholder building is smaller than average for its period. In the 1870s, the typical gasholder was 70 feet in diameter with a height of 60 feet. A well-proportioned, hip-roofed, enclosed entry, detailed in imitation of the main block, faces the intersection.

The one-foot thick, finely-detailed, common bond, masonry walls include corbeled brickwork at the roof line and each of the twelve bays are defined by pilasters which divide the circumference. Alternating bays contain a bay of four, 8/2, double-hung sash, windows with brownstone lintels and a continuous, brownstone sill. On the northern side of the building, the window bay facing northwest includes one bricked-in opening.

On the projecting entry, similarly-configured, but diminutive casement windows provide illumination. The front doorway is recessed behind a brownstone lintel surmounted by corbeled brickwork supported by recessed panels topped with brownstone sections and corbeled capitals. The existing door is a replacement. The size of the opening of the likely original door on the interior suggests the entry previously included sidelights. The exceptional workmanship and detailing enhance the building's compatibility with the largely residential nature of its immediate vicinity.

The massive, conical, roof, covered with common lap slate, rises approximately 30 feet from the top of the side walls to the cupola. It is supported by sixteen, large radial, wooden beams. Iron tie rods, centered on an iron ring in the middle of the building, are in lateral tension. The cupola has a

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetAttleborough Falls Gasholder Building
North Attleborough (Bristol County),
MassachusettsSection number 8 Page 6

1855. Richards foresaw the potential of Attleborough Falls and purchased all the land lying between the stone mill and the river at the intersection of Chestnut Street. The Panic of 1857 ruined many jewelry manufacturers in the country. H. M. Richards lost his real estate holdings which were subdivided and sold off by the Providence Land Company. The mill was purchased by Handel N. Daggett (b. Attleborough, January 27, 1821; d. Attleborough, February 27, 1894) another local industrialist involved in the manufacture of cotton cloth, shoelaces, stearin candle wicks and sabres and the covering of hoop skirt wires. Daggett began the fabrication of dress and other braids at the site, forming the Gold Metal Braid Company. Operation of his factory was fueled by both water and steam power but lighted by electricity made in the building.

After purchasing the mill, H. N. Daggett also improved the other property at Attleborough Falls which had fallen into disrepair. The dilapidated tenements attracted a number of undesirable occupants who gave the area a bad reputation and threatened other residents of the neighborhood. Daggett established order, improved the holdings and constructed new buildings, including a home for himself. His advancements attracted additional jewelry firms to the Falls and Robinsonville which merged into the single village of Attleborough Falls.

Around 1865, the North Attleborough Gas Light Company erected a second gasholder on East Street in North Attleborough Center. Sold in the 1920's, it remains today, but has been painted and altered by the addition of large garage doors. In 1871, the North Attleborough Gas Light Company works consisted of the processing plant and a larger gasholder. In 1874, \$25,000 was spent to enlarge the plant and construct a new gasholder. By 1876, the estimated value of the company's property was \$80,000. **The Attleborough Falls gasholder, the third in town, was constructed in 1882 at a cost of about \$25,000 to meet increasing demands.**

In 1885, the interconnected plant consisted of two, one-story, coal houses forming a T-shape to surround on two sides the one-story retort house (where the coal was burned to produce crude gas), attached to which was the condensing room (where tar was separated from the crude gas), adjacent to the one-story tar house which abutted a two-story structure with a meter and purifying equipment (which removed sulphur from the gas) on the first level and a pipe shop above. The freestanding, octagonal gasholder was located immediately to the south as was a one-story storehouse for lime, attached to one-story horse sheds sited west of the gasholder.

Gas light proved successful in North Attleborough. The availability of gas lighting and industrial development was mutually supportive. Additional impetus to development came during the Civil War when local firms won government contracts for large quantities of badges and emblems. Growth in North Village was further stimulated in 1870 by improved transportation when completion of the

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Attleborough Falls Gasholder Building
North Attleborough (Bristol County),
Massachusetts

Section number 9 Page 1

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

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- Friedberg, Betsy and Gordon, Edward. "North Attleborough Town Center Historic District" National Register Nomination Form, 1985. Massachusetts Historical Commission, Boston, Massachusetts.
- Greenwood, Richard E. and Friedberg, Betsy. "Old Town Historic District." National Register Nomination Form, 1990. Massachusetts Historical Commission, Boston, Massachusetts.
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(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Attleborough Falls Gasholder Building
North Attleborough (Bristol County),
Massachusetts

Section number 9, 10 Page 2, 1

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Walling, Henry F. "Map of Bristol County, Massachusetts." New York, 1858.
(end of section 9)

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

With reference to the North Attleborough Assessors' Maps and Lot Numbers, the boundaries of the site of the North Attleborough gas holder building are synonymous with those of Lots 1 and 2 on Map Number 13.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The boundaries of the site of North Attleborough Gasholder Building were selected as being those of the lots retaining the original property lines of the property.

(end)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION

PROPERTY NAME: Attleborough Falls Gasholder Building

MULTIPLE NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: MASSACHUSETTS, Bristol

DATE RECEIVED: 9/19/14 DATE OF PENDING LIST:
DATE OF 16TH DAY: DATE OF 45TH DAY: 11/05/14
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 96000848

NOMINATOR: STATE

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N
OTHER: N PDIL: N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N
REQUEST: N SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: N NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

ACCEPT RETURN REJECT 10.29.14 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

Additional Documentation Approved

RECOM./CRITERIA Accept
REVIEWER Edson Beall DISCIPLINE History
TELEPHONE _____ DATE 10.29.14

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N

If a nomination is returned to the nominating authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the NPS.

National Register of Historic Places
Memo to File

Correspondence

The Correspondence consists of communications from (and possibly to) the nominating authority, notes from the staff of the National Register of Historic Places, and/or other material the National Register of Historic Places received associated with the property.

Correspondence may also include information from other sources, drafts of the nomination, letters of support or objection, memorandums, and ephemera which document the efforts to recognize the property.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY NAME: Attleborough Falls Gasholder Building

MULTIPLE
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: MASSACHUSETTS, Bristol

DATE RECEIVED: 7/05/96 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 7/16/96
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 8/01/96 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 8/19/96
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 96000848

NOMINATOR: STATE

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N
OTHER: N PDIL: N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N
REQUEST: N SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: N NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

ACCEPT RETURN REJECT 8.1.96 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

**Entered in the
National Register**

RECOM./CRITERIA _____

REVIEWER _____ DISCIPLINE _____

TELEPHONE _____ DATE _____

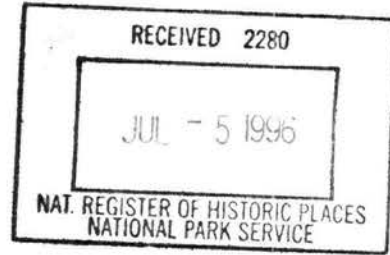
DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
William Francis Galvin, Secretary of the Commonwealth
Massachusetts Historical Commission

June 26, 1996

Carol Shull
Keeper
National Register of Historic Places
Department of the Interior
National Park Service
P. O. Box 37127
Washington, D. C. 20013-7127



Dear Ms. Shull:

Enclosed please find the following nomination form:

Attleborough Falls Gasholder Building, 380 Elm Street, North Attleborough (Bristol County),
Massachusetts, 02760

The nomination has been voted eligible by the State Review Board and has been signed by the State Historic Preservation Officer. Owners were notified of pending State Review Board consideration 30-75 days before the meeting and were afforded the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Betsy Friedberg".

Betsy Friedberg
National Register Director
Massachusetts Historical Commission

enclosure

cc: Stephen Fish, PO Box 938, Easton, MA 02375
Richard Peterson, Chairperson, North Attleborough Historical Commission, 5 Brandon
Street, North Attleborough, MA 02760
Dianne L. Siergiej, Commonweal Collaborative, 66 West St., Leominster, MA 01453



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
William Francis Galvin, Secretary of the Commonwealth
Massachusetts Historical Commission

August 13, 2014

J. Paul Loether
National Park Service 2280, 8th Floor
National Register of Historic Places
1201 I (eye) Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20005

96000248

RE: Additional Documentation for Attleborough Falls Gasholder Building, North Attleborough (Bristol County), Massachusetts

Dear Mr. Loether:

It has recently come to my attention that research submitted to MHC after the Attleborough Falls Gasholder Building was listed on the National Register (August 1, 1996) determined that the building was constructed in 1882 rather than 1874. I am enclosing corrected pages of the nomination along with a continuation sheet that lists all of the changes.

Please let me know if you need anything else to bring your files up to date.

Sincerely,

Betsy Friedberg
National Register Director
Massachusetts Historical Commission

Enclosures

xc: North Attleborough Historical Commission with enclosures