

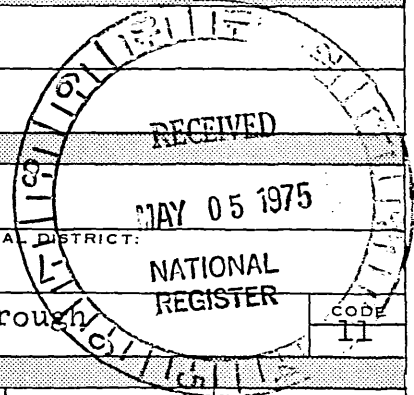
NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: New Hampshire
COUNTY: Hillsborough
FOR NPS USE ONLY
ENTRY DATE: MAY 23 1975

1. NAME
COMMON: Weston Observatory
AND/OR HISTORIC: Weston Observatory

2. LOCATION
STREET AND NUMBER: Oak Hill, Derryfield Park
CITY OR TOWN: Manchester
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT: First
STATE: New Hampshire
CODE: 33
COUNTY: Hillsborough
CODE: 11



3. CLASSIFICATION
CATEGORY: Building
OWNERSHIP: Public
STATUS: Unoccupied
ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC: No
PRESENT USE: Other (Specify) unused

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY
OWNER'S NAME: City of Manchester
STREET AND NUMBER: City Hall, 908 Elm Street
CITY OR TOWN: Manchester
STATE: New Hampshire
CODE: 33

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION
COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.: Hillsborough County Registry of Deeds,
STREET AND NUMBER: Hillsborough County Court House, PO Box 370, 19 Temple St.
CITY OR TOWN: Nashua,
STATE: New Hampshire
CODE: 33

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS
TITLE OF SURVEY: None.
DATE OF SURVEY:
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:
STREET AND NUMBER:
CITY OR TOWN:
STATE:
CODE:

STATE: New Hampshire
COUNTY: Hillsborough
ENTRY NUMBER: 78
DATE: 5/23/75
FOR NPS USE ONLY

7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unaltered		<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site	

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Weston Observatory stands atop Oak Hill which, in turn, is located within Derryfield Park. This is an extremely large park encompassing many acres of grass lawns, wooded areas and a ski slope for the use of city residents. Oak Hill is by far the best vantage point for viewing the panorama of the city and the lands beyond the Merrimack River and on to the distant mountains. From this point the city appears to be laid at the viewer's feet and it is for this reason that this location was chosen for the observatory tower.

The Weston Observatory is a five story, eight sided tower constructed of gray granite set in an irregular uncoursed pattern. Its walls taper slightly inward above the heavy cornice at the top of the first story. An entrance on the West side is topped with a smooth granite lintel reading WESTON and gives access to the interior spiral iron stairway which leads to the roofed open observation platform at the top of the tower. The platform is railed on all sides and its roof, supported by eight slim metal posts, is topped by an eight sided small cupola. Rectangular windows with slightly projecting granite sills are found in tiers of three on every other side, their levels reflecting the rising stair inside. Massive stone blocks, one to a side, finish the tower's base. The top beneath the observation platform is finished with a moulded cornice above a plain frieze. This is sheathed in copper as is the matching but smaller cornice beneath the platform's roof, the cupola and the roof itself.

With the exception of its highly deteriorated and almost ruinous condition, the tower stands today largely as when it was built in 1897. The double hung two pane sashes have disappeared from the windows together with their wooden frames. The original wooden door with its four panes of glass at the top is also missing and the relief map identifying the terrain seen from the observatory is no longer in place on the observation platform. The fabric of the building has deteriorated perhaps beyond repair. Large chunks of granite have fallen from the exterior. Weather has gotten in between the exterior granite and the interior brick wall causing damage to both and changes in the rubble fill between. The lower section of the stairway is missing, the glass is gone from the cupola and large sections of the copper sheathing have been torn away.

At the present time the observatory is surrounded by a high wire fence in an attempt to keep out the young vandals who have done so much damage to the structure. The area around the building is now much overgrown and difficult to police and the vandals continue to gain access despite the various preventive measures taken to keep them out.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

8. SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

<input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian	<input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century	<input type="checkbox"/> 18th Century	<input type="checkbox"/> 20th Century
<input type="checkbox"/> 15th Century	<input type="checkbox"/> 17th Century	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 19th Century	

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) 1897

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

<input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal	<input type="checkbox"/> Education	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Political	<input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning
<input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> Engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) <u>recreation</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> Historic	<input type="checkbox"/> Industry	<input type="checkbox"/> Science	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> Invention	<input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture	_____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> Landscape	<input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Art	<input type="checkbox"/> Literature	<input type="checkbox"/> Theater	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> Military	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Communications	<input type="checkbox"/> Music		
<input type="checkbox"/> Conservation			

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Architecture

The Weston Observatory is a unique and handsome structure for the city of Manchester. Its location atop Oak Hill makes it a landmark seen for miles around and its strong simple design makes it a noteworthy structure in its own right. The building was designed by the Lowell, Mass. firm of Davis and Raynes and the building contract given to Head and Dowst, a prominent Manchester firm. The corner stone was laid by the New Hampshire State Grand Lodge A.F. and A.M. on September 7, 1896 during the semi-centennial celebration of the city of Manchester. The structure was dedicated and opened to the public with great fanfare on September 6, 1897.

The tower is built of granite from the Bailey quarry in Allentown. The floor of the outlook is 50 feet from the ground, the outlook is 16 feet high and the total height of the structure is 66 feet from base to roof peak. At the time of its construction local newspapers proudly stated that it was so well constructed that it would stand for centuries an unblemished monument to its builder.

Political

The Observatory was built by the city of Manchester with \$5,000 left to it for that purpose by ex-Governor James A. Weston at that time New Hampshire's only Governor from Manchester who was also a native born resident of that city. Governor Weston served two terms as Governor of the state and four as Mayor of the city of Manchester. He was a well known civil engineer having laid out a considerable portion of the track for the Concord Railroad and the Concord & Portsmouth Railroad. He was also known for his part in the design and construction of the water works for the cities of both Concord and Manchester and for his 1870 map of the city of Manchester.

Gov. Weston and his family resided in a house at the corner of Myrtle and Maple streets in Manchester. The site is now occupied by a privately endowed park established by a later resident. The observatory is therefore the only structure

continued on continuation sheet 1

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Clarke, John B. Successful New Hampshire Men. Manchester, John B. Clarke, 1882.

"Weston Observatory". Undated newspaper clipping from: The Amoskeag Textile Club Bulletin. Manchester, The Amoskeag Company. n.d. Architectural file, Weston Observatory folder, The Manchester Historic Association.

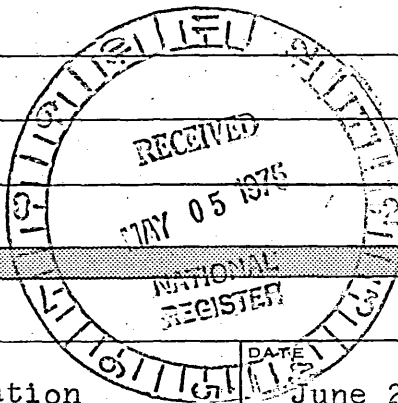
10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			OR	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	
NW	° ' "	° ' "		43° 00' 04"	71° 26' 24"	
NE	° ' "	° ' "				
SE	° ' "	° ' "				
SW	° ' "	° ' "				

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: none-located in a large park (.7 of an acre)

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

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE



11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE: Virginia G. Flisko, Director

ORGANIZATION: The Manchester Historic Association

STREET AND NUMBER: 129 Amherst Street

CITY OR TOWN: Manchester

STATE: New Hampshire

CODE: 33

DATE: June 20, 1974

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION **NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION**

As the designated State Liaison 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. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National State Local

Name: [Signature]
 Title: Commissioner, DRED
 State Historic Preservation Officer

Date: April 30, 1975

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

[Signature]
 Director, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date: 5/28/75

ATTEST:
[Signature]
 Keeper of The National Register

Date: MAY 22 1975

E E I N S T R U C T I O N S

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Continuation Sheet) 1

STATE	New Hampshire	
COUNTY	Hillaborough	
FOR NPS USE ONLY		
ENTRY NUMBER		DATE
		MAY 23 1975

(Number all entries)

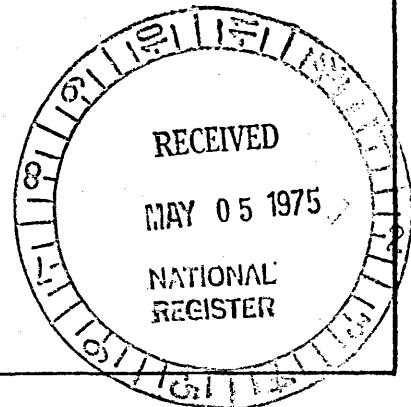
8. SIGNIFICANCE continued

presently standing in Manchester which is strongly connected with this important state and local personage.

Recreation

The Weston Observatory was originally kept open to the public during the summer months and was a popular focal point for city residents who enjoyed viewing the city and the state beyond from this high vantage point. Governor Weston stated in his will that his purpose in leaving this bequest to the city was "for the advancement of science, for educational, purposes, and for the pleasure, enjoyment, benefit and mental improvement of the inhabitants of Manchester and for the people who may visit Manchester." The observatory served these purposes admirably up until the time of the Second World War. The tower is a symbol of a more leisurely time when people found their recreation close to home and a walk or drive to a high vantage point was considered a pleasant afternoon's occupation. It was the place to take visitors and show them the young city of which the residents were so proud, and perhaps was also the magnet for young couples, as the hill was for evening "parkers" until the road to the summit was closed a few years ago.

During WW II the observatory was used as an airplane spotting post and after the war as a broadcasting tower for the police department. Due to these activities public use was discontinued and the city never again opened the structure to the public for recreational purposes. The observatory's present state of near ruin is directly due to this action and to the total lack of maintenance by the city.



**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM**

(Continuation Sheet) 2

STATE New Hampshire	
COUNTY Hillsborough	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
	MAY 28 1975

(Number all entries)

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA, continued

10.2 UTM References

Zone 19
Easting 3-01-175
Northing 47-63-600

