National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

1. Name of Property
   historic name  Saugatuck Pump House
   other names/site number  

2. Location
   street & number  735 Park Street
   city or town  Saugatuck
   state  Michigan  code  005  county  Allegan  code  005  zip code  49453

3. State/Federal Agency Certification
   As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,
   I hereby certify that this _X_ 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 at the following level(s) of significance:
   ___ national  ___ statewide  _X_ local

   Signature of certifying official/Title  Date
   MI SHPO
   State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government
   In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.

   Signature of commenting official  Date
   Title  State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

4. National Park Service Certification
   I hereby certify that this property is:
   ___ entered in the National Register  ___ determined eligible for the National Register
   ___ determined not eligible for the National Register  ___ removed from the National Register
   ___ other (explain):  

   Signature of the Keeper  Date of Action
5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- [ ] Private
- [x] public - Local
- [ ] public - State
- [ ] public - Federal

Category of Property
(Check only one box.)

- [x] building(s)
- [ ] district
- [ ] site
- [ ] structure
- [ ] object

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contributing</th>
<th>Noncontributing</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>buildings</td>
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<td>objects</td>
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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

None

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

Industry/Processing/Extraction:
- waterworks
- energy facility

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

Recreation and Culture: Museum

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions.)

Other: hip/gable-roof vernacular brick

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions.)

foundation: Not visible
walls: Brick
roof: Asphalt
other: N/A

Narrative Description
(Describe the historic and current physical appearance of the property. Explain contributing and noncontributing resources if necessary. Begin with a summary paragraph that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, setting, size, and significant features.)

Summary Paragraph

The building known locally as “The Pump House” is a red brick structure with an approximately 1400 square foot footprint that stands on the west bank of the Kalamazoo River across from downtown Saugatuck. It is located at the foot of a large, wooded sand dune known as Mount Baldhead, which is a city park. The area is today wooded with homes and cottages, docks on the river, and a magnificent view up and down the river. The pump house stands with its back (west side) to Park Street and front (east) facing the river. There are six parking spaces to the west, along the street, and a large parking lot across the street to the west. The lot on which the building sits measures 115 feet on the east and west sides, seventy feet on the north boundary and forty-three feet on the south. The Saugatuck-Douglas Historical Society (SDHS) has leased the property from the City of Saugatuck since 1992. A concrete switchback walkway was added to the north of the building around 1995 to facilitate access for the disabled. Between 1999 and 2001 new gardens were designed and planted along the walkway; they are maintained by the SDHS. Entrance to the site is through a hip-roof brick and wood pavilion (visible at right edge of Photo 1) that was constructed in 2001.

Narrative Description

Around 1900 many cities and towns around America were installing their first municipal water and electrical systems. According to the August 1900 Sanborn fire maps, the then-Village of Saugatuck had a population of 800, with many wooden structures. Its water facilities were rated “not good,” with the sources of water being the Kalamazoo River and six public wells. There was no organized fire department and only one hand-pulled fire vehicle, with cisterns located around the village.

Over the next few years, there were several major building fires in the area. On November 22, 1903, a fire destroyed most of a downtown residence in what was described as “a distressing spectacle” (“Wiped Out by Fire,” Commercial Record, Nov. 27, 1903). This event prompted the common council to meet in special session the very next day and call a special election on December 7 on the question of the issuance of $8500 in bonds to pay for design and construction of a system of water works (“The Water Works Question,” Commercial Record, December 4, 1903). The Council had previously received a design and estimate for an elevated tank system similar to ones that had been installed in other villages in Michigan. The measure passed by a vote of 100 to 9 (“100 to 9,” Commercial Record, Dec. 11, 1903). The story noted that, “our recent great fire had opened the eyes of our people to the necessity of better fire protection.”

Next a committee was appointed to study what kind of system should be installed, and where. It met with several engineers and visited water plants in the Chicago area (“Committee Reports,” Commercial Record, Jan. 1, 1904). Concluding that a tank system would be more expensive, it recommended instead a 100,000-gallon reservoir be built at a high point west of
the river with a main running under the river, with pumps powered by gas engines to push the water up into the reservoir. A few days later, the Village agreed to retain John W. Alvord to prepare the plans and superintend the work, for a fee of $400 (“More About Water Works,” Commercial Record, Jan. 15, 1904). Alvord submitted proposed specifications for the water system to the Village Board on or about March 5, 1904 (“Specifications of the Water Works System,” Commercial Record, March 11, 1904). Bids were approved in May along with an award of the bond issue (“Council Accepts Bids,” Commercial Record, May 6, 1904). Work commenced and it was reported in mid-August that the “power house [was] finished and the machinery is now in it….” (“Water Works Almost Complete,” Commercial Record, Aug. 19, 1904). On October 14, 1904, the local paper reported that the system had been completed and had recently been turned on, with three miles of pipes and a number of hydrants (“Water Turned On,” Commercial Record, October 14, 1904). “We now have one of the best water systems in the country,” the article stated. A J. F. Metzgar was the first citizen to have water in his house, and the pressure was so great that a step-down valve had to be installed to reduce it (Id.).

The Pump House is the most visible manifestation of Saugatuck’s first municipal water system. It is situated at the bottom of Mount Baldhead, a sand dune over 200 feet high that in the 1800s had little vegetation at the top, hence the name. The pumps, wells and reservoir of the original water system were sited away from the town for health reasons, to keep the drinking water away from cesspools and contamination in the Village (“Specifications of the Water Works System,” Commercial Record, March 11, 1904). Water was drawn from seven wells, then pumped – by two 25-horsepower gasoline-powered pumps in the Pump House – to a 100,000-gallon reservoir at the top of what is now Lone Pine Dune, just north of Mt. Baldhead (“Water Turned On,” Commercial Record, Oct. 14, 1904). Water then flowed by gravity down the hill and through pipes under the river into mains that served buildings and hydrants in the Village.

The Pump House itself is a simple one-story structure. It measures fifty-eight feet in length on the river (east) and street (west) sides, twenty-seven feet wide in the north section, and twenty-two feet wide in the south section. Its dominant features are its red brick walls, hipped roofs with flaring eaves and wide overhangs with exposed rafter beams, and four sets of triple windows on the front (river) side topped by white-painted colonial caps. The low west elevation displays two triple windows in the south section and the north end two double windows. The foundation is of concrete and block. The roof is timber-framed and now clad in asphalt shingling. A list of specifications of the water system submitted by Alvord to the Village Board on or about March 5, 1904, states that the “pumping station” building was estimated to cost $720.00 to construct (“Specifications of the Water Works System,” Commercial Record, March 11, 1904).

The original 1904 building was the southern section (slightly under half the overall length) of the current one, measuring twenty-two by twenty-five feet. A c. 1906 post card view shows the building as originally constructed, with the east side’s two triple windows and to their north/right the slightly projecting brick stack, part of what was then a chimney stack that rose above the roofline, in place. The building had a hip roof, and the entry was in a broad square-head, transomed near the south end of the narrow north facade.

In 1912 the building was more than doubled in size to also house the Village’s first electric power generating station. In early March of that year the Village Board approved an electric light ordinance
and a franchise to W. T. McCaskey to provide electrical service to the Village for street lights and private homes and other buildings. McCaskey also “made the village a proposition to pump the city water” as well. If this was approved, according to the article, the electric light plant would be built as an expansion of the pump house (“Electric Light Ordinance Is Passed,” Commercial Record, 3/9/1912). This is apparently what happened. The new plant also used water power from the reservoir atop the nearby dune to generate the electricity.

An April 5, 1912, article reports that E. A. Armstrong, from Lansing, was in town to arrange for building the new power house for the newly established Lake Shore Electric Co. The story stated, “the new building will be practically an addition to the water works building and will be of the same style of architecture.” Armstrong’s visit to Saugatuck was also “to ascertain the number of lights that will be used by private parties and arrange for wiring houses, which will be well to have done before the spring house cleaning.” A two candle power light will cost “about three eighths of a cent per hour for the time it is in use” (“Lake Shore Electrical Co.,” Commercial Record, April 5, 1912).

Construction of the power house addition to the pump house must have gotten under way soon after, and the electric light plant went into operation by mid-July 1912. A July 19 story, “Opening a Success,” in the Commercial Record reported on an open house at the Lake Shore Electric Co.’s showroom on Hoffman Street in Saugatuck two days earlier. Termed a “decided success,” the open house presented a display of “all kinds of light fixtures, electric fans, irons, bread toasters and vacuum cleaners, which were thoroughly demonstrated. The show rooms will be open afternoon and evening and the public is invited to call and inspect their line of fixtures at any time. The street lights were turned on the same evening and are a decided improvement over the old gasoline lamps.”

The addition on the pump house’s north side measured thirty-two feet in length by twenty-seven feet in width (five feet wider than the original). A much broader entry, though in similar transomed style to the original, was installed in the center of the eastern (river-facing) side. The windows’ smooth slab sills and molded wood colonial caps appear to be the originals installed when the building’s two sections were constructed. The floor of the addition is eighteen inches higher than that of the original portion of the building, presumably to protect the generating equipment in case of a water leak.

By the 1930s, if not before, the pumping and generating functions were no longer adequate to the village’s growing population and needs and had been moved to larger facilities. The Pump House was abandoned and gradually fell into disrepair. By 1970 its heavy slate roof had pushed out portions of the walls. Part of the west wall had fallen in, exposing the interior.

In 1972 Dr. and Mrs. William Shorey of Chicago contracted with the Village to lease the property for twenty years to serve as their cottage in exchange for restoring the building. The work included removal of the remaining pumping and generation equipment, and replacement of the roof and certain footings, as well as repairs to the windows, doors and brickwork. A new pine floor was installed over the original maple. A fireplace was also added. The floor plan was a large living area on the north side, where the addition had been made, while the original space on the south side was used as the kitchen (see photo submitted herewith). A loft was installed on that side to contain sleeping quarters (Interview with Jay Shorey, July 22, 2015).
When that lease expired and Dr. Shorey passed away, in 1992 the City leased the property to the SDHS, which opened the community’s first historical museum in the space. The walls were sheetrocked, and a new pine floor was added over the old one. In 2001 an entrance pavilion, with red brick piers and bracketed hip-roof wood canopy, was added out by the street at the property’s northwest end, and a concrete switchback walk replaced railroad tie stairs from the street level down to the entrance. Gardens on the north side of the building, created by the Shoreys, have been restored and improved over the last twenty years. A riverfront retaining wall and black iron fencing were added to define the garden area, while the waterfront below the wall was left in its natural state.

Today the Pump House Museum consists of two connected rooms and a small bathroom. The large north room has interior dimensions of thirty by twenty-five feet while the south room is twenty by twenty-five feet; the loft space, located on the west side of the smaller south room, measures approximately eight by twenty-five feet. The interior walls are of sheetrock, and the floor is pine. The museum welcomes over 8,000 visitors a year to its interior exhibition space and an estimated additional 20,000 to the site itself.

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.

E a cemetery.

F a commemorative property.

G less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

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

Property is:

A Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.

B removed from its original location.

C a birthplace or grave.
Areas of Significance
(Enter categories from instructions.)

Engineering
Social History

Significant Person
(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)
Alvord, John W.

Period of Significance
1904-c. 1930

Cultural Affiliation
N/A

Significant Dates
1904
1912

Architect/Builder
Alvord, John W.

Period of Significance (justification):
Construction of first part of plant to time when it was last used for its original purposes (according to best estimate with available information).

Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary)
N/A

Statement of Significance
Summary Paragraph
(Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance and applicable criteria.)
The Saugatuck Pump House meets national register criterion A in the Saugatuck context for housing Saugatuck’s first public water supply pumping station and electric system generating plant. The water pumping station went into operation in 1904, the electric plant, operated by the Lake Shore Electric Company, in 1912. The pump house also meets national register criterion B for its direct association with John W. Alvord, a nationally prominent hydraulic and sanitary engineer of the time from the Chicago area. Alvord, who planned the village public water system of which the pump house was a component, was a summer resident in Saugatuck at the time he was tapped to plan Saugatuck’s water system and for over forty years in all.

Narrative Statement of Significance
(Provide at least one paragraph for each area of significance.)

Criterion A – Historic Events
The Pump House is historically significant at the local Saugatuck level in that it marks two major events in the history of the Village of Saugatuck: the introduction of its first public water system and its first electrical system. As such it is also symbolic of a national movement to develop
clean household water and municipal fire protection at the turn of the last century. The direct impetus for the establishment of the municipal water system in 1903-04 was several fires that destroyed a hotel and other buildings. As Saugatuck (population then approximately 800) became more popular as a resort town with direct steamship traffic from Chicago and interurban service that connected it to nearby cities including Grand Rapids, it became apparent that the village needed to replace the cisterns that, along with private wells, provided the water supply with a system that provided a more adequate water supply for all purposes, including fighting fires in this town of mostly wooden buildings. As in other small towns and villages of the time, the installation of a powered municipal water system greatly improved health and safety, setting the stage for further growth.

The pump house building initially housed two large gasoline-powered pumps, which lifted water from seven wells up 175 feet to a concrete reservoir built at the top of a neighboring sand dune. The water then flowed downhill and under the Kalamazoo River into mains in the village, serving homes and commercial buildings, as well as a number of fire hydrants. According to articles published at the time, the cost to build the structure itself was estimated at $720, while that of the entire system was approximately $10,000.

The Pump House signifies a time in our history when even smaller towns and villages were able to grow beyond the restrictions of standing water and dirty and dangerous gas lamps. Systems such as this improved safety by enhancing the town’s ability to fight fires, providing safe drinking water, and illuminating the downtown streets. In a village made up mostly of wooden buildings, the fear of fire and risk of destruction were greatly reduced when cisterns were replaced by fire hydrants as the primary fire prevention system. This is documented in Sanborn Fire Maps from August 1900 and 1910, before and after the installation of the water system.

**Criterion B – John W. Alvord**

The 1904 Pump House, and reportedly the 1912 addition, were designed by John W. Alvord, a summer resident of the area, who was one of the leading water/sanitary engineers of his time. While working in nearby Holland, Michigan, in 1899, Alvord viewed the Lake Michigan shore in the Saugatuck-Douglas area from a passing steamer and fell in love with the area. Alvord and his wife bought a waterfront lot later that year and in 1900 built a summer cottage there. Alvord was one of the founders of Shorewood, a ninety-seven-acre cottage community on the lakeshore established in 1902, and personally laid out the grounds into seventy-four lots, with streets and park areas. Alvord served as the president of the Shorewood Association, the association of stockholders that owned and managed the property, for its first twenty-three years and summered in Saugatuck until his death, actually passing away at his cottage there.

Alvord (1861-1943) was born in Massachusetts but settled in the Chicago area in the 1880s. He learned his trade with his brother-in-law’s civil engineering firm, and soon was made a partner in the firm. He served as assistant engineer in the Chicago suburbs of Lake View and Hyde Park and then as city engineer for Lake View in the 1880-88 period, involved extensively in sewer, water works, and street pavement construction. He spent much of 1888 in England, France, Germany, Italy and Austria studying municipal and sanitary engineering works. In 1889-90 he served as city engineer in Cicero, Illinois. Later in 1890 Alvord was appointed by Daniel H. Burnham, the Director of Works of the World’s Columbian Exhibition in Chicago (a/k/a the Chicago World’s Fair), to head his Bureau of
Roads & Waterways charged with laying out and developing the fair’s grounds, collaborating with Frederick Law Olmsted and others. Alvord was put in charge of the dredging, grading and filling of the 630 acre fair grounds, the construction of roads, and the installation of a drinking water supply from springs in Wisconsin (including 150 “drinking booths”). Serving 1890-93, he was the recipient of one of the seventy medals later awarded to the designers of the Fair. In 1893, following his work for the exposition, Alvord entered into his own practice as a consulting engineer, specializing in municipal and sanitary, water works, and flood control engineering and valuations.

In 1902 Charles B. Burdick joined the firm, which became Alvord & Burdick, and in 1921 it became Alvord, Burdick & Howson when Louis Richard Howson, brought on board in 1908, was admitted as a partner. Like Alvord, Burdick and Howson also lived in the Chicago area and, like him, both came to have summer cottages in the Saugatuck area, Alvord’s just outside of Shorewood and Burdick and Howson’s within Shorewood.

Alvord’s firm of consulting engineers designed water and sewage systems for many municipalities, including Chicago, Columbus, Ohio, Grand Rapids, Michigan, Omaha, the new steel town of Gary, Indiana, and St. Louis. He authored a number of technical papers in his field. He received an honorary degree in civil engineering from the University of Wisconsin in 1913. Alvord was elected President of the Western Society of Engineers, the Illinois Society of Engineers, and the American Water Works Association. He was a director of the American Society of Civil Engineers. He was also a member of the Chicago Real Estate Board and the Illinois State Board of Natural Resources and Conservation.

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Developmental history/additional historic context information (if appropriate)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)


“Memoir.” Transactions of the American Society of Civil Engineers (1943)

National Cyclopedia of American Biography

Public Service: Electricity, Gas, Water, Telephones, Tramways, Vol. 7-9 at 171 (June 1910)


Saugatuck Commercial Record, Saugatuck, MI.
- November 27, 1903: “Wiped Out by Fire.”
- December 4, 1903: “The Water Works Question.”
- December 11, 1903: “100 to 9.”
- January 1, 1904: “Committee Reports.”
- March 11, 1904: “Specifications of the Water Works System.”
- May 6, 1904: “Council Accepts Bids.”
- August 19, 1904: Water works system almost complete.
- October 14, 1904: “Water Turned On.”
- March 9, 1912: “Electric Light Plant Is Passed.”
- April 5, 1912: “Lake Shore Electrical Co.”
- July 19, 1912: “Opening a Success.”

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 # [ ]
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # [ ]

Primary location of additional data:
- State Historic Preservation Office [ ]
- Other State agency [ ]
- Federal agency [X]
- Local government [ ]
- University [ ]
- Other [ ]

Name of repository: Saugatuck-Douglas Historical Society

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned):
10. Geographical Data

**Acreage of Property**
Not applicable (display site is < 1 acre)
(Do not include previously listed resource acreage.)

**UTM References**
(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.) see attached Google Earth screenshot

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**Verbal Boundary Description** (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

**Boundary Justification** (Explain why the boundaries were selected.) Not applicable

11. Form Prepared By

| name/title | James Schmiechen and Richard E. Donovan, Members |
| organization | The Saugatuck Douglas Historical Society |
| street & number | 130 W. Center St. |
| city or town | Douglas |
| e-mail | rdono61@gmail.com |
| date | August 3, 2015 |
| telephone | 269-857-1256 |
| state | MI |
| zip code | 49406 |

**Additional Documentation**

**Photographs:**
Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map.

**Name of Property:** Pump House

**City or Vicinity:** Saugatuck

**County:** Allegan
**State:** Michigan

**Photographer:** Richard E. Donovan or Elliot Sturm

**Date Photographed:** October 23, 2014 and July 16, 2015

**Description of Photograph(s) and number:**

- **Photo #1:** East façade, camera facing west
- **Photo #2:** East façade, camera facing northwest
Photo #3: North façade, camera facing southwest
Photo #4: Southwest façade, camera facing northeast
Photo #5: West façade, camera facing east
Photo #6: Two interior views during Shorey years (1970s)
Photo #6: South room, camera facing northeast
Photo #7: North room, camera facing northeast
Photo #8: North room, camera facing southeast
Photo #9: South room, camera facing southeast
Photo #10: East and north facades
Photo #11: Entry pavilion and gardens, camera facing south-southwest
Photo #12: Entry pavilion, pump house at right, camera facing southeast
Photo #13: Entry pavilion, Kalamazoo River and central part of Saugatuck in distance, camera facing northeast
Photo #14: Ceiling detail

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

name City of Saugatuck
street & number 102 Butler St. telephone 269-857-2603
city or town Saugatuck state Michigan zip code 49453
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.460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18 hours per response including 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 Office of Planning and Performance Management. U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW. Washington, DC.