



**Seth Thomas Clock Company, 242 Elm Street: Site Summary**

**Prepared by  
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The following information was extracted from public records.

### **Address**

242 Elm Street, Thomaston, Connecticut 06787

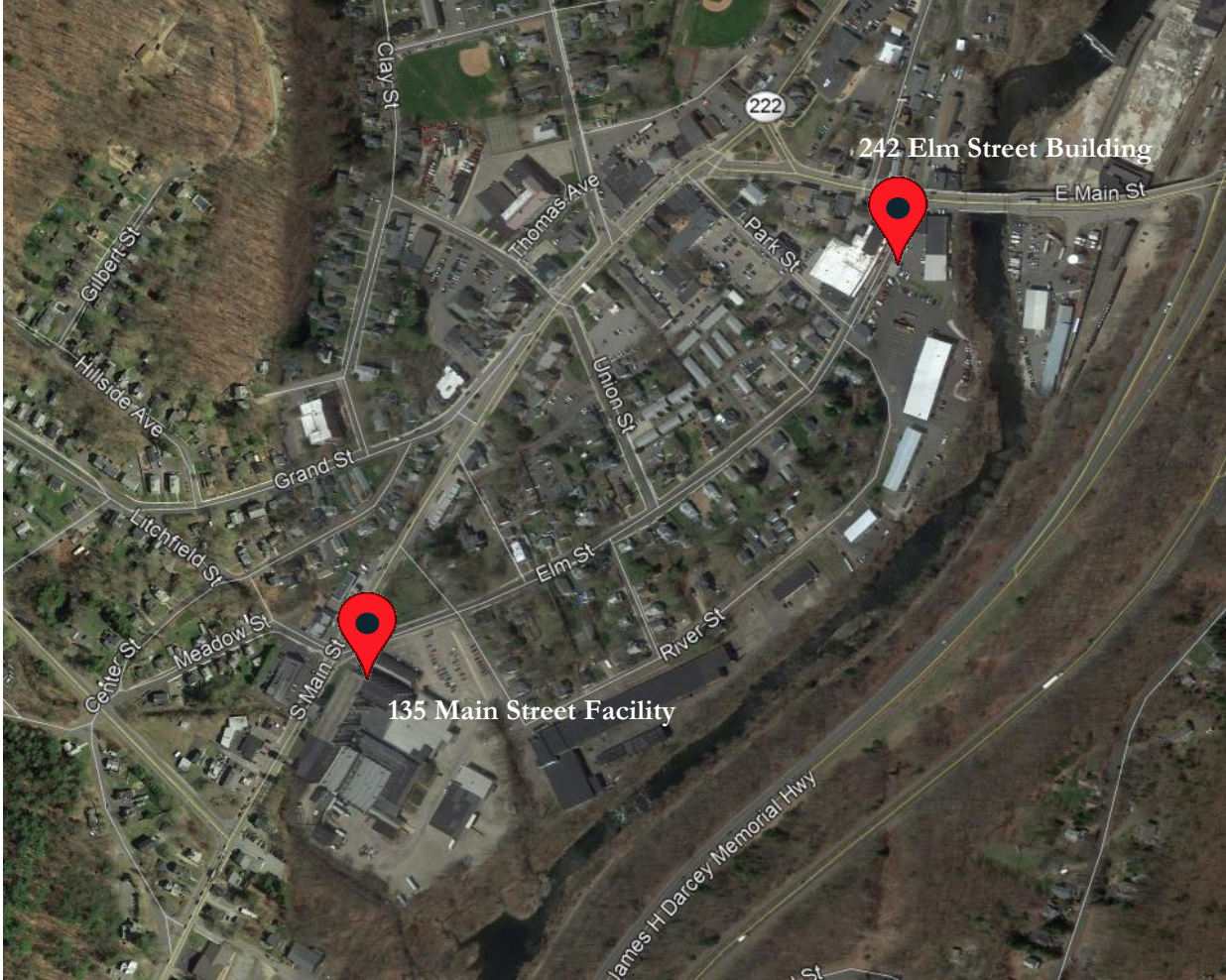
### **Site Description/History**

The Seth Thomas Clock Company (Seth Thomas) began making clocks in 1813 in the town of Plymouth Hollow, later renamed Thomaston after the clock maker. They continued to manufacture clocks and watches until the early 1980s (Master Clock Repair 2017, HBC 2014). In review of historic maps, there was a Seth Thomas Clock Company Movement Shop identified on Elm Street in addition to the 135 South Main Street Seth Thomas Clock Company location. Note, the balance of the Elm Street complex (219 Elm Street) is dispositioned under a separate summary report. As will be discussed, it is not completely certain that radium was either present or used at the Elm Street Movement Shop, which was part of the former Seth Thomas complex. Possible radium use at the property is suggested by the 1911 Sanborn map (Figure 1) that notes "Dial Painting" and the fact that radium contamination was positively identified at the South Main Street facility (ATSDR 1999, Sciencetech 2003, ORAU 2017a). The 0.5-mi distance between the Elm Street and South Main Street facilities is illustrated in Figure 2.

The small structure at 242 Elm Street was constructed in 1870 by Seth Thomas as an office building (ORAU 2017b, Thomaston 2017). It likely supported the Movement Shop and foundry operations (Sanborn 1911, Wassong 2004). The property currently consists of a parking lot, the subject structure, and a modern-era building surrounded by businesses and residences, as shown in Figure 3. According to the Thomaston Assessor's Office online database, the site's land area is 0.520 acres (Thomaston 2017). The brick building occupies approximately 1,200 square feet (DraftLogic 2017). A comparison of the 1911 Sanborn map and recent photographs show that the 242 Elm Street building is one of two originals that remain from the Seth Thomas Movement Shop era. Figure 4 is an old photo (date unknown) of the former Movement Shop, including the office building, and Figure 5 is a recent photo taken at approximately the same angle.

According to the Thomaston Town Clerk's Office, the Seth Thomas Company owned the site until 1936 when it was transferred to the General Time Instruments Corporation (ORAU 2017b). Seth Thomas became a division of the General Time Instruments Corporation in 1930 or 1931, later known as General Time Corporation (Master Clock Repair 2017, Antique Clocks Guy 2017, ClockHistory.com 2017, HBC 2017). In 1970, General Time Corporation was taken over by Talley Industries, which closed the Thomaston plant (presumably including the small office building at 242 Elm Street) and moved all operations to Norcross, Georgia (HBC 2017). Litchfield County Industrial Space, LLC purchased the 242 Elm Street property in 2003 (Thomaston 2017). The current occupant, Micro-Document, Inc., offers computer-related and data storage services (A2zcity 2017).

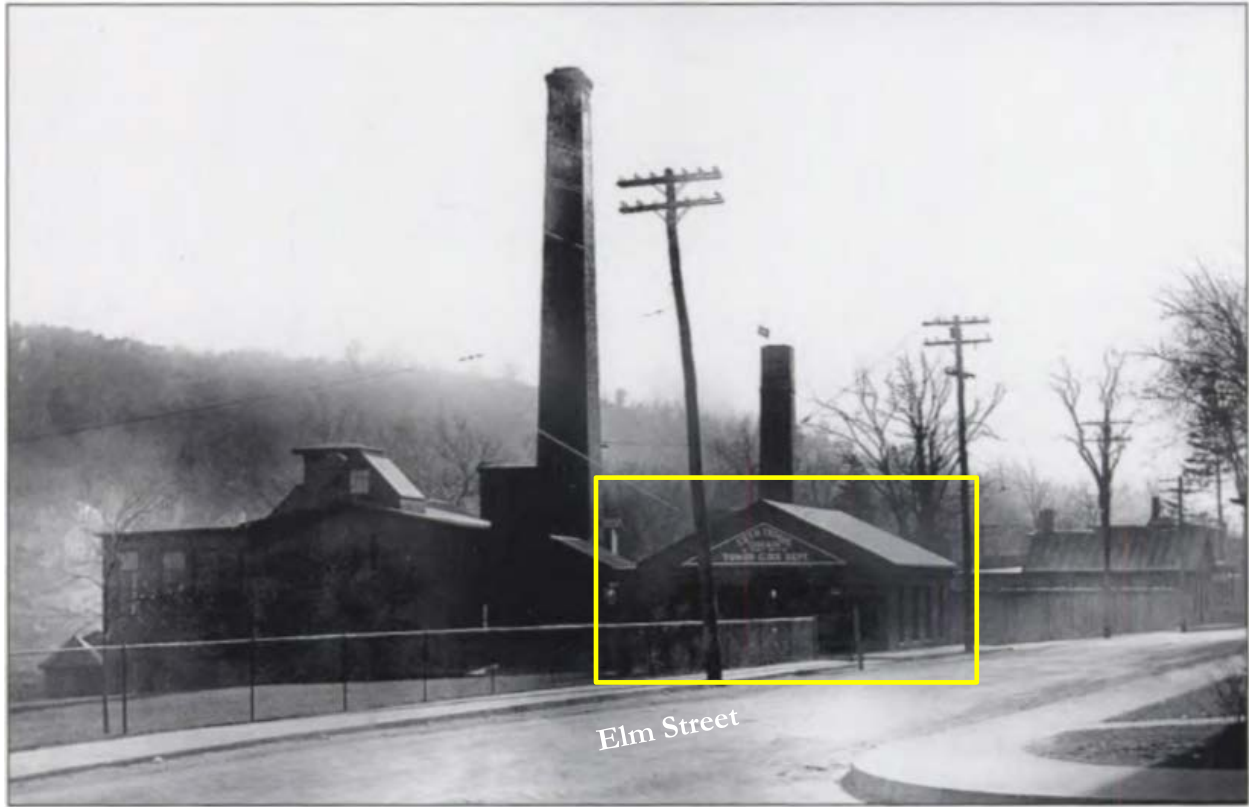




**Figure 2. Seth Thomas Main Facility at 135 S Main Street in Relation to the Site at 242 Elm Street (Google Earth Pro 2017)**



**Figure 3. April 2016 Photo of 242 Elm Street Building and Surrounding Area  
(Google Earth Pro 2017)**



**Figure 4. Small Brick Building at 242 Elm Street in the Early 1900s (Wassong 2004)**



**Figure 5. October 2008 Street View of Small Brick Building at 242 Elm Street (Google Earth Pro 2017)**

### **Information Regarding Radium Sources/Contamination at the Site**

It is not known whether radium was either present or used at the Elm Street facility; though the 1911 Sanborn map (Figure 1) indicates that the building across the street at 219 Elm Street was used for “Storage,” “Glass & *Dial Painting*,” (emphasis added) and “Assembling.” Radium dial painting did not begin in general until 1917 and not at Seth Thomas until after 1917 (Clark 1997). Therefore, the potential link between radium contamination and the Elm Street “Movement Shop” is based on the term “Dial Painting” and knowledge that radium dial painting was practiced within the Seth Thomas complex as late as the 1940s (CT DPH 1998). Radium contamination was positively identified at the South Main Street facility (ATSDR 1999, Sciencetech 2003, ORAU 2017a). However, radium use at the Elm Street Movement Shop could not be confirmed, and the use of radium within the business offices at 242 Elm Street seems unlikely. No direct historical references to radium use or past radiological assessment records for this property were found.



### Summary of Current Radium Levels:

As of October 2017, it is not known if radium sources and/or radium contamination are present at the site.

### **Location and Population Near the Site**

The site at 242 Elm Street is located in the town of Thomaston in Litchfield County, Connecticut. According to the 2010 U.S. Census, the population of Thomaston was 7,887 and the 2016 estimate was 7,595 (U.S. Census Bureau 2017). Figures 2 and 3 show the small brick building within the local community.

### **Current State/other Federal Involvement**

A comprehensive internet search of public records did not reveal any information concerning recent State and/or Federal involvement with this property.

### **Current Access and Activities at the Site**

The property at 242 Elm Street is currently owned by Litchfield County Industrial Space, LLC (Thomaston 2017) and occupied by Micro-Document, Inc. The latter offers computer-related and data storage services (A2zcity 2017). Currently, there are no known access limitations to the property.

### **Existing Engineering and Administrative Controls**

No engineering or administrative controls are known to exist at the 242 Elm Street location.

### **Prioritization Ranking**

NRC assigns a prioritization ranking for each site based on two factors. The first factor relates to whether or not the historical record confirms the presence of radium and there is no documentation that the radium contamination was previously remediated. The second factor considers the potential for human exposure. Based on these factors, the site is assigned Tier 1, 2, 3, or 4 using the following criteria:

- Tier 1 = the historical record confirms the presence of radium, the building or adjacent lands are occupied or frequented by visitors, and site access is not controlled.
- Tier 2 = the historical record confirms the presence of radium, the building or adjacent lands are not occupied or frequented by visitors, and site access is weakly controlled.
- Tier 3 = the historical record confirms the presence of radium, the building or adjacent lands are not occupied or frequented by visitors, and site access is strongly controlled.
- Tier 4 = the presence of radium is suspected but not confirmed by the historical record.

Radium use is suspected at the former Movement Shop based on the term "Dial Painting" on the Sanborn map (1911) and given that radium use was confirmed at the 135 Main Street facility. However, radium use has not been confirmed within any Movement Shop building,

including the 242 Elm Street facility, which was used as business offices. Therefore, the former Seth Thomas building at 242 Elm Street is classified as Tier 4.

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