

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service



22

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting de *House and Home 1954* and terminations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. 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 certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).**

1. Name of Property

historic name Tisza, Vera and Laszlo House

other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number 2 Deer Trail not for publication

city or town Wellfleet vicinity

state Massachusetts code MA county Barnstable code 001 zip code 02667

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, 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 at the following level(s) of significance:

___ national ___ statewide local

Robert A. Matson, Deputy FPO
Signature of certifying official/Title

January 10, 2014
Date

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Brona Simon
Signature of commenting official

9/20/12
Date

SHPO
Title

Massachusetts Historical Commission
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:)

Patrick Anderson
Signature of the Keeper

2/25/2014
Date of Action

5. Classification

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

<input type="checkbox"/>	private
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - Local
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - State
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	public - Federal

Category of Property
 (Check only **one** box.)

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	building(s)
<input type="checkbox"/>	district
<input type="checkbox"/>	site
<input type="checkbox"/>	structure
<input type="checkbox"/>	object

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
0	0	district
0	0	site
0	0	structure
0	0	object
1	0	Total

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

Mid-Twentieth-Century Modern Residential
 Architecture on Outer Cape Cod 1929 – 1979

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
 (Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC – single dwelling

Current Functions
 (Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC – single dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification
 (Enter categories from instructions.)

MODERN MOVEMENT

Materials
 (Enter categories from instructions.)

foundation: CONCRETE
 walls: WOOD: weatherboard

 roof: ASPHALT
 other: _____

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 Tisza House (LCS No. 757644) is a minimalist Modern style residence designed by Finnish émigré architect Olav Hammarstrom in 1960 for year-round recreational use by Cambridge, Massachusetts-based professors, Vera and Laszlo Tisza. The house is located in a remote section of Wellfleet, Massachusetts and is within the boundaries of the Cape Cod National Seashore. It is expressed as a low, horizontally emphasized rectangular volume with a transecting internal breezeway that merges interior and exterior space to enhance the experience of the surrounding natural environment. It has a T-shaped plan comprised of two perpendicular one-story blocks with nearly flat, overhanging gable roofs and is anchored by a concrete block foundation. Vertically laid pine sheathing boards that are stained dark brown blend the building with the landscape.

Narrative Description

Setting

The Tisza property is a private 2.8-acre woodland lot that is located among a loose strand of Modern style residences between the kettle ponds and coastline in the northeast corner of Wellfleet. Two beaches along Gull Pond to the west and Newcomb Hollow Beach on the Atlantic Ocean to the northeast are accessible within one-quarter mile. The house is sited atop a slight rise in the northeast portion of the irregularly shaped lot, which spans from Deer Trail to Newcomb Hollow Road. A 200 foot-long sand and grass driveway winds north from Deer Trail and terminates in an undefined parking area. The house faces west toward the driveway and is secluded by a buffer of dense native vegetation that covers most of the property and blocks any distant views of neighboring houses. The land immediately surrounding the house is cut back, providing an open, informal lawn with mature pitch pine trees. A soft layer of fallen pine needles, grass, and moss coats the terrain. The ocean is not a visible part of the setting, but breaking surf can occasionally be heard (NPS 2010). A freestanding clothesline is located north of the house and a simple doghouse is located to the southeast, but there are no outbuildings on the property.

Exterior

Hammarstrom designed the Tisza House to emphasize views of the natural Cape Cod landscape and prominent local designer/builder Hayden Walling erected it to Hammarstrom's specifications in 1960. Its solid T-shaped rectangular form is broken up by the internal breezeway, which punches a void through the center of the house allowing for continuous visibility of the woodland setting. The breezeway is encompassed within the main section of the house; a low one-story, 41-foot by 25-foot block above a shallow crawl space. A 31-foot by 14-foot one-story block with a full basement is attached perpendicularly to the north end of the main block and extends several feet past its east and west walls. The ground slopes away from this end of the house, exposing the basement. The two wings have a unified appearance achieved through a consistent height, use of materials and roofline. Both roofs are nearly flat, but incorporate a slight pitch to shed rain and snow. The roofs overhang about 2 feet on each elevation and are covered with rolled asphalt. Exposed rafters are visible in open exterior eaves and on the interior. Flood lights hung from the eaves light the perimeter of the house. An interior brick chimney located between the two building wings rises 4 feet above the roof. There are no gutters on the building.

The facade (west elevation), south, and east elevations of the house are primarily blank, except for pairs of transparent sliding doors on either end of the breezeway. Staggered slate pavers define a walkway leading from the driveway to a dry-laid, irregularly shaped slate patio set into the ground in front of the main entrance. The entrance consists of two pairs of single-pane sliding metal-track doors located near the center of the facade, at the north end of the main block. A solid wood utilitarian door painted dark brown to match the exterior sheathing flanks the main entrance at the edge of the patio. Three adjacent pairs of sliding doors on the opposite side of the breezeway form a glazed wall on the east elevation that extends nearly the full length of the main block. The doors are accessed by replacement open riser wood stairs that

ascend to a 2-foot deep deck ledge in the place of a deck that was removed. A wood plank has been nailed across the two end doors for safety.

The porous quality of the breezeway is echoed on the south elevation where an open porch is recessed 8 feet within the exposed frame of the main block. The concrete block foundation of the house rises from 1 to 3 feet above grade and functions as the porch floor. A 4-foot by 8-foot storage shed is enclosed within the frame of the southwest corner of the house and has an open doorway to the porch. A painted, wood plank utilitarian door, similar to the one on the facade is located off the porch on the south elevation.

The north elevation has generally symmetrical fenestration with a central garage door bay in the exposed basement wall of the north wing. The bay is recessed 2 feet from the wall and is filled with vertically laid wood boards with a single utilitarian plank door. Short retaining walls made from wood beams and logs flank a slate patio set in front of the garage bay. Floor joists extend through the exterior wall 4 feet out over the garage bay supporting a trellis created from cross-laid boards placed on end. The north wing of the house is well-lit by groups of wood awning sash. Sets of three vertically stacked rectangular awning windows are arranged in pairs on either side of a single stack centered on the wall of the main level. The garage bay is flanked by an identical pair of stacked windows to the east and a pair of adjacent square awning windows to the west. Two additional pairs of the square awning type light the exposed portion of the basement on the east elevation. A single stack of two small rectangular awning windows is located on the south wall of the north wing, which extends past the edge of the main block of the house.

Interior

The two building sections correlate to separate functional zones inside the 1,370 square-foot house. The visually open main block serves as the primary living area, while the sleeping and utilitarian spaces are concentrated within the more private, insulated north wing. The center of the house is a spacious, airy living room within the "breezeway" that is defined by the glazed wall of sliding doors at each end. A single partition wall centered in the south end of the living room separates it from a compact galley kitchen. The wall terminates several feet short of the east and west sides of the living room, leaving open circulation space instead of doorways. A dining space in the southeast corner of the main block is open to both the kitchen and living rooms and contains a door to the side porch and attached storage room. The opposite end of the kitchen leads to a short hall and utilitarian facade entrance.

The north wall of the living room is formed by a wide brick-faced wall surrounding the interior chimney, which is flanked by open passages providing access to the north, sleeping wing of the house. White paint covers the brick wall and an off-center fireplace is accented by a rectangular slate hearth. The north wing contains three equal-sized 175-square-foot bedrooms, including two separated by a shared bathroom on the main floor, and one bedroom in the east half of the basement below. A roughly 270 square-foot utility room accessed by the garage bay door and a second bathroom fill the remainder of the basement.

Interior finishes throughout the house are simple and economically efficient. The ceilings consist of the exposed roof framing with gypsum board panels between the rafters. Painted gypsum boards form the walls and hardwood covers the majority of the floors on the main level. The kitchen retains a seamless, dark-colored asphalt floor and minimal wood cabinetry manufactured by Newmar Carefree Kitchens (NPS 2010). The house is served by a private well and forced air heating system with floor registers.

Alterations

Alterations to the Tisza House are limited to the removal of the original east deck in 1998 and slight changes in the density of the landscape vegetation over time. The original deck measured approximately 17 feet long by 12 feet deep and extended the full length of the living room. A 2-foot-deep extension of the deck continued to the edges of the elevation, past the third pair of sliding doors (opening into the kitchen) to the corner of the south porch and for 2 feet north where it met the north wing. This 2-foot section of the deck remains and the rest of the deck was truncated to match it. The safety plank blocking access through two sets of the sliding doors and the open riser stair were installed when the deck was removed. Photographs from about 1972 and 1989 depict more brush and other natural vegetation immediately

surrounding the house (NPS 2010). The current driveway also appeared as a narrower footpath. The vegetation was cut back as part of the necessary maintenance of the property.

Integrity

Internationally known architect Olav Hammarstrom's minimalist and informal Modern style design for the Vera and Laszlo Tisza House is completely intact as it was built, with the exception of the deck removal. Hammarstrom's characteristic use of low, simple rectangular volumes and emphasis on views and experience of the woodland setting is clearly evident. The house retains its original horizontal, T-shaped rectangular form, low overhanging roofline, and regionally prevalent, economic materials. The transparent breezeway void and remote siting of the house within the natural landscape evoke a feeling of serenity and commune with the environment. The functionally zoned interior layout, complete fenestration pattern, exposed framing, and general utilitarian systems remain. The house is nearly identical to its original appearance as published in *Interiors Magazine* shortly after its construction.

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.)

RECREATION

SOCIAL HISTORY

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1960-1979

Significant Dates

1960: House constructed

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Hammarstrom, Olav (architect)

Walling, Hayden (builder)

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.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

Period of Significance (justification)

The period of significance for the Vera and Laszlo Tisza House begins in 1960 when the house was erected, and extends to 1979, the end of the Mid-Twentieth-Century Modern Residential Architecture on Outer Cape Cod 1929 – 1979 MPDF. This timeframe encompasses the Tisza family's ownership of the property from 1960 to 1974 and continued use through 1979.

Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary)

The end date of the period of significance meets Criteria Consideration G as part of the exceptional significance of the development of mid-twentieth-century Modern architecture on Outer Cape Cod, as discussed in the MPDF.

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance and applicable criteria.)

The Vera and Laszlo Tisza House is eligible for individual listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criteria A and C at the local level for its associations with the development of recreational residences, progressive social network, and dissemination of Modern style architecture on Outer Cape Cod during the mid-twentieth century. The building possesses significance under Criterion A in the areas of Recreation and Social History for its associations with the postwar, progressive intellectual community that commissioned the construction of single-family, Modern style vacation houses in the underdeveloped peripheries of the Outer Cape towns. The development of the Tisza property is tangible evidence of the interaction between integral members of the Outer Cape Cod community and presents collaboration between successful Cambridge, Massachusetts professor Laszlo Tisza, local designer/builder Hayden Walling, and influential Finnish émigré architect Olav Hammarstrom. Under Criterion C, the building possesses significance in the area of Architecture as a characteristic representation of Olav Hammarstrom's residential designs on Cape Cod, which express simple, crisp horizontal forms, visible framing, and a focus on views of the natural landscape. Hammarstrom is a prolific international architect who completed at least 21 Modernist design commissions on the Outer Cape after building his own summer home there in 1952.

The Tisza House meets the requirements for listing under the Mid-Twentieth-Century Modern Residential Architecture on Outer Cape Cod, 1929 – 1979 historic context and property type Number F.2 Geometric, as defined in the Mid-Twentieth-Century Modern Residential Architecture on Outer Cape Cod 1929 – 1979 Multiple Property Documentation Format (MPDF). The house exhibits the Geometric property type through its simple, horizontal, grounded form comprised of two rectangular units and internal void that blurs the boundaries between interior and exterior space. The house satisfies the registration requirements of the Geometric type through its association with accomplished international architect Olav Hammarstrom and his application of the Modern design paradigm. It retains its original setting in a woodland clearing, simple rectangular form, structure, materials, plan, and finishes.

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

Area of Significance: Criterion A
Recreation and Social History

The development of Vera and Laszlo Tisza's Wellfleet residence illustrates the rapid postwar development of single-family vacation housing on Outer Cape Cod and the appreciation for Modern style design fostered by the community of progressive urban intellectuals who congregated there. The house is the result of the interaction between a notable Cambridge-based scientist, internationally experienced architect, and a local designer/builder that occurred through their participation in the Modernist Outer Cape community. Approximately 160 Modern residences were erected on the Outer Cape during the mid-twentieth century, including more than 35 completed or under construction when Hammarstrom designed the Tisza House in 1960. The Tisza property is located among the strand of Modern houses spanning between the kettle ponds and coastline from Wellfleet to Truro, and is in close proximity to the recreational residences of several notable designers, writers/editors, and academics.

Subdivision of the primarily undisturbed northeast corner of Wellfleet substantially increased during the 1950s as developers and local landholders divided forested multi-acre tracts into spacious private lots. The quiet, scenic woodland setting of the ponds appealed to sophisticated urbanites seeking tranquility and privacy in their recreation destinations, and provided ideal sites for Modern style houses designed to provide an experience of the natural landscape through the integration of interior and exterior living spaces. Former Cape Cod Chamber of Commerce president Arthur E. Sparrow created five parcels later combined as the Tisza lot as part of his Gull Pond Village subdivision in 1950. His subdivision included deed restrictions intended to limit development to low-density, well-constructed, permanent residences. Sparrow specified that each property could not be further subdivided and could only be developed with one single-family dwelling that cost at least \$5,000 and included indoor plumbing. He further required a 15-foot setback of the house from the lot line and deeded use and right-of-way access to two commonly owned beaches on Gull Pond (Barnstable County Registry of Deeds 1950).

Architect Olav Hammarstrom and his wife, renowned Modernist textile designer Marianne Strengell Hammarstrom individually purchased four of the five original lots that comprise the Tisza property from Arthur Sparrow's family, Eldridge E. Sparrow and Lillian Edwards, between August 1954 and September 1956 (Barnstable County Registry of Deeds 1954a, 1954b, 1955, 1956). Olav and Marianne Hammarstrom's own vacation home, which they designed for themselves in 1952, is located approximately 400 feet west of the Tisza property across Gross Hill Road. The Hammarstroms sold the four adjacent lots (numbers 88, 92, 93, and 94) to Laszlo and Veronica (Vera) Tisza on October 10, 1959 (Barnstable County Registry of Deeds 1959). Builder Hayden Walling filed a permit application to erect a new \$22,000 house on the Gull Pond Village property for the Tiszas on March 17, 1960, noting the construction was scheduled to begin a few weeks later in April (Wellfleet Building Department, 1957–1971). By this time, Hayden Walling and Olav Hammarstrom had already completed several projects on the Outer Cape and established a working relationship during the construction of the Lillian Swann Saarinen house on Herring Pond in Wellfleet for architect Eero Saarinen's ex-wife in 1955. The Tiszas purchased the final portion of their Newcomb Hollow Road property, Gull Pond Village lot 87, on August 1, 1961, which currently encompasses the first half of the driveway (Barnstable County Registry of Deeds 1961).

Laszlo and Vera Tisza immigrated to the United States from Hungary and settled in Cambridge, Massachusetts where they met other professionals who summered on the Outer Cape. Laszlo Tisza (1907–2009) gained international notoriety as an accomplished physicist who developed a pioneering model for the characteristics of liquid helium. Born in Budapest, he began his career amidst a tumultuous political climate. Tisza enrolled as a math student at the University of Budapest in 1926 and studied physics at the University of Gottingen in 1928, before moving to Leipzig and eventually returning to the University of Budapest. Immediately following receipt of his doctoral degree in 1932, Tisza served a 14-month prison sentence for his affiliations with communist classmates. Despite this setback, Tisza's scholastic achievements led to a position at the Ukrainian Physical-Technical Institute at Kharkov in 1935. The increasingly anti-Semitic sentiment in Kharkov caused Tisza to flee two years later and he returned to Budapest before gaining employment as a researcher at the College of France in Paris. At the onset of World War II, Laszlo Tisza and his wife, Veronique (Vera) Elisabeth Benedek Tisza (ca. 1913–1991) fled from Paris, France through Marseille to Lisbon, Portugal where they boarded a boat to New York City, arriving in the United States on March 15, 1941 (Friedman et al. 2009; Negri 2009; U.S. Customs 1941).

Upon reaching the United States, the Tiszas moved to Cambridge, Massachusetts to be close to relatives (Friedman et al. 2009). Laszlo Tisza worked as a full-time faculty member of the department of physics, specializing in theoretical physics, thermodynamics, quantum mechanics and statistical physics at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) from 1941 to 1973 (MIT News 2009). Although he retired and moved to Newton, Massachusetts in 1973, Laszlo Tisza continued teaching and remained involved with MIT until his death in 2009. Vera Tisza, originally of Szeged, Hungary, graduated from the University of Budapest Medical School in 1937. She found employment as a physician at Radcliffe College in Cambridge before serving as the director of child psychiatry at the New England Medical Center in Boston from 1952 to 1961 (*Boston Globe* 1991; U.S. Customs 1941). Her Greater Boston affiliations led to ongoing associate teaching positions at the Tufts and Harvard Medical Schools up to her retirement in 1977. Vera Tisza also held the position of Chief of Child Psychiatry at University of Pittsburgh in Pennsylvania from 1961–1968.

The Tiszas formed associations with progressive social circles in Greater Boston and the Outer Cape through common heritage and scholarship (Burke et al. 2008). Budapest-born structural engineer Paul Weidlinger (1914–1999) immigrated to the United States in the mid-1940s and acquired adjunct lecturer positions at MIT and Harvard by networking with other recent Jewish Hungarian transplants, presumably including Tisza and painter Gyorgy Kepes at MIT and Bauhaus architect Marcel Breuer at the Harvard Graduate School of Design (Levy 1999). Breuer (1902–1981), grew up in Pècs, Hungary, and designed his own house on the north side of Higgins Pond about three-quarters of a mile from the Tisza property in 1948. Kepes (1906–2001) was from Selyp, Hungary and immigrated to the United States the same year as Breuer. He accepted an invitation to teach visual design at MIT in 1947 and commissioned Breuer to design his Wellfleet house on Long Pond slightly more than 1 mile southwest of the Tiszas from 1948 to 1949. Weidlinger joined Breuer and Kepes in Wellfleet following the completion of his Hammarstrom-designed home on the south side of Higgins Pond in 1954. Weidlinger's property originated as part of the Gull Pond Village subdivision and he shared common beach rights with the Tiszas.

Laszlo Tisza began teaching physics at MIT the same year that accomplished Finnish Modernist Alvar Aalto (1898–1976) accepted a position there as visiting professor in the School of Architecture. Olav Hammarstrom (1906–2002), was working for Aalto in Finland by 1940 and came to the United States in 1948 to assist Aalto in the design of MIT's Baker House dormitory. Hammarstrom remained in the United States and married Finnish textile designer Marianne Strengell in Wellfleet the following year. The Hammarstroms became familiar with the Outer Cape through the Saarinen family, with whom Strengell vacationed with in the 1930s. Eliel Saarinen (1873–1959) became president of the Cranbrook Academy of Art in Michigan in 1932 and Strengell taught there from 1937 to 1961, serving as Director of the Weaving and Textile Department from 1942 to 1961 (Smithsonian 2010a). Hammarstrom worked for Eliel's son, architect Eero Saarinen (1910–1961) while Strengell was employed at Cranbrook (PCAD 2010). Tisza, Kepes, and Weidlinger potentially met Hammarstrom in 1948 at MIT before the Hammarstroms built their Wellfleet residence in 1952.

The Tizas undoubtedly used builder Hayden Walling (1917–1981) to construct their vacation home because of his preexisting working relationship with Hammarstrom. Walling summered on the Outer Cape since 1927 with his parents who were social activists involved in the founding of the National Association for Advancement of Colored People and the International Ladies Garment Union. Walling's activist and Quaker background influenced his position as a conscientious objector during World War II, which is a value the Tizas likely appreciated. After attending Amherst and graduating from Bard College, Walling became a self-taught architect, builder, cabinet maker, and furniture designer. He met builder/designers Jack Phillips and Jack Hall in the 1930s and subsequently completed at least 13 design commissions for houses and studios on the Outer Cape besides constructing homes for other architects.

In 1960, the same year the Tizas completed their house, Massachusetts-based architect Nathaniel Saltonstall designed a Modern house in the west side of Wellfleet for Samuel and Minette Kuhn of New York (Crisson and Burke 2003). Their son, Thomas Samuel Kuhn (1922–1996) studied theoretical physics at Harvard from 1943 to 1949 and taught there from 1948 to 1956 during Tisza's active tenure as a physicist at nearby MIT. Vera Tisza also likely networked with psychologists Robert Jay and Betty Jean Lifton who purchased a property 1 mile south of the Tizas on Ocean View Drive in 1966 and hired Hammarstrom to design a Modern house there in 1970. Robert Lifton (b. 1926) taught at Harvard and Boston universities and formed the Wellfleet Psychohistory Group with his mentor Erik Erikson at this property in Wellfleet in the late 1960s, to apply psychology and psychoanalysis to the study of history. Lifton is a notable writer on the topic of human evil and Nazi history. His wife, Betty Jean Lifton, authored the book *Twice Born*, published in 1975.

Area of Significance: Criterion C

Architecture

The Tisza house is a characteristic representation of prolific Finnish Modern architect Olav Hammarstrom's residential work on Cape Cod, which demonstrates his affinity for incorporation of the natural environment into design as influenced by Alvar Aalto and Eero Saarinen. It exhibits Hammarstrom's archetypical low elongated rectangular shape with an overhanging horizontal roofline that references the simple, crisp forms prevalent during the early stage of the Modern movement. The internal breezeway introduces transparency through the house, framing views of the woodland setting and providing an experience of the natural environment from the main living space. Hammarstrom often incorporated open breezeways or internal voids that engaged views of the landscape in his residential buildings and typically included entries or walkways tucked beneath the roof overhangs. The nearby houses that Hammarstrom designed for himself (1952) and Lilly Saarinen (1960) portray a similar, low boxy shape with open-air central breezeways and glazed walls of sliding doors that fuse interior and exterior space.¹ Plans of the Hammarstrom House published in *House and Home* and *House and Garden* illustrate the use of the breezeway to separate interior sleeping and living space as employed in the Tisza House (House and Garden 1965; *House and Home* 1954). As demonstrated in the Tisza house, he offset simple facades and groups of small horizontal windows with glazed walls comprised of sliding doors opening to the landscape and used informal, regional materials visually compatible with the environment. Hammarstrom's interest in function is evident in exposed framing allowing construction efficiency and zoned floor plans that cluster spaces for similar uses.

¹ The breezeway in the Hammarstrom house has been altered and is now enclosed.

Olav Hammarstrom cultivated his architectural career through his early connections to other internationally successful Finnish designers influencing the dissemination of the Modern style in the United States. Hammarstrom attended the Helsinki University of Technology, where Alvar Aalto and Eliel Saarinen received their architectural educations, and the Athenaeum in Helsinki.ⁱⁱ From 1939 through 1945, while working for Aalto in Finland, Hammarstrom oversaw the design of an entire mining town in the northern territory of Petsamo adjacent to the Soviet Union (CCMHT 2009; Smithsonian 2010b). Although the project was not completed, Hammarstrom gained experience designing small-scale housing. Hammarstrom managed Aalto's firm when he traveled abroad in the early 1940s, which included visits to MIT. In 1949, Hammarstrom joined Eero Saarinen and Associates in Michigan in 1949 after assisting Aalto with the MIT Baker House project and immigrating to the United States. That year, he collaborated with Saarinen on the design for the General Motors Technical Center. Hammarstrom's wife, Marianne Strengell designed all of the textiles for the GM Center and completed several commissions for the interiors of Saarinen's and Hammarstrom's buildings.

Although Hammarstrom lived primarily in Michigan from 1949 to 1961, he maintained affiliations in Massachusetts throughout his career. He served as a draftsman and project manager at The Architects Collaborative (TAC) in Cambridge where he contributed to the design of the Bellapaise Villas in Cyprus Turkey. Employment at TAC and teaching positions at MIT and Yale University placed Hammarstrom within a network of architects at the forefront of Modern design.

Hammarstrom simultaneously operated his own architectural practice and completed more than 50 private commissions. He designed several institutions including an air force museum (1963), the Oakland Museum (1961–1962), and the Hotel Bernardin in Yugoslavia (1973), but specialized in residential and religious buildings (Smithsonian 2010b).ⁱⁱⁱ After Saarinen died in 1961, Hammarstrom returned to the east coast and is recorded as living in New York City and Wellfleet in 1966 (*New York Times* 1966). His portfolio on the Outer Cape involved the design of 17 houses, two art studios, several residential additions, and the Chapel of St. James the Fisherman (1957) which won him an AIA award. The church is described in a 1959 *New York Times* article as an octagon with a “‘living room’ atmosphere” that provides “an experience equally rewarding for both the esthetic and spiritual senses” (*New York Times* 1959).

Hammarstrom designed his own house for low maintenance and year-round occupancy and incorporated a cross-ventilation system through louvers in the floor that could be closed with carpet strips created by Marianne Strengell Hammarstrom. The Tisza House reiterates Hammarstrom's informality and practicality in its simple materials that can withstand the harsh Cape Cod weather. The near-flat roof on the Tisza House, which overhangs as a horizontal plane on all sides and incorporates exposed rafter tails, is repeated on many of Hammarstrom's residences including the Hammarstrom, Saarinen, Lifton (1964), and Women's Day Magazine (1967) houses. Many of the houses also exhibit grids of compact awning windows and the restriction of glazing on some elevations that balances glazed walls facing a more scenic or private view. The Tisza House is the second residence Hammarstrom completed on the Outer Cape. Hammarstrom subsequently designed the Edwards (1960), Levy (1962), Brooks (1962), Hoist (1964), Nimitz (1974), Ostrander (1967), Hollander (1969), Harris (1969-1971), Melman (1970), Must (1974), Clapp (1974), and Spencer (1974) houses; the Gonzales (1957) and Thomas (1967) studios; and the Gruenbaum house addition (1967).

All of Hammarstrom's Outer Cape residential designs, including the Tisza house, portray his Finnish influences. The architectural history of Finland includes a parallel development of Modern style vacation homes designed for a lifestyle intertwined with nature. The country's extensive coastline and densely forested lakes and ponds have long provided a bucolic seasonal retreat that provided an ideal setting for year-round recreational residences. Modern vacation houses constructed beginning in the 1930s created a dialogue with the surrounding landscape through the use of moveable and glazed walls, protected courtyards, and framing of panoramic or selected views. The forest symbolizes independence and individuality in Finnish culture, and the rhythm of viewing buildings within the landforms and trees is central to the Finnish perception of space (Jetsonen and Jetsonen 2008:14–15). Hammarstrom's Tisza house employs this relationship

ⁱⁱ Alvar Aalto attended the University of Helsinki from 1916 to 1921. In 2010, the school was incorporated into a new entity, Aalto University and renamed the Aalto University School of Science and Technology.

ⁱⁱⁱ Hammarstrom's international work included a project with the United Nations in Japan and development of Modern furniture in the Philippines and Jamaica, made by manipulating traditional bamboo construction methods (CCMHT 2009).

between the experience of the building and with nature through its woodland setting, internal breezeway, and seamless views through glazed walls.

The Tisza house further parallels Finnish Modern vacation home design through the consideration of an informal lifestyle, cost-efficiency, and the creation of comfortable space. Hammarstrom's colleagues and mentors experimented with these ideas before he designed the Tisza House. Eliel Saarinen focused on the multi-layering of spatial uses in a house he designed for his parents, Villa Pulkanranta (1900–1901). Aino Aalto (née Marsio), working with her husband Alvar Aalto, manipulated the layout of domestic space in their Villa Flora (1926) and Villa Mairea (1938–1939) (Jetsonen and Jetsonen 2008:13). Alvar Aalto, who served as chief architect for Finland's postwar reconstruction, promoted the development of affordable leisure houses and practiced the theory that, "A native tradition of frame construction, special ways of living, [and] peculiar climatic conditions . . . [formed] a sound beginning for a new architecture" (*New York Times* 1939). Subsequent development of Finnish Modern residences included Alvar Aalto's innovative Experimental House at Muuratsalo (1952–1954), Mikko Pulkkinen's steel framed and plywood cottage (1967), and Aarno Ruusuvuori's row of connected cabins resembling vernacular storehouses (1968) (Helamaa and Jetsonen 2007:10; Jetsonen and Jetsonen 2008:12–13). Hammarstrom's affiliations within the networks of preeminent Modernists present in Finland; and the United States at Cranbrook (Michigan), Outer Cape Cod, and Greater Boston shaped his personal version of the Modern style expressed in the Tisza house.

Developmental history/additional historic context information (if appropriate)

The Tisza family retained use of their Wellfleet house until 1989. Vera and Laszlo Tisza divorced in 1963, but maintained year-round Massachusetts residences (Negri 2009). Laszlo Tisza married a fellow MIT professor in 1973, the year he retired, and subsequently moved to Newton, Massachusetts. Despite her employment in Pennsylvania in the 1960s Vera Tisza remained in Cambridge (NPS 2010). Vera Tisza sold the property, including all five original subdivision lots, to the National Park Service on June 17, 1974, but retained a 15-year use and occupancy agreement (Barnstable County Registry of Deeds 1974). The National Park Service assumed management of the property in October 1989.

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Wellfleet Building Department

1957-1971 Building Permit Logbook. Town of Wellfleet Building Department, Wellfleet, MA.

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
 - Local government
 - University
 - Other
- Name of repository: _____

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____

10. Geographical Data

Vera and Laszlo Tisza House
Name of Property

Barnstable County, MA
County and State

Acreage of Property 2.8 acres
(Do not include previously listed resource acreage.)

UTM References
(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

A 19 0417320 464578
Zone Easting Northing

C _____
Zone Easting Northing

B _____
Zone Easting Northing

D _____
Zone Easting Northing

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

The property boundaries encompass the legally recorded lines of Lot 1, shown on Map 5, containing 2.8 acres.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundaries include the house and full extent of the associated landscape features that contribute to the historic setting and appearance of the property.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Jenny Fields Scofield AICP/Architectural Historian and Virginia H. Adams/Sr. Architectural Historian
organization PAL date February 2011
street & number 210 Lonsdale Avenue telephone (401) 728-8780
city or town Pawtucket state RI zip code 02860
e-mail jscofield@palinc.com; vadams@palinc.com

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **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. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Continuation Sheets**
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

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: Vera and Laszlo Tisza House

City or Vicinity: Wellfleet

County: Barnstable **State:** Massachusetts

Photographer: Virginia H. Adams

Date Photographed: December 10, 2009

Description of Photograph(s) and number:

Photo 1 of 6. View looking southeast at north elevation and facade (west elevation), showing driveway approach in foreground.

Photo 2 of 6. View looking northeast at facade.

Photo 3 of 6. View looking east through internal breezeway.

Photo 4 of 6. View looking northwest at south and east elevations.

Photo 5 of 6. View looking west at east elevation.

Photo 6 of 6. View looking southeast at north elevation (north wing of house).

Vera and Laszlo Tisza House
Name of Property

Barnstable County, MA
County and State

Property Owner:

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

name National Park Service, Cape Cod National Seashore
street & number 99 Marconi Site Road telephone (508) 349-3785
city or town Wellfleet state MA zip code 02267

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.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

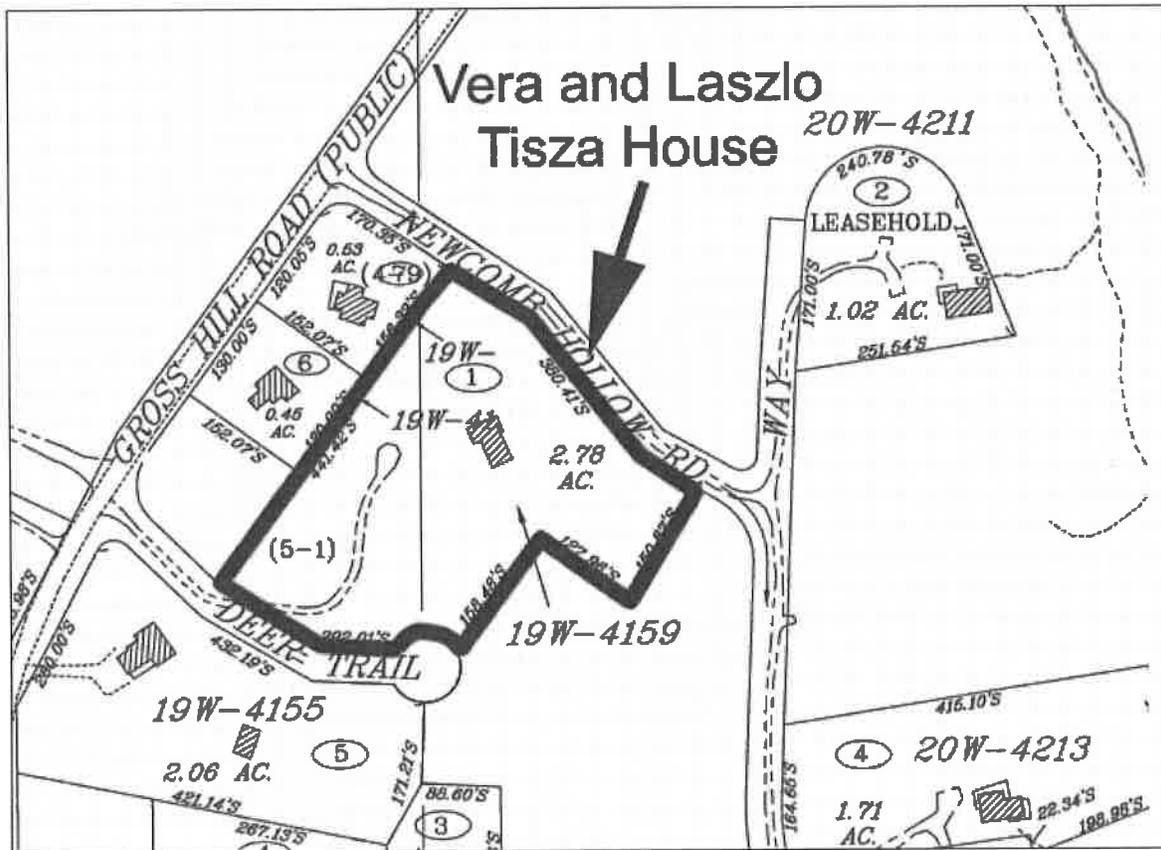
National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Vera and Laszlo Tisza House

Barnstable County, Massachusetts

Mid-Twentieth-Century Modern Residential
Architecture on Outer Cape Cod 1929 -1979

Town of Wellfleet Assessor's Map Number 5



United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

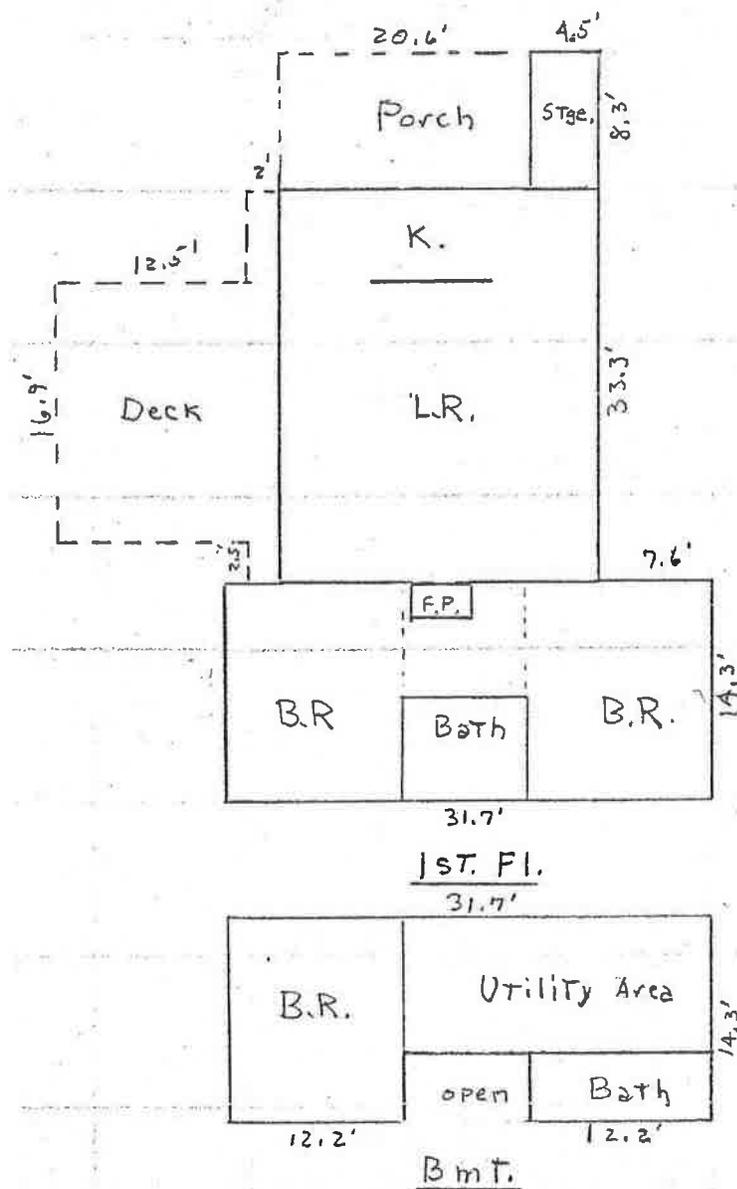
National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Vera and Laszlo Tisza House

Barnstable County, Massachusetts

Mid-Twentieth-Century Modern Residential
Architecture on Outer Cape Cod 1929 -1979

Floor Plans



Floor Plan (source: NPS 2010)

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

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Vera and Laszlo Tisza House

Barnstable County, Massachusetts

Mid-Twentieth-Century Modern Residential
Architecture on Outer Cape Cod 1929 -1979

Historical Photographs



View looking northeast at facade, circa 1972 (source: NPS 2010)

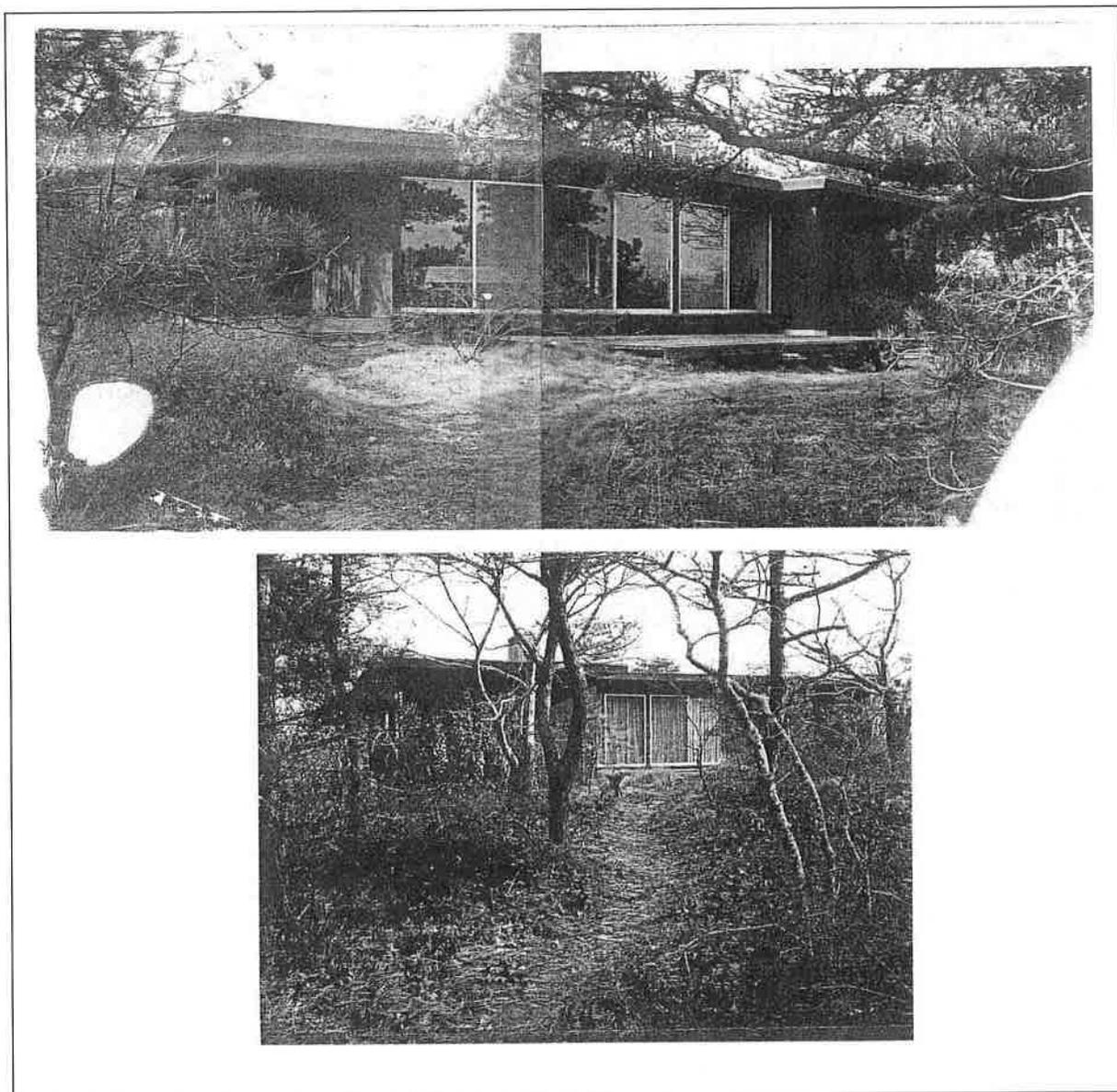
**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Vera and Laszlo Tisza House

Barnstable County, Massachusetts

Mid-Twentieth-Century Modern Residential
Architecture on Outer Cape Cod 1929 -1979



Views looking east at facade, circa 1972 (source: NPS 2010)

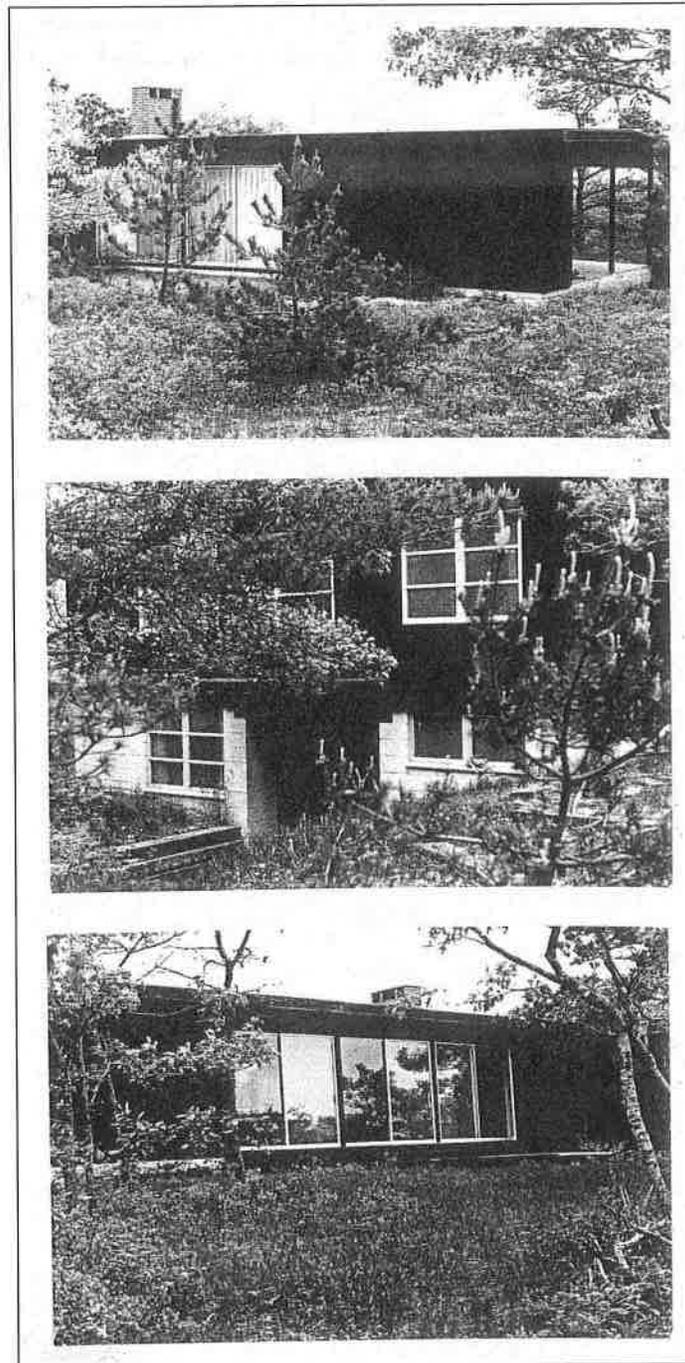
**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Vera and Laszlo Tisza House

Barnstable County, Massachusetts

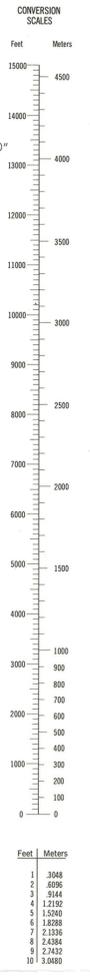
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Architecture on Outer Cape Cod 1929 -1979



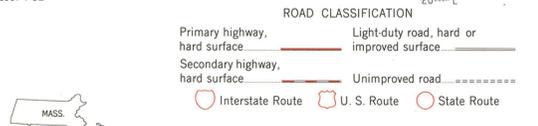
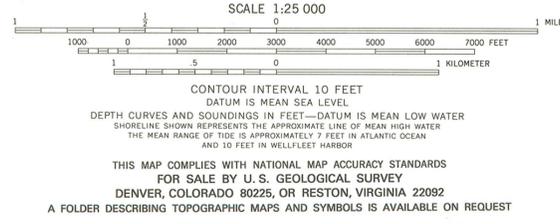
Views of the facade, south and east elevations, circa 1972 (source: NPS 2010)



Tisza, Vera and Laszlo House
Wellfleet, Barnstable County, MA
UTM Reference
A. 19 0417320E 444578N



Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey
Control by USGS, USC&GS, and Massachusetts Geodetic Survey
Planimetry by photogrammetric methods from aerial photographs
taken 1938. Topography by planimetric surveys 1941. Revised from
aerial photographs taken 1971. Field checked 1972
Selected hydrographic data compiled from USC&GS
Charts 580 (1972), 581 (1971), and 1208 (1972). This
information is not intended for navigational purposes
Polyconic projection. 1927 North American datum
10,000-foot grid based on Massachusetts coordinate system,
mainland zone
1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid,
zone 19



WELLFLEET, MASS.
N4152.5—W6957.5/7.5
1972
AMS 6967 1 NE—SERIES V814













