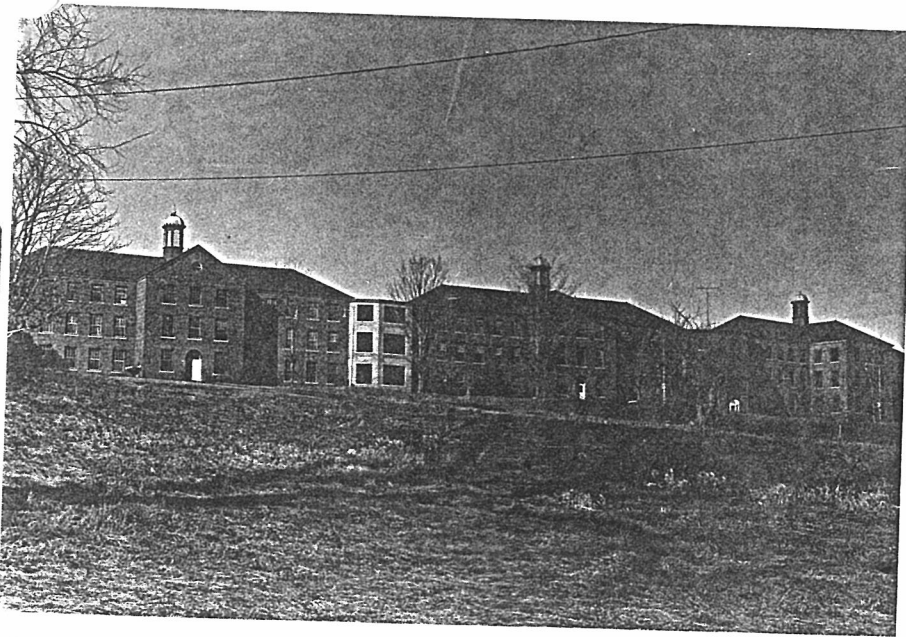


FORM A - AREA SURVEY

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
Office of the Secretary, State House, Boston

Form numbers in this area	Area no.
A-G	2



Northampton  
of area (if any) \_\_\_\_\_  
"Memorial" Complex  
cal date or period \_\_\_\_\_  
1926-1969  
ea uniform (explain): \_\_\_\_\_  
(except for G  
yle? Colonial Revival/ Building  
ndition? Yes - Good  
pe of ownership? Yes - Comm. of Mass.  
se? Yes - institutional

5. Map. Use space below to draw a general map of the area involved. Indicate any historic properties for which individual reports are completed on Forms B thru F, using corresponding numbers. Show street names (including route numbers, if any) and indicate north. Indicate with an "x" existing houses not inventoried on Form B.

DO NOT WRITE IN THIS SPACE  
USGS Quadrant \_\_\_\_\_  
MHC Photo no. \_\_\_\_\_

6. Recorded by Ed Lonergan  
Organization Northampton Historical Commission  
Date February, 1981

(over)

7. Historical data. Explain the historical/architectural importance of this area.

The Memorial Complex contains six ward buildings and a cafeteria, and has contributory historical and architectural significance. Construction began in the mid 1920's on the first ward building here. This was viewed as an alternative to selling the original State Hospital building and beginning anew. By the late 1930's the new complex had become the major focus of the institution. Architecturally, most of this complex is of the same period and exhibits a unified appearance.

\* \* \* \* \*

The first land south of Prince St. had been purchased in 1869. This eight-acre parcel was bought at a cost of \$3000.00 from Samuel Parsons. The reason for the purchase was given in that year's report: "As it is so situated as to have been likely soon to be sold for house lots and as it is desirable not to have a dense population at that particular section of the boundaries of the farm, we thought it best that the State should own it."

Dr. Pliny Earle, the second superintendent of the Northampton State Hospital (NSH), was a far-sighted individual who planned for the future. In 1880, after buying five acres adjacent to the Parsons lot, he reported that "by this purchase we have secured an excellent and very beautiful site for any additional dwellings, whether large or small, which it may in the future be decided to erect in connection with this institution. There is no finer or more desirable spot for such edifices in the township of Northampton". Two years later he reported the need for an "annex" on the "South lot". This would consist of a central administration block with a wing for patients. Other wings would be built as needed.

However, this planned expansion was not soon in coming. In 1917 the State Board of Insanity recommended selling the State Hospital and buying another site. The buildings were "old" and over crowded and it was thought best to start anew. Smith College appeared interested in acquiring the property, but negotiations dragged on over the \$2,000,000.00 price and Smith lost interest.

A few additions were made to the main complex in the first two decades of the twentieth century, but it was clear that no major expansion could take place here. By 1925 there were 1371 patients at the State Hospital. It was in this year that the decision was made to construct a new complex on the southeastern brow of Hospital Hill, across Prince St. from the main complex.

Continued on Inventroy Form

8. Bibliography and/or references such as local histories, deeds, assessor's records, early maps, etc.

Annual Reports: 1856-1940	Forbes Library
1945-1970	NSH Library

Original Plans:	NSH Engineer's Office
<u>Daily Hampshire Gazette:</u>	Jan. 5, 1917 p.1; July 2, 1925 p.1
	Oct. 1, 1930 p.1; Aug. 14, 1934

INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
Office of the Secretary, Boston

Community: Northampton	Form No: 2 A-G
Property Name: Memorial Complex	

Indicate each item on inventory form which is being continued below.

7. The state had been purchasing land south of Prince St., bounded by Earle, Grove, and Laurel St. since 1869 with the intention of owning all of it. The plan for the new group envisioned six ward buildings, spread along the brow of the hill between Prince and Laurel Streets. This site was thought to be "splendid - one of the best if not the best to be found in Northampton... commanding a view that can scarcely be equaled in Western Massachusetts".

Gordon Robb, a Boston architect, designed the first four ward buildings, constructed between 1925 and 1936. They were all three stories in height, built of brick with slatehipped roofs and T-shaped, with the cross arm of each block connected to its neighbors', forming a continuous curved facade oriented to the southwest. Each block was capped by a domical cupola and had a projecting entrance pavilion on the southwest facade.

The other two ward buildings envisaged in the original plan for the Memorial Complex weren't built as planned, as this would have entailed the closing of Locust St. and the purchase of more property. A cafeteria was built, though, to accommodate the expected 1000 patients (160 per ward building). This was a detached structure sited between the new complex and Prince St. It also was designed by Gordon Robb and features "Colonial" detailing.

The cafeteria, as well as the last of the four ward buildings, were built under the Public Works Administration program, A massive federal construction program organized to off set the ravages of the depression. A new laundry and power plant on Earle St., at the foot of Hospital Hill, were also constructed through this project. Steam mains were carried from the new power plant to the Memorial Complex and then to the Main Complex in a tunnel that was also used for other services, as well as to bring food carts from the main kitchen to the cafeteria and as an all-weather passageway.

The "AP" building was constructed as a detached structure to house tubercular patients in 1952, and the Memorial Complex attained its present size with the construction of "G" building in 1969. This new concrete building joined "AP" building and the cafeteria to the Memorial wards, and housed geriatric patients. It is the only building in the group not built of brick and serves as the central focus and main entrance to the Memorial Complex.

Staple to Inventory form at bottom