

FORM B - BUILDING

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

446

In Area no.	Form no.
	30D-7



Northampton
Route 66 at the intersection
of West, Chapel, & Burt's
Pit

Northampton State Hospital
ent use State hospital

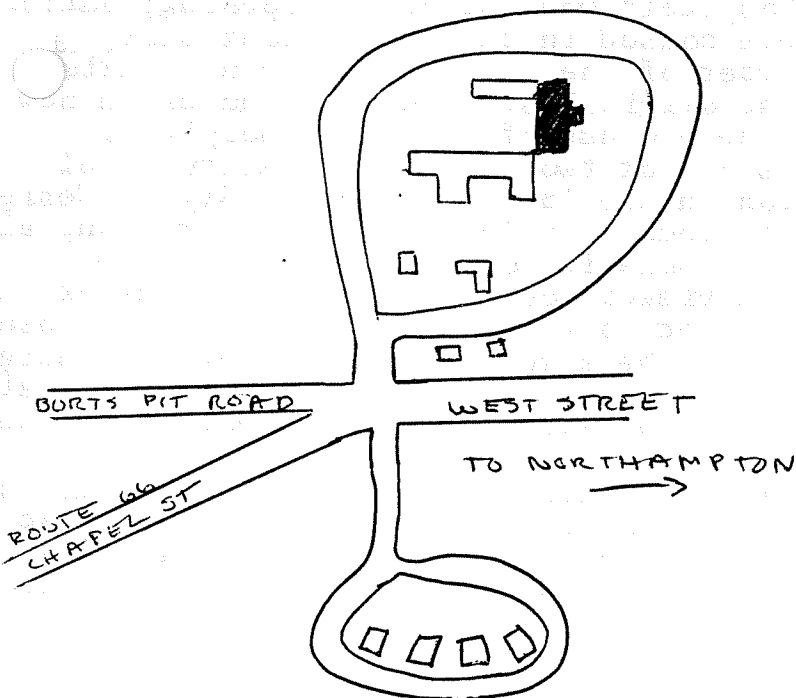
ent owner Comm. of Massachusetts

ription:

1856
Daily Hampshire Gazette
ource February 26, 1856

Gothic

4. Map. Draw sketch of building location in relation to nearest cross streets and other buildings. Indicate north.



Arncitect Jonathan Preston

Exterior wall fabric brick

Outbuildings (describe) numerous

Other features 5 stories (central);
stone lintels; numerous elaborate
gables; wings.

Altered additions to Date various
sides and rear

Moved no Date _____

5. Lot size:

One acre or less _____ Over one acre x

Approximate frontage 1/4 mile on

Approximate distance of building from street
route 66

1/2 mile from West Street

6. Recorded by C. Dible

Organization Northampton Historical

Commission

Date August 30, 1975

DO NOT WRITE IN THIS SPACE
USGS Quadrant _____

MHC Photo no. _____

RECEIVED

FEB 6 1976 (over)

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7. Original owner (if known) Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Original use State mental hospital

Subsequent uses (if any) and dates same

8. Themes (check as many as applicable)

Aboriginal	<input type="checkbox"/>	Conservation	<input type="checkbox"/>	Recreation	<input type="checkbox"/>
Agricultural	<input type="checkbox"/>	Education	<input type="checkbox"/>	Religion	<input type="checkbox"/>
Architectural	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Exploration/ settlement	<input type="checkbox"/>	Science/ invention	<input type="checkbox"/>
The Arts	<input type="checkbox"/>	Industry	<input type="checkbox"/>	Social/ humanitarian	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Commerce	<input type="checkbox"/>	Military	<input type="checkbox"/>	Transportation	<input type="checkbox"/>
Communication	<input type="checkbox"/>	Political	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Community development	<input type="checkbox"/>				

9. Historical significance (include explanation of themes checked above)

The state hospital at Northampton, built in 1856, was the third state mental institution in Massachusetts, the Worcester and Taunton facilities having preceded it. Northampton was chosen as the site for the hospital, as well as for the county House of Correction in 1851, because of the pleasant environment and accessibility of the town on the Connecticut River. The capacity of the "Northampton Lunatic Hospital" was 250 at its opening; patients, employees, and supervisors were housed in the single four story building. Since the last quarter of the nineteenth century various additions have been made to the original structure and numerous new buildings have been built on the grounds of the state hospital.

The original structure is one of two important institutional structures built in Northampton in the 1850's. G. F. J. Bryant designed the House of Correction for the county in 1851; Jonathan Preston, also from Boston, designed the Gothic Lunatic Hospital in 1856. The massiveness and what the modern viewer would term the grimness of the Victorian structure were calculated to instill in the inmate a sense of security and stability. While the angular qualities of the design were intended to secure abundant light and air for all inmates, local architectural tastes, which ran to the smooth and the symmetrical, were at odds with the gothic design.

The original design included a central structure with two wings three stories in height. Stone was used in the window areas and at the cornice line. The roofline of the complex is exceptionally irregular and well set against the sky as the hospital buildings are located atop a hill.

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

Daily Hampshire Gazette, February 26, 1856;
The Northampton Book, "Northampton State Hospital,
1858-1952," p. 371-376.