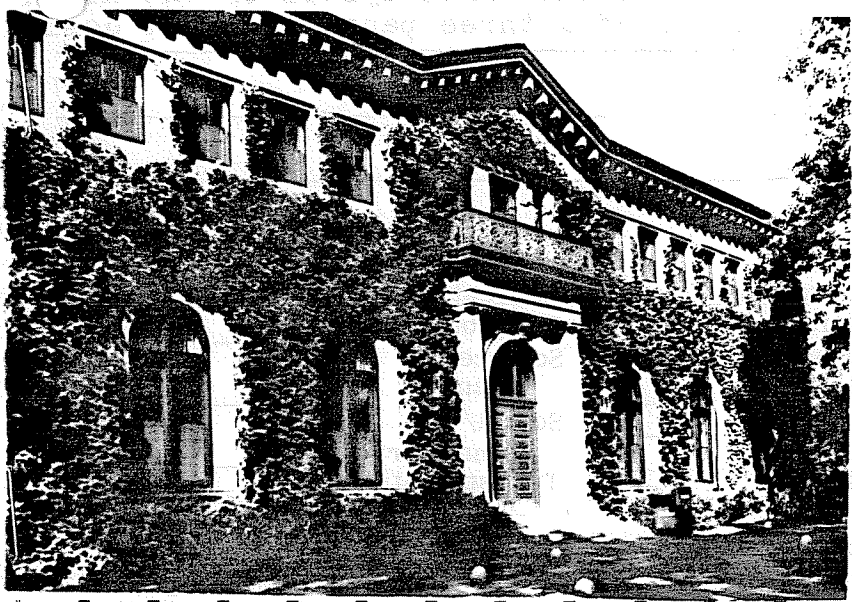


FORM B - BUILDING

In Area no.	Form no.
	31 D 7

729

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



1. Town Northampton  
Address Smith campus  
Name William Allan Neilson Library  
Present use college library

Present owner Smith College

3. Description:  
Date 1910

Source Smith College Archives

Style late Italian Renaissance Revival

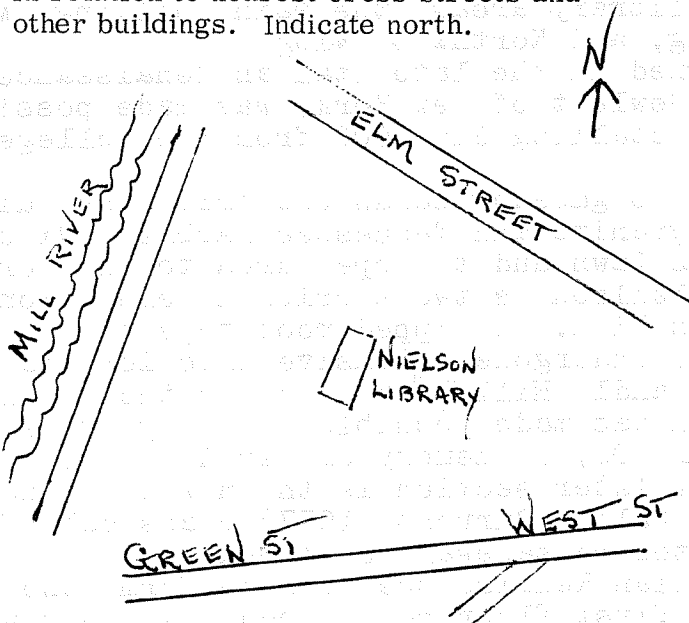
Architect Lord & Hewlett, of N.Y.C.

Exterior wall fabric brick

Outbuildings (describe) none

Other features hipped roof; sandstone Renaissance detailing

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



Altered Yes; several Date 1938; 1962  
wings added; interior (possibly  
Moved remodelled Date others, also

5. Lot size:  
One acre or less \_\_\_\_\_ Over one acre \_\_\_\_\_

Approximate frontage \_\_\_\_\_

Approximate distance of building from street \_\_\_\_\_

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

6. Recorded by Ann Gilkerson

Organization Northampton Historical Commission

Date March 27, 1977

(over)

The north wing is executed in a utilitarian style of smooth sandstone blocks with elongated, rectangular sash windows. The recent northwest addition, of brick construction, is shielded by vertical sandstone panels set out approximately two feet from the wall surface. Windows, regularly set, are modern, single pane rectangles. To the south, the later wing is in a modern brick and sandstone design similar to that of the panel system of the north wing. Original owner (if known) Smith College

Original use same as present 729

Subsequent uses (if any) and dates \_\_\_\_\_

8. Themes (check as many as applicable)

Aboriginal	_____	Conservation	_____	Recreation	_____
Agricultural	_____	Education	<u>x</u>	Religion	_____
Architectural	<u>x</u>	Exploration/ settlement	_____	Science/ invention	_____
The Arts	_____	Industry	_____	Social/ humanitarian	_____
Commerce	_____	Military	_____	Transportation	_____
Communication	_____	Political	_____		
Community development	_____				

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

Named for the third president of Smith College, the William Allan Neilson Library was dedicated on May 27, 1910. Construction began in September, 1908. Housing a collection of approximately 664,000 volumes, the open stack library is organized on six levels (three floors, each with a mezzanine). There are five main library areas: the Main Building, West Pavilion, South Addition, North Wing, and Northwest Wing.

The "H" shaped building, designed in the late Italian Renaissance Revival style by architects Lord & Hewlett of New York, was made possible through the gift of matching funds totalling \$165,000 from the College and Andrew Carnegie.

Constructed of red brick with Longmeadow sandstone trim, the building also incorporates pink Connecticut granite and Tennessee marble. Situated on a sloping hillside between Burton Lawn and the open area to the north of Seelye Hall, the east facade of Neilson is two stories in elevation, while the west side is three stories high. A hipped roof tops the building.

Over the years, the library has undergone extensive interior and exterior renovation. In 1938 the James Mandly Hills <sup>Wing</sup> was added to the north of the original building. This section was made possible by the gift of \$350,000 by Helen Hills Hills, Smith '08, in memory of her husband. A south wing was completed in 1962. Another later section is the new wing and second floor <sup>connected</sup> to the adjacent Wright Hall. Current (1977) plans call for expansion to the south via an elevated passageway to Alumnae Gym.

Primarily a revival of the Italian Renaissance palazzo form, the original Neilson Library combines large first floor round arched windows with small blank marble medallions in a regular rhythm. At the second floor level, three part rectangular <sup>high</sup> windows, surrounded by sandstone Greek inspired

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

meander moldings, march across the planar surface of the simple cubic mass. The facade and west side entryways are emphasized by pink Doric Connecticut granite columns supporting a sandstone entablature. Volutes and egg and dart moldings drawn from historical precedent further embellish these porticoes. A modillioned and dentilled cornice runs around the building, and is pulled up into a pediment shaped form above the facade entryway. At the second story level of the facade, an iron acanthus ornamented balcony surmounts the portico, while the wall surface receives subtle articulation via inset brick patterning. The first floor sash windows are framed by round arched sandstone moldings. Source: Smith College Archives