

FORM B - BUILDING

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

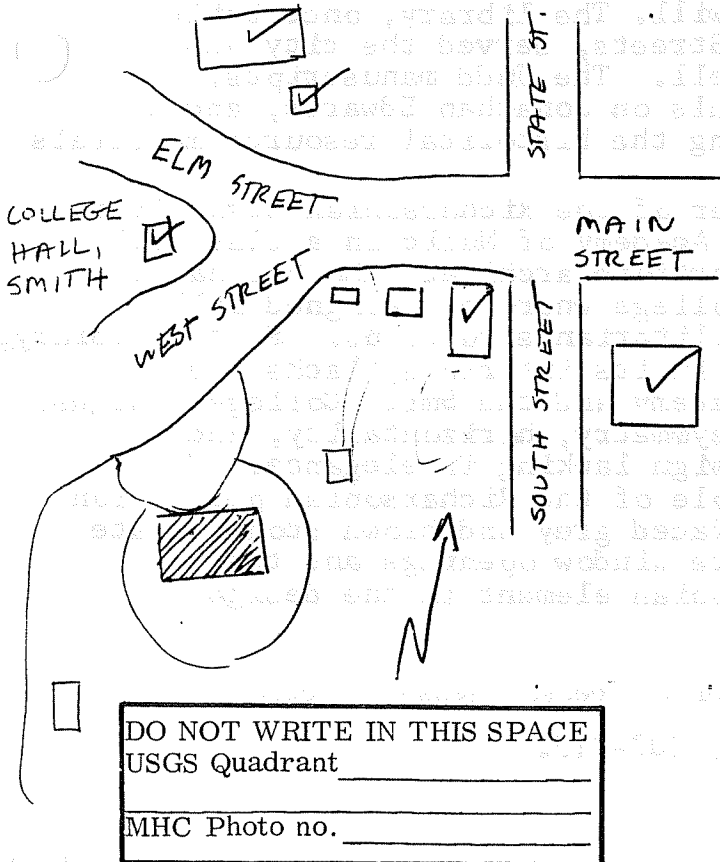
NR 159

In Area no.	Form no.
	31D-96



1 Northampton
 ess West Street
 e Forbes Library
 ent use Public Library
 ent owner City of Northampton
 ription:
1894
 ource inscribed on building
Richardsonian

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



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

Archnitect William C. Brockelsby
 Exterior wall fabric stone
 Outbuildings (describe) none
 Other features low arched entranceway supported by columns; irregular massing; grouped windows
 Altered no Date _____
 Moved no Date _____
 5. Lot size:
 One acre or less _____ Over one acre x
 Approximate frontage 500 feet
 Approximate distance of building from street
100 feet
 6. Recorded by Carol Dubie

Organization Northampton Historical Commission
 Date August 5, 1975

RECEIVED
 MAY 5 1976

✓ inventoried structure (over)

7. Original owner (if known) City of Northampton

Original use Public Library

Subsequent uses (if any) and dates Library

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 checked="" 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 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)

Forbes Library was dedicated in October 1894 over a decade after the wills of Judge Forbes and Dr. Pliny Earle had provided the City with the financial resources to maintain a large and progressive library. The prior establishment of the Clarke Library in Memorial Hall in 1871 complicated the creation of a memorial library as dictated by the Forbes will. The library, once built near the junction of Elm and West Streets, served the city and the students of Smith College as well. The Judd manuscripts, a substantial collection of materials on Jonathan Edwards, and a Calvin Coolidge Collection are among the historical resource materials now housed at Forbes Library.

William C. Brockelsby, designer of the Richardsonian style library, had two years earlier designed the Academy of Music in a Classical Revival style. Brockelsby was a Hartford architect who had had a number of commissions from Smith College where he designed Lilly Hall and Alumni Gym and several utilitarian structures. Forbes Library, while well laid out and attractive in its interiors, lacks the coherent massing possessed by the Academy and the Smith College designs. The Richardsonian preference for asymmetry, horizontality, and massive effects here produced a design lacking in elegance. The library is nonetheless a good example of the Richardsonian persuasion in its various tendencies. Rough faced grey and brown stone create a polychromatic effect and delineate window openings and the low central arch, a typically Richardsonian element in the design.

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

The Northampton Book, p. 207-213.