

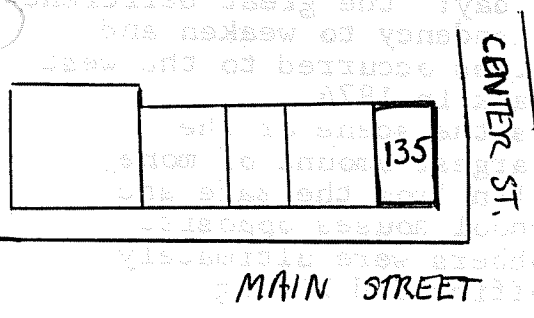
COMMISSION  
House, Boston



1. Town Northampton  
 Address 135 Main Street  
 Name Northampton National Bank (Old)  
 Present use Morrison Opticians  
 Present owner Gordon Morrison

3. Description:  
 Date October 30, 1866  
October 30, 1866  
 Source Daily Hampshire Gazette  
 Style Renaissance Revival  
 Architect William Fenno Pratt

Indicate location in relation to nearest cross streets and other buildings. Indicate north.



Exterior wall fabric cast iron front/brick sides  
 Outbuildings (describe) none  
 Other features fine cast iron railing in front

Altered no Date \_\_\_\_\_  
 Moved no Date \_\_\_\_\_

5. Lot size:  
 One acre or less x Over one acre \_\_\_\_\_  
 Approximate frontage 25 feet  
 Approximate distance of building from street borders sidewalk \_\_\_\_\_

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

**RECEIVED**

MAY 2 1975

6. Recorded by C. Dubie  
 Organization Northampton Historical Commission  
 Date April 1, 1975

MASS. HIST. COMM.

7. Original owner (if known) Northampton National Bank

Original use Bank/Law Offices

Subsequent uses (if any) and dates commercial

8. Themes (check as many as applicable)

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

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

A cast-iron front with brick sides distinguishes the Northampton Bank Building (1866) from its later nineteenth century neighbors on Main Street; bold detailing reveals its kinship with the Smith Charities building on lower Main Street. Both are the work of local architect W. F. Pratt. It is interesting that the old Bank building has survived to the present day: the great deficiency of cast-iron as a building material was its tendency to weaken and collapse when exposed to heat. Major town fires occurred to the west of the bank in 1870 and to the east of the bank in 1874.

In January, 1876 the building was the scene of the famous Great Bank Robbery. 1,500,000—the largest amount of money stolen in the U. S. until that time—was stolen from the safe and secreted in the attic of one of the brick school houses opposite the Bridge Street cemetery entrance. The robbers were ultimately brought to justice. (Judge Forbes had his office and living quarters on the third floor of the bank.)

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

Daily Hampshire Gazette, October 30, 1866,  
February 1, 1876