

FORM B - BUILDING

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

In Area no. <u>A</u>	Form no. <u>31D-166</u>
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794



Northampton

Address 260 Main Street

Academy of Music

Present use Motion Picture Theatre

Present owner City of Northampton

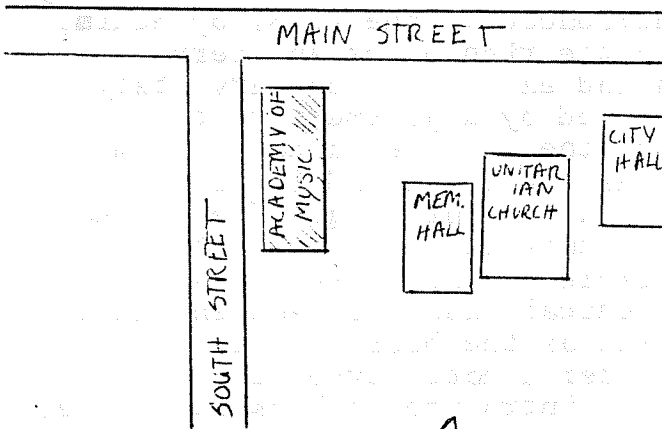
Year of construction: _____

1891

Source _____

new class.

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



Architect William Brockelsby

Exterior wall fabric warm gold brick

Outbuildings (describe) none

Other features central pedimented

pavillion decorated with pilasters

and symbols of the Arts; delicate

balustrade.

Altered no Date _____

Moved no Date _____

5. Lot size:

One acre or less x Over one acre _____

Approximate frontage 75 feet

Approximate distance of building from street

50 feet

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

RECEIVED

6. Recorded by C. Dubie

Organization Northampton Historical

Commission Date May 1, 1975

MASS. HIST. COMM.

7. Original owner (if known) City of Northampton

Original use Theatre

Subsequent uses (if any) and dates none

8. Themes (check as many as applicable)

Aboriginal	<input type="checkbox"/>	Conservation	<input type="checkbox"/>	Recreation	<input checked="" 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 checked="" 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)

The Academy of Music was the first municipal theatre in the United States. The theatre was presented to the city by Edward H. R. Lyman in 1891. Outstanding lectures, concerts, operas, dramas, and even Christmas pageants were regularly presented. In 1912, a stock company began the presentation of a different play each week. This first municipal theatre company in the United States achieved national fame. William Powell and James Rennie were among the well-known members.

The Academy of Music was designed in 1891 by William Brockelsby. "It represents the new style introduced to the U. S. by McKim, Meade and White, and is based on the rich brick and terra cotta architecture of late 15th and early 16th century Italy.

The two story facade is crowned by a pediment resting on lavishly ornamented pilasters; the cast terra cotta trim is the same warm and tawny tone as the brick and its created symbols appropriate the function of the building. The Academy is also a fine example of 19th century rationalism. Its mass is articulated to reveal the different spaces within, and its exterior is detailed in a hierarchical fashion. The entrance and the first two bays of the side of the building are of golden Roman brick with generous terra cotta trim; the next portion has less ornamentation and introduces a less expensive, dark red brick; this part is clearly revealed as the theater itself. Finally the stage house is shown, not only through the silhouette but also through its straightforward character; it is totally of the red brick and the only embellishments are the handsome early maps, etc.)

10. Bibliography and/or references (such as local histories, deeds, assessor's records, iron fire-escapes, etc.)