

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Our Mother of Sorrows Monastery and Retreat Center

other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number 110 Monastery Avenue _____ not for publication

city or town West Springfield _____ vicinity _____

state Massachusetts code MA county Hampshire code 015 zip code 01089

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this ☒ nomination
☐ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of
Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property
☒ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant
☐ nationally ☐ statewide ☒ locally. (☐ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Brona Simon

7/11/02

Signature of certifying official/Title Brona Simon

Date

Massachusetts Historical Commission, Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

State or Federal agency and bureau _____

In my opinion, the property ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. (☐ See continuation sheet for additional Comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title _____

Date _____

State or Federal agency and bureau _____

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:

- ☒ entered in the National Register
☐ See continuation sheet.
☐ determined eligible for the
National Register
☐ See continuation sheet.
☐ determined not eligible for the
National Register
☐ removed from the
National Register
☐ other (explain): _____

Signature of the Keeper [Signature]

Date of Action 8/30/02

Our Mother of Sorrows
Name of Property

Hampshire, Massachusetts
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply)

☒ private
☐ public-local
☐ public-State
☐ public-Federal

(Check only one box)

☒ building(s)
☐ district
☐ site
☐ structure
☐ object

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
4	0	building
		sites
2	0	structures
19	0	objects
25	0	Total

Name of related multiple property listing

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Religion/religious facility/church-related residence

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Domestic/multiple dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

Late 19th & 20th c. Revivals/Spanish Colonial Revival

Modern Movement/Modernistic

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation granite, brick

walls brick and stone

roof tile, copper

other _____

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

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Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 1

Our Lady of Sorrows Monastery and Retreat Center
West Springfield (Hampshire), MA

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

Setting

Our Mother of Sorrows Monastery and Retreat House is located in West Springfield on a promontory that provides a view to the east of the Connecticut River valley. It is in a suburban neighborhood of single-family homes built primarily in the 1930s and 1940s after the monastery was constructed. Fenced in and set above and away from the street on park-like, landscaped grounds, the property provides the largest open space in the neighborhood. Mature white pine trees screen the south side of the property; mature red maples line the drive in front of the building. On the south perimeter of the property along Monastery Avenue is an iron fence strung between Quincy granite posts that are topped with gray granite coping stones. Six of these posts are arranged to form an elliptical gateway at the entry. On one of the posts is an engraved metal sign announcing "Monastery of Our Mother of Sorrows".

The entry drive opens on the south side of the west-facing building and separates it from the landscaped monastery grounds that have been furnished with devotional sculpture (**Photograph No. 1**). Directly across from the building, small wood niches containing bronze reliefs depicting the fourteen Stations of the Cross have been attached to maple and pine trees along a devotional walkway. Worshippers progress through the stations with three additional stops at life-sized statues on high concrete plinths depicting the Virgin and Child (a white painted terra cotta statue), Crucifixion (a white painted metal statue affixed to a wooden cross), and Virgin and Young Child (a white painted metal statue). There are two additional devotional areas on the grounds. Southeast of the monastery a statue of Christ holding his cross is set in a myrtle and grass covered enclosure that is framed by rhododendrons. South of this enclosure a large sunken garden has been organized around a statue of the Virgin on a stone plinth. A sixth statue of the crucifixion is visible from Monastery Avenue only at the southeastern-most corner of the property. In a roundabout opposite the main entry to the monastery is a stone plinth that formerly supported a *pieta* statue that is now gone.

Building Exterior

Although it is one of two monasteries in West Springfield (the other is a Dominican Sisters monastery in a Neo-Gothic style of later date) this is the only Spanish Colonial Revival building of its scale and setting in the community. The steel frame construction monastery and retreat house is a three story, random ashlar granite and brick structure under a Spanish Colonial, red tile-covered, hipped roof with a wide eaves overhang and exposed, enriched rafters (**Photograph no. 2**). Composed of five angled segments, the symmetrical building is C-shaped in plan. While the symmetrical, five segment composition was presumably conceived by the architects as they began designing in 1923, only the first three segments on the south and center were drawn up and constructed in 1925. The two remaining northern segments were added in 1955 in contemporary materials and more economical detailing (**Photograph No. 3**). The inner side of the C is the principal elevation and faces west. The outer elevation of the C faces east. On the outer elevation there are three projecting features: a single-story, arcaded bay entrance on the south (**Photograph no. 4**); a full-height, transverse choir wing on the east (**Photograph no. 4**); and a two-story retreat chapel (**Photograph no. 5**).

The inner elevation is divided into fifty-three bays and each vertical three-story bay is slightly recessed in the 1925 section of the building, giving the plane of the facade a subtle variety. There are two main and two subordinate entries on this facade. The center entry leads into the monastery's public chapel through a pedimented pavilion that is framed by engaged buttresses (**Photograph no. 6**). A double leaf entrance, it is sheltered by a tiled, shed roof portico on Spanish

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Colonial derived carved wood and stone consoles. A second entry leading into monastery offices and quarters is located on the west end of the C. It is a deeply recessed, arched opening reached by a double flight of granite stairs. A vertically-stepped ornamental granite molding on this facade rises three stories and marks this as an important entrance. Relief plaques of Passionist symbols are enclosed by the molding and are characteristic of the Spanish Colonial Revival style. A third entry is into the 1955 retreat house on the north. It is a 1½-story rectangular vestibule of concrete, metal and glass, stylistically typical of the 1950s (**Photograph no. 3**).

Comes, Perry, McMullen, the monastery architects drew upon elements of Spanish Colonial Revival style to soften and avoid monotony in the large-scale building. Windows of the exposed basement level are segmentally arched; those of the first floor are arched and have arched transoms above 2/2 sash; second and third floor windows have squared lintels and 2/2 sash. On the west elevation two-story, high arched windows of the refectory create a Spanish arcade pattern (**Photograph No. 4**). Fenestration in the 1925 portions of the building is not completely regular, and asymmetries correspond to interior functions with leaded glass stair windows, and bands of smaller scale openings for public rooms. Color and texture of the exterior masonry also contribute to the building's visual interest. Quincy granite blocks range from rust to light cream in color and have two degrees of rusticated surfaces: split and seam-faced. Window sills and lintels are uniform gray granite for contrast.

Brother Cajetan J.B. Baumann, architect of the 1955 retreat house completed the symmetrical plan of the building, adding the two segments that completed the C-shaped plan (**Photograph no. 3**). Baumann designed the retreat house and retreat chapel to be compatible with the original building but clearly contemporary. Windows are all square-headed in the 1955 segments of the building and paired sash is metal 1/1. There is less variety in the surface texture of the Quincy granite used in the 1955 section; the rear facade of that portion is a more economical yellow brick (**Photograph no. 5**). The retreat house roof is tiled, but its exposed rafters are square rather than enriched as in the 1925 portion. The two-story, copper-roofed retreat Chapel that projects from the east elevation gains lighted space by being excavated at the basement level. Relatively plain in elevation, the Chapel is decorated on its easternmost facade with a full height concrete panel with a cross in relief flanked by colored, textured glass windows.

Building Interior

Room Functions

Original 1923 drawings by the architects Comes, Perry, McMullen are in the collection of the monastery owners. A comparison between the drawings and the current building shows that there have been no significant changes on the interior of the building since 1925. The steel frame construction building with hollow tile interior walls is laid out with supporting services primarily on the first level, the upper levels contain a mixture of bed rooms, meeting and service rooms. In plan, the first two and a half sections of the building are devoted to monastery functions; north of the center block is devoted to retreat functions. On the basement level room designations proceeding from the south west are a drying room, a laundry room with clothes chutes, the monastery refectory, servant and guest dining rooms, kitchen, showers and vegetable cellar, boiler room and coal rooms. First floor rooms from the southwest are parlors, monastery offices, priests' confessional, infirmary, infirmary chapel, upper part of the refectory, additional guest rooms, Bishop's bedroom and reception room. The center block contains the monastery choir and public chapel stacked one above the other on first through third floors. On the north side of the center block are the original 13 retreat rooms and toilets. The

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Our Lady of Sorrows Monastery and Retreat Center
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third floor opposes ten monastery rooms on the outer side of the corridor with the library and archives on the inner side. Seven more bed rooms, alcove and recreation room are followed by a working sacristy and on the north section ten retreat rooms, lavatory and sitting room.

1955 drawings for the addition to the retreat house by Brother Cajetan J. B. Baumann, O.F. M., Architect are also in the collection of the monastery. The smaller steel frame construction addition follows the division of floors established in the 1925 building with service rooms on the basement level, retreat bed rooms, chapel and meeting rooms on the second floor, additional bedrooms and meeting space on the third floor.

Interior Decorative Styles: Monk and Retreatant Rooms

Befitting its functions as a monastery and retreat house, the interior of the building divides into two disparate styles: austere private rooms for monks and retreatants to live, work, and meet, contrasted with more richly decorated spaces for worship and public community use. This distinction holds true in both 1925 and 1955 sections of the building. Comes, Perry, McMullen designed the 1925 monk and retreatants' rooms at a standard size and with nearly identical finishes. United States Department of the Interior

Walls and ceilings are plaster. While the corridor floors are terrazzo with oak baseboards, bedroom floors and baseboards are entirely of maple. From the wide corridor, oak framed doors with glass transoms open to rooms that are approximately eight by ten feet in size. Each room has one, oak-framed window. A single decorative feature is the use of paneled oak shutters that remain in a few rooms but were originally on all the windows of the monks' rooms. Remaining furnishings include a single bed, wardrobe, overhead light and desk.

The monastery meeting and special purpose rooms are consistent with this aesthetic. It is true that a third floor student reading room has a pale leaded glass window and statue of St. Gabriel, patron saint of students, and a large second floor meeting room has vivid leaded glass windows, but they otherwise share with the library and barbering room a deliberate simplicity.

Retreatants' rooms in the 1955 section are approximately the same size as the monastery rooms; they use the same finishes with the exception of floors that are linoleum, and ceilings that are acoustical tile or plaster. Rooms in this section have a sink included on a ceramic-tiled wall, and a few rooms have toilets. Meeting/recreation rooms and large lavatories are larger versions of the bed rooms in terms of finishes.

Mechanical and Service Rooms

On the basement level the mechanical service rooms maintain their original functions. A sub-basement room contains the building's boilers for its steam heat system. Polished concrete floors, plaster walls and ceilings crossed by exposed plumbing lines make these spaces purely utilitarian. The drying and laundry rooms, actually a single space, are equipped with boilers, laundry equipment, and a laundry chute that extends to the upper floors. The main 1925 kitchen has a large central, stainless steel range and oven stack capped by a large stainless steel vent hood. This equipment replaces the original equipment. Stainless steel tables, and sinks line the walls. The ceiling has been covered with acoustical tiles. The Bishop's dining room between the refectory and kitchen has the same utilitarian finishes: plaster walls, dropped

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acoustical ceiling, composite floors. An oak Mission style hutch cabinet in the Bishop's dining room would appear to date from the 1920s. A small shower room with four stalls has oak doors and ceramic tiled walls. Further along the corridor is a walk-in, room-sized refrigerator.

In the basement of the 1955 section, a rambling kitchen was created with ceramic tile walls, glazed clay tile floors, and acoustical tile ceiling. Once again the room was furnished with typical institutional sized, stainless steel ovens, preparation islands, and refrigerator freezer bank. On this lower level is the main 1955 retreat dining room beneath the retreat chapel. Large metal frame windows light the room. The floor is composition; walls and ceiling plaster, entry and end walls are covered in a vertical, tongue-and-groove paneling in a smoothly finished, light wood. Semi-recessed metal fixtures are ceiling hung. At an angle to the dining room is the multi-purpose, group meeting room which is also wood paneled, with vinyl tile and carpeting on the floors, and semi-recessed, ceiling-hung fixtures on the plaster ceiling.

Interior Decorative Styles: Communal and Worship Spaces

Beginning with the 1925 refectory, the rooms for communal use are more elaborate. The refectory is two stories in height and is lit by seven bays of arched, full-height windows. The long rectangular room with a terrazzo floor has a row of tables and benches secured to a low plinth around the outer walls. Inner walls behind the tables are paneled veneer wainscoting below and plaster above. The plaster ceiling is vaulted providing spaces on the walls for a series of paintings of the Life of the Virgin by Brother Conrad Ivan on the west and arched window heads on the east. A carved, Spanish style, wood balcony is above the south entrance to the room; a life-sized crucifixion is at the north end. The room is lit by hanging copper light fixtures in a Mission/Spanish Colonial Revival style.

The stylistic focal point of the 1925 monastery is the choir that occupies the central block of the building and extends as an apse-like wing on the east side of the building. Two stories in height, the choir occupies second and third floors (**Photograph no. 7**). The elaborately decorated room has paneled wainscoting on the lower half of the walls and plaster above. An arched cedar panel ceiling is divided into four bays by a faux charpente system of wooden beams and arched braces with king post trusses. The wooden ceiling is divided into decoratively carved panels by floral leaf patterned ribs and corner rosettes. Beams vary in their decoration using both geometric designs and floral scrollwork. The beams are supported by large carved consoles on the lateral walls. The cedar is dark brown in color with the carving picked out in hand painted hues of gold, blue, and red. A quotation from the canon of Mass has been carved and painted into the east and west beams and lateral friezes around the room, as follows: (west end) "Thou has left us the Memorial of thy passion" (north) "Be mindful O Lord of thy servants and handmaids, and of all here present whose faith and devotion are known to Thee" (east) "For whom we offer, or who offer up to thee this sacrifice of praise for themselves, and all those dear to them" (south) "For the redemption of their souls, the hope of their safety and salvation: who now pay their vows to thee, the eternal living and true God. Canon of Mass". Black and white marble steps lead from the oak parquet floor of the choir to an arched alcove on the west wall (**Photograph no. 8**). The alcove contains a multi-colored marble altar that supports pilasters below gilded panels around the arch containing signs of the passion. The arch frames a mosaic of the crucifixion in the late style of the Renaissance painter Sandro Botticelli. The mosaic is signed by Ravenna Mosaics, Inc.

Facing each other at the sides of the room and across the east wall are two levels of wooden choir stalls behind continuous music stands. Above the choir stalls are small paintings of the Stations of the Cross while two portrait paintings, one of the founder of the Passionist order, decorate the west wall. Above the stalls the choir is illuminated by

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Our Lady of Sorrows Monastery and Retreat Center
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stained glass windows on the north, east and south walls. The windows show scenes from the life of Christ over quotations from the Gospels. The windows include donor names and dedications. The choir is preceded by a large vestibule that contains several vestment closets and a large oak highboy for vestments, chalices, altar cloths and other requirements of mass. Three rooms on the other side of the vestibule lit by stained glass windows served as single chapels for the Passionists; one contains an altar.

On the first floor directly beneath the rooms which service the choir and the choir itself is the public chapel. Set aside as unfinished space at the time of construction for a future sanctuary, the chapel was completed in 1955 to the designs of Brother Baumann. The rather low ceilinged room is oriented to a square, wood paneled alcove on the east that contains an altar. It is flanked by two niches for statues. Pews are a light wood, floors are rubber tiled and on the entry wall are two wooden confessional stalls. The chapel is lit by arched stained glass windows, eight on one side and seven on the other. Relief plaques of the Stations of the Cross are placed on the side walls.

In keeping with the Spanish Colonial Revival style of the building, the monastery's corridor stairs have wrought iron railings with scrollwork supports.

The most elaborate room in the 1955 section is the retreat chapel that is on the first floor. It is entered through a wood paneled vestibule with black, marble-faced posts. To the right of the chapel doors in the vestibule is an altar with an unsigned, painted triptych. The center panel is a *pieta* flanked by angels with symbols of the crucifixion, nails and crown of thorns in the side panels. The chapel is entered through a pair of double leaf glass doors etched with symbols of the crucifixion: crown of thorns, money bags, cross and rope. Chapel walls are divided into four bays by large square posts. Each bay has wood paneled infill on its lower part and chunk-style stained glass windows showing scenes from the passion above. The windows are divided into two parts: fixed above and a small hopper below. The wood paneling is identical to that used in the vestibule and appears in the more formal meeting rooms in this part of the building as well. It is a contemporary vertical, tongue and groove paneling in a smoothly finished, light wood. The plaster chapel ceiling is arched and from it hang bronze fixtures typical of the 1950s. Behind the marble altar on the east end of the room is a full-height mosaic of Joseph the carpenter attended by three angels holding tools. The mosaic contains a portrait of Pope Pius X blessing a congregation of working men. Above the mosaic - and extending as a canopy over it - is an oval mosaic panel of the Dove of the Holy Spirit. Four confessionals with doors screened in a cross pattern range across the back wall of the chapel. There is a small organ behind the pews and its pipes are located in a loft above the entry door. As in the public chapel, the retreat chapel pews are a light wood. Floors here are composite.

Outbuildings

There are two gazebos on the property dating not long after construction of the monastery in 1925 (Photograph no. 9). On the northeast side of the building the first gazebo has a steeply pitched, hipped roof supported on square posts with square cut braces at the eaves. Exposed rafters are enriched. A balustrade encircling the gazebo is constructed of simple cross braces, and latticework ornaments the apron at the foundation level. The second gazebo also has a steeply pitched, hipped roof supported on posts. Railings are cross-braced and the structure sits on pressed concrete block foundations.

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Our Lady of Sorrows Monastery and Retreat Center
West Springfield (Hampshire), MA

Directly behind the monastery are three, pressed concrete block garages with pyramidal hipped roofs. Two are single bay and one is a double bay building. All were constructed shortly after the monastery.

Archaeological Description

While no ancient Native American sites are recorded within the boundaries of the Monastery and Retreat Center or in the general area, sites may be present. Environmental characteristics of the property indicate the presence of locational criteria (slope, soil drainage, distance to wetlands) that are favorable indicators for some types of Native sites. The Monastery and Retreat Center is located on a well drained, level to moderately sloping promontory with a south to southeast facing exposure. Wetlands are also located in close proximity to the property. Piper Brook, a tributary stream of the Connecticut River, lies about 1000 feet from the southern portion of the property. Bagg Brook lies within 1000 feet of the northern property boundary. The Connecticut River lies less than one-half mile to the east. Given the above information, documented Native American settlement patterns for the region, the size of the nominated parcel (18.17 acres) and impacts related to the Monastery, Retreat Center and related outbuildings, a moderate to high potential exists for locating ancient Native American resources on the nominated property.

A high potential exists for locating historic archaeological resources on the Monastery and Retreat Center property. The religious property was created in the 1920s from the former Henry S. Hyde property, however, little is presently known about the latter estate. Further research is needed to document what portions of the Hyde property, if any, were demolished for construction of the Monastery and Retreat Center. Buildings or facilities may have also been integrated into agricultural and maintenance activities related to the Monastery and Retreat Center. At present, evidence of structures no longer extant have not been identified on the nominated property. Structural evidence of outbuildings related to agricultural activities may be present. Occupational related features, especially refuse areas, may also exist. The cemetery was reportedly moved, however, it is likely mortuary related artifacts and evidence of burials including grave shafts and possibly human remains still exist.

(end)

Our Mother of Sorrows

Name of Property

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- ☒ **A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- ☐ **B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- ☒ **C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- ☐ **D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- ☐ **A** owned by religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- ☐ **B** removed from its original location.
- ☐ **C** a birthplace or grave.
- ☐ **D** a cemetery.
- ☐ **E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- ☐ **F** a commemorative property.
- ☒ **G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- ☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- ☐ previously listed in the National Register
- ☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register
- ☐ designated a National Historic Landmark
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Hampshire, Massachusetts

County and State

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Religion

Architecture

Period of Significance

1923-1960

Significant Dates

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

Comes, Perry and McMullin, architects

Primary location of additional data:

- ☐ State Historic Preservation Office
- ☐ Other State agency
- ☐ Federal agency
- ☐ Local government
- ☐ University
- ☐ Other

Name of repository:

Pioneer Valley Planning Commission; Simsbury Associates, Braintree, Mass. (drawings)

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Our Lady of Sorrows Monastery and Retreat Center
West Springfield (Hampshire), MA

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HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

Our Mother of Sorrows Monastery and Retreat Center is significant under criteria A and C as the first monastic order in western Massachusetts, and the only Passionist order. It is significant for its place in the history of the Catholic church as an institution that combined three important church functions: outreach through the preaching and retreat house fathers; presentation of a theological model through the monks who were devoted to contemplation of the passion of Christ; and sustenance through the educational system offered young men on their way to becoming the next generation of Passionist members. The monastery is significant for having served several generations of Catholic immigrants who came to the Connecticut River Valley to take part in its agricultural and industrial economies. The Retreat Center portion of the property, constructed in 1955, meets criterion G of the National Register having achieved significance within the past 50 years, during which time the Orders of the Catholic Church reached their greatest membership and the Retreat Center served thousands of retreatants who came for weekend religious instruction and contemplation.

The Passionist Monastery is architecturally significant as an example of the Spanish Colonial Revival style that was frequently adopted, along with the Italian Renaissance Revival style, by the Catholic Church for its buildings, symbolizing the religion's European origins. Its integration with the landscape ornamented with sculptural vignettes and later the Retreat Center exemplifies the way in which the Church sought to convey the integration of religion in the daily life of its congregants. The Passionist Fathers Monastery and Retreat Center has integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association. It is of local significance.

Founding of the Order

Our Mother of Sorrows Monastery and Retreat Center is part of a Catholic religious society, the Passionist Order, that originated in Lombardy, Italy in 1720 with Paul Francis Danei. Danei had taken part in Pope Clement XI's crusade against the Turks and returned to Italy determined to build an Order. It took twenty-one years for him to gain Vatican approval from Pope Benedict XIII, but once sanctioned, Paul, who later came to be known as St. Paul of the Cross, and his brother John, who became St. John Baptist, began to travel throughout Italy recruiting members who pledged to devote themselves to the theme of the sufferings of Christ, hence the "Passionists." Paul died in 1775 with twelve Passionist houses established in Italy. It was an Order that combined vows of silence and meditation on the passions of Christ, with vows to provide religious retreats for laymen. The theory behind this combination of monastery and retreat was that through prayer, penance and solitude a monk could get close to the suffering of Christ and thereby transform his soul in God, and at the same time Passionate priests could make this experience available to others.

The Order continued to spread in Italy, then in the early 19th century moved first to Belgium and then to England. Establishment and growth of the Passionist Order in Europe during the 19th century made it familiar to Catholics, but it would take several generations before the Catholic population of the United States was large enough to support the Order. Significant Catholic immigration to the United States began in the 1820s with Irish and German immigrants; in 1830 there were 318,000 Catholics in the country and by 1870 there were 4.5 million. On the eastern seaboard Irish Catholics escaping the potato famine and French-Canadians coming south for work from the 1840s expanded their numbers. Many made their way west in Massachusetts from New York and Boston principally by laboring on railroad and canal construction in the 1840s. In 1843 the first Catholic Church with a resident priest in western Massachusetts was established in Chicopee.

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Our Lady of Sorrows Monastery and Retreat Center
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Membership increased in a second major growth period at the turn of the 20th century with the large immigration movement from eastern and central European countries as people came to work on the farms, mines, and industries along the east coast. In western Massachusetts immigrants were often brought directly to the Connecticut River Valley in the 1880s and 90s by farmers who urgently needed workers to help cultivate and process tobacco which had become the region's first true cash crop. They stayed to grow onions and potatoes, establish their own farms and businesses. Meanwhile, in 1870 the Diocese of Springfield was established. With a diocese came lay associations such as parish missions and confraternities that later were to form the backbone of the retreat movement.

The Passionists had arrived in the United States in 1852 when Bishop O'Connor of Pittsburgh, impressed with their success in England, went to Rome to request that the church send a group of missionaries to his home city and diocese. He took four Passionist brothers home with him and within a year they had founded a community. New monks came from Italy and England and when they had grown enough to take on retreat work their influence grew. A second monastery was established in 1860 in Dunkirk, New York, a third in Hoboken, New Jersey. Others went to Queens, New York; Scranton, Pennsylvania; and Union City, New Jersey. In the meantime, western Massachusetts' clergy went to Boston where a retreat was established.

Founding of the Passionist Monastery and Retreat in West Springfield

In 1922 Right Reverend Thomas Mary O'Leary asked the Passionists headquartered in Pittsburgh to come to western Massachusetts to establish a monastery in West Springfield. The Passionists agreed, a site was selected, an architectural firm chosen, and plans were drawn up in 1923. Bishop O'Leary led a group that raised \$100,000 for the building.

The site selected for the monastery in West Springfield was the former Henry S. Hyde property on a hill overlooking the river valley in an area that came to be known as Monastery Heights. The Hyde property, known as "Brush Hill Farm", had been constructed between 1868 and 1890 by Henry S. Hyde, who owned the Wason Manufacturing Company in Springfield, builders of railway cars, car wheels and railroad castings. Hyde by 1896 was treasurer, later president and director of the Agawam National Bank of Springfield. Directories indicate his sons Henry Junior and Jerome also lived at Brush Hill Farm (women were not listed in the Springfield directories until the 1920s). During the late-1890s and first decades of the 20th century, Henry Junior was assistant bookkeeper and bookkeeper of the Wason Manufacturing Company while Jerome was assistant treasurer of the Springfield Steam Power Company. Between 1915 and 1920, Henry S. Hyde, Sr. died leaving his son Henry and Hazel Hyde at Brush Hill Farm. They remained there until the property was sold to the Catholic Church. Henry had become proprietor of the Central Storage Warehouse.

The architects chosen to design the monastery were Comes, Perry & McMullen a Pittsburgh firm that had completed a retreat house for St. Paul's Passionist Monastery in Pittsburgh in 1920. A letter from John T. Comes, the architect, to the Pittsburgh Rector of St. Paul's Monastery outlines the terms of the firm's work for the Passionists. They would make preliminary sketches that would be done without charge unless the project went forward. If construction were undertaken, the architects would be selected to do the work and would get 6% of the contract cost in fees. They promised to make a donation to the church. Whether terms were similar for West Springfield is not known. While the architects were imports from Pennsylvania, most of the contractors were from the Springfield area beginning with the building contractors, J. G. Roy & Sons.

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
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National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 3

Our Lady of Sorrows Monastery and Retreat Center
West Springfield (Hampshire), MA

Organization of the Monastery and its Work

The West Springfield monastery was named for its particular charism, or contribution that a congregation offered the church. In this case, the charism was meditation on the passion of sorrow experienced by the Mother of Christ at his crucifixion, hence "Our Mother of Sorrows". The monastery was composed of three groups of Passionists. One group was dedicated to **apostolic work**. They were the fathers who circulated to churches throughout the region conducting series of religious services such as *novenas*. The fathers also ran the retreat function of the monastery in which lay men came to the retreat house for a weekend of thought and work on religious topics. The fathers performing the mission work would leave the monastery then return to study and rest before going out again to continue their work or to lead a Passionist retreat.

The second group of Passionists were the brothers who chose a **contemplative life** in the monastery. To maintain focus on meditation, the brothers sustained silence and a margin of physical discomfort. For instance, brothers slept on straw mattresses and pillows, wore the same weight robes year round which were slightly too thick for the summer and somewhat too thin for the winter. These men lived a virtually silent life speaking only at appointed times such as recreation time during the evening. From 2-3 A.M. they attended vespers in the choir, then returned to their rooms for the rest of the night. They rose at 5:30 A.M. for mass, followed by work, and a tightly scheduled day of walks, work, chanting, eating, and worship. Each man was allotted a specific area of work and trained for it. For instance, a man might be sent away for culinary school to become a baker and cook for the monastery. Others were in charge of the laundry, gardens, orchards, tailor shop, building maintenance, or infirmary.

The third group was that of the **students**. For them, each Passionist monastery was a separate campus where they studied philosophy, theology or other aspects of the contemplative life. Often arriving at the age of fifteen, they circulated among the monasteries during their training years before ordination, and took part in the life of the monastery in which they were staying as well as following their studies. They lived on the upper floor, helped with the work of the monastery and followed the regimen of the brothers. Students would, for instance, take turns sitting on the balcony in the refectory to read aloud from religious texts during the otherwise silent meals. For the Our Mother of Sorrows Monastery, the largest number of men came from the Springfield area. As was true of all Catholic Orders in the United States, it was assumed that a continual process of taking on new students would allow the Order to continue as they matured and replaced older members.

To meet the needs of these three groups the three-story monastery was designed with two floors of dormitory style rooms, shared bathrooms and small living and meeting rooms, and function rooms for barbering, library, and infirmary among others. The public chapel was open to all. While only men used the retreat for much of the monastery's history, women's spiritual and counseling needs were taken care of in the parlor rooms of the monastery offices set off from the rest of the building.

The monastery was close to being a self-sufficient village. From its founding until the 1960s, the grounds extended west to Piper Road. On this large acreage they cultivated gardens and orchards to feed themselves and visiting retreatants. Excess was offered to other monasteries and orders and then to local residents. The Passionists were mindful of competing with local farmers and their roadside stands, so they tried to direct their excess produce to the needy. The

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
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National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 4

Our Lady of Sorrows Monastery and Retreat Center
West Springfield (Hampshire), MA

brother tailors made all the men's robes, and their under garments. Each monk had three cassocks: for services, for working, and for sleeping. All the laundry of the monastery and retreat was done in the laundry rooms by brothers. The monastery also ran an infirmary for members who were sick. While the sick might need to go to a hospital for urgent care, the monastery took care of them in the infirmary as long as they were able. Until the monastery was closed, monks were cared for through death, nursed and attended and finally buried on the grounds in a cemetery reserved for Passionists.

This level of self-sufficiency required that the basement level of the monastery contained besides mechanical equipment, the spaces for food storage and preparation, sewing room, and laundry. Three garages were needed to house farming equipment and vehicles. The monastery landscape combined areas for practical monastery use, the agricultural land, with landscape used for religious purposes. The latter was located closer to the monastery spread on three sides of it; the agricultural area was in the outer portion of the property. On the west side of the entry drive paths lead to sculpted Stations of the Cross affixed to trees (**Photograph no. 1**). Here the brothers followed their routine of silent meditation for hours each day. There are individual devotional areas as well in this inner landscape area, including one devoted to Mary with a flower garden in the southeast corner of the property. Devotional areas were set close to the public entrance to encourage their use. Two gazebos – placed at the crest of the monastery land overlooking the valley – were for public use as well (**Photograph no. 9**). A central roundabout at the entrance to the monastery's public chapel acts as a focal point of the landscape (**Photograph no. 2**).

History of the Passionists 1950-present

Religious orders reached their peak in the late 1950s and early 1960s in the United States. There were nearly 1,000 orders involving 200,000 members who worked on almost every facet of Catholic life: schools, hospitals, charities, retreats. In western Massachusetts the Springfield diocese supported all these activities in both the urban and increasingly suburban settings and laymen through their lay organizations increasingly made weekend retreats at Our Mother of Sorrows part of their religious life. Additional space was needed by the 1950s, so money was raised to add a larger retreat house and complete the symmetry of the building. In 1955 the two northern segments were added to accommodate 110 men and within three years Our Mother of Sorrows had become the fifth largest retreat house in the country. From 446 men the first year, numbers of retreatants rose to 6,000 by 1974. Twenty-five Passionist members lived there in 1975.

Brother Cajetan Baumann, FAIA, architect of the 1955 retreat house was a Franciscan monk with an office at 44 Whitehall Street in New York. With his staff of eight licensed architects, after Our Mother of Sorrows retreat house he designed Our Mother of Florida monastery and retreat house in Palm Beach, Florida in 1962, then the Cardinal Spellman Retreat House in Riverdale, New York in 1967. In addition to work for the Catholic Church in the United States, he helped in restoration of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem. Cajetan Baumann, according to Monsanto Magazine was in 1962 the only religious order member ever elected a Fellow of the American Institute of Architects.

The Passionists conducted retreats that lasted from Friday evening through 8 A.M. on Monday morning and were called the "Sixty Golden Hours." They were open to all men Catholic and non-Catholic without charge, although a donation was requested. The art and architecture of the addition was designed to make explicit the democratic, non-hierarchical nature of the retreats. All of the retreat bedrooms were equal in size and furnishings, meeting rooms were open, flexible and

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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Section number 8 Page 5

Our Lady of Sorrows Monastery and Retreat Center
West Springfield (Hampshire), MA

modestly decorated. The centerpiece of this principle is the mosaic in the retreat chapel. The subject and main figure is St. Joseph, Carpenter. Beneath St. Joseph and small in scale, the church in the form of a portrait of Pope Pius X is ministering to a group of unidentifiable working men. The centrality and celebration of the working lay man is the primary message of the mosaic, but, according to Brother Anselm of Our Mother of Sorrows, to the monks of the monastery it also held a message of their equality as workers within the institution of the church.

In 1954 Father Fidelio Rice and three other monks set up a studio in an unused bed room at Our Mother of Sorrows to produce a taped radio show that grew to be broadcast nationwide to 15,000,000 listeners. Called "The Hour of the Crucified" broadcasts were first aimed at renewing faith of people with physical handicaps. The program's title changed to "Crossroads" and its theme diversified until it eventually was broadcast by 130 stations. In 1957 Rev. Rice began a television program for Sunday mornings called "The Choice of Salvation". In the 1960s the radio program outgrew the bed room/studio and was moved nearby to 1089 Elm Street in West Springfield.

The garden and orchard land was sold on direction of the Catholic Church in the 1960s when the Passionists were no longer using it to feed themselves and retreat visitors. A portion was fenced off for the grounds and meditation walk, but the balance was sold in the 1960s for housing lots that would bring tax income to West Springfield.

The Passionist fathers responded to social changes in 1967 by admitting women who took part in couples programs; young people were invited to retreats in 1973. A women's auxiliary was formed in 1974 and made women's retreats once a year. Although non-Catholic men had been invited to retreats from its inception, in 1982 the first non-Catholic women, in this case Episcopalians, held a retreat at the Center.

During the 1980s declining retreat attendance and a dwindling number of students left much of the work to an aging group of fathers and brothers. For 1980 there were 2,286 retreatants and in 1993 only 1529. The order turned to other groups to keep the monastery in appropriate use and it was opened as an elder hostel in 1990. In 1993 the Passionists decided to close the retreat house and ultimately the monastery. Retreat houses in West Hartford and Shrewsbury took over West Springfield's functions. The cemetery was moved. The monastery is now privately owned, and has been rehabilitated under the Investment Tax Credit program as an assisted living and Alzheimer's care center.

Archaeological Significance

Since patterns of ancient Native American settlement in West Springfield are poorly understood, any surviving sites could be significant. Ancient sites in this area may contain information important to the study of Native American adaptations to a temperate forest riverine environment, a habitat unique within the state of Massachusetts. Potential sites in this area may contribute important information indicating the overall importance of sites along secondary drainages to sites along the main course of the Connecticut River. Ancient sites along the Piper Brook drainage may have a seasonal or functional role in a regional Native American settlement and subsistence system based at larger sites along the Connecticut River. Information may be present indicating a relationship or development between ancient site distributions and later Native American core areas recognized during the Contact and Plantation Periods. The location of the district in close proximity to river drainages that functioned as important north/south and east/west transportation corridors also indicates the potential for locating sites and information that contribute to the analysis of prehistoric exchange. The

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
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**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8 Page 6

**Our Lady of Sorrows Monastery and Retreat Center
West Springfield (Hampshire), MA**

Connecticut River flows north to south less than one-half mile east of the property while the Westfield River flows west to east less than a mile south of the parcel.

Historic archaeological resources described above have the potential to document historic land use at the property that predates construction of the Monastery and Retreat Center in the 1920's. Additional historic research combined with archaeological survey and testing may identify structural evidence and occupational related features associated with the activity that predated the Monastery and Retreat Center on this parcel of land. It is presently unclear whether the existing religious property incorporated an undeveloped portion of the Hyde property or an estate developed with buildings. Information related to the Hyde property may contribute information relating to the settlement of West Springfield in general and more specific stages of that settlement. Potential evidence from outbuildings and refuse areas related to the Monastery and Retreat Center may contribute evidence that indicates the extent the monastery approached being a self-sufficient village and details relating to the lives of the three groups of Passionists living at the monastery. In spite of the fact that the monastery was occupied during the well documented and recent 20th century period, archaeological resources may contribute important details about the day-to-day lives of the Passionists not verified in written documents.

(end)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 9 Page 1

Our Lady of Sorrows Monastery and Retreat Center
West Springfield (Hampshire), MA

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(end)

Our Mother of Sorrows
Name of Property

Hampshire, Massachusetts
County, State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 18.17 acres

UTM References See continuation sheet.

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1. 18 695550 4665360
Zone Easting Northing

2. 18 695400 4665550
Zone Easting Northing

3. 18 695940 4665550
Zone Easting Northing

4. 18 695940 4665340
Zone Easting Northing

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Bonnie Parsons, Principal Planner, PVPC with Betsy Friedberg, NR Director, MHC

organization Massachusetts Historical Commission date July 2002

street & number 220 Morrissey Boulevard telephone (617) 727-8470

city or town Boston state MA zip code 02125

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional items (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name Simsbury Associates ; 110 Monastery Assocs. Ltd. Partnership

street & number 14 Storrs Ave. telephone _____

city or town Braintree state MA zip code 02484

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

United States Department of the Interior
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National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 01 Page 1

Our Lady of Sorrows Monastery and Retreat Center
West Springfield (Hampshire), MA

GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Verbal Boundary Description

The property of Our Mother of Sorrows Monastery and Retreat House is bounded on the south by Monastery Avenue, on the west by the rear lot lines of houses on Piper Road, on the north by the Springfield Country Club golf course and on the east by lot lines of buildings on Elm Street and Monastery Avenue.

Boundary Justification

The boundaries were drawn to follow the lot lines of the property in monastery ownership.

United States Department of the Interior
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National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Our Lady of Sorrows Monastery and Retreat Center
West Springfield (Hampshire), MA

Section number photo Page

List of Photographs

All Photographs were taken by Bonnie Parsons; original negatives are located at the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission; property is located in Hampshire County, Massachusetts.

Photos 7 and 8 were taken in April 2001, all other photos were taken in May 2000.

View to north west of landscape
Photograph no. 1

View to east of west elevation
Photograph no. 2

View to north east of 1955 retreat section
Photograph no. 3

View to north of east elevation of 1923 section of monastery
Photograph no. 4

View to north of 1955 retreat chapel
Photograph no. 5

View to east of Public Chapel entry, stonework and windows.
Photograph no. 6

View to east of interior of 1923 choir
Photograph no. 7

View to west of altar of 1923 choir
Photograph no. 8

View to north east of 1923 gazebo
Photograph no. 9

**Our Lady of Sorrows Monastery and Retreat Center
West Springfield (Hampshire), MA**

**Our Mother of Sorrows
Data Sheet**

<u>Name</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Resource</u>	<u>Status</u>
Monastery/Retreat Center	1923; 1955	Building	C
South Gazebo	1923	Structure	C
North Gazebo	1923	Structure	C
Single-Bay Garage	1923	Building	2C
Double-Bay Garage	1923	Building	C
Stations of the Cross	1923	Objects	14C
Virgin and Child	ca. 1923	Object	C
Crucifixion	ca. 1923	Object	C
Christ and Cross	ca. 1923	Object	C
Crucifixion	ca. 1923	Object	C
Virgin Mary	ca. 1923	Object	C

Contributing

Noncontributing

Buildings	4
Structures	2
Objects	19
Total	25



- Utility ROW
- Railroad ROW
- Easement

Lot Lines

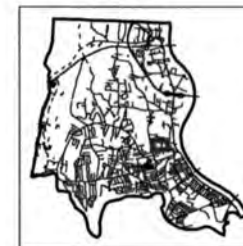
- Lot Line
- Former Lot Line

Water & Wetlands

- Lake, Pond or Reservoir
- River
- Wetland / Marsh

Streams

- Stream



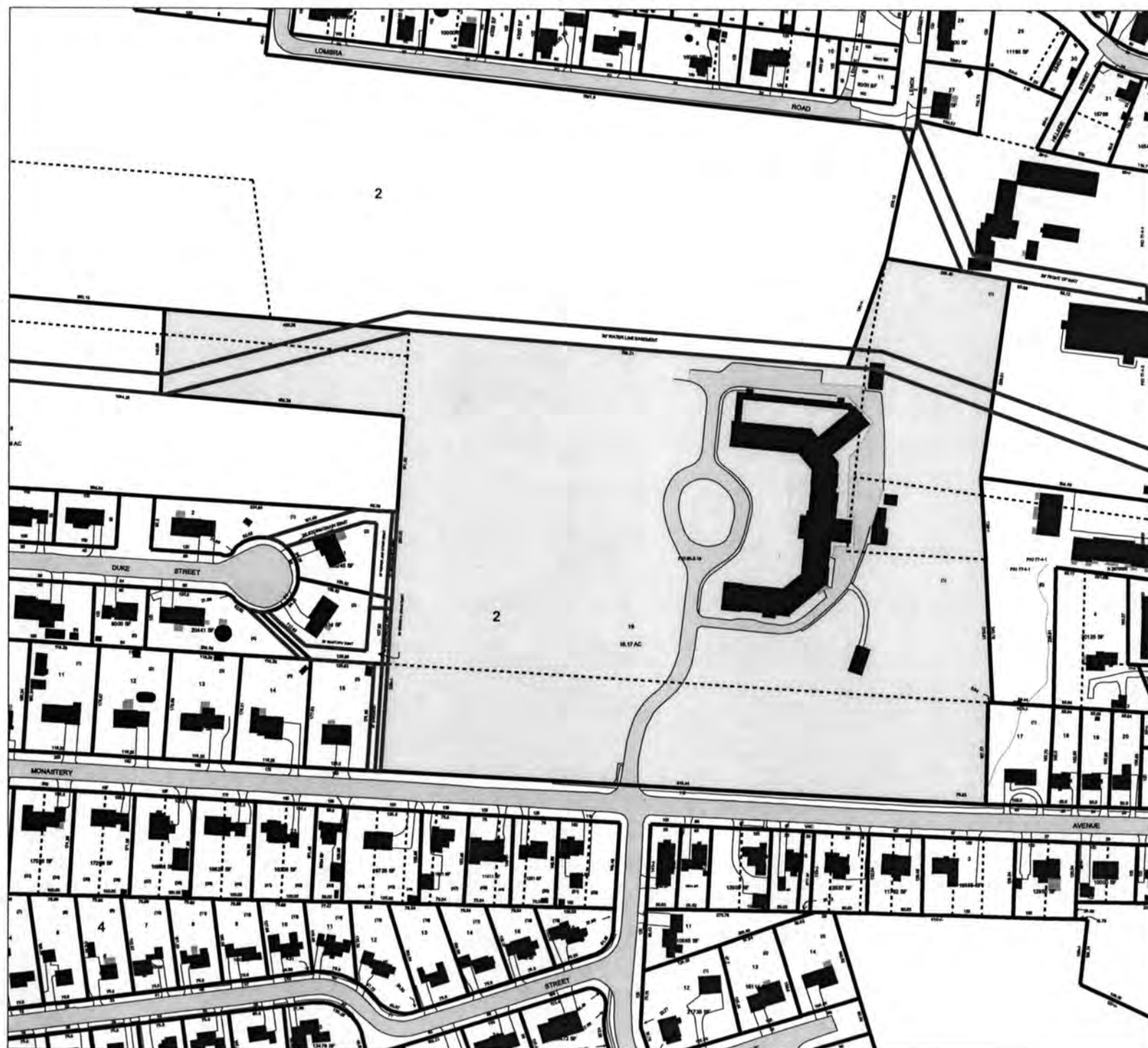
Planimetric & Topographic Features compiled by photogrammetric methods from aerial photographs dated 03/30/1998. This map meets National Map Accuracy Standards for 1" = 40' maps with 1' contours. Horizontal datum is NAD83 MA State Plane. Vertical datum is NAVD88. This data should not be used for legal description or conveyance purposes.



0 254 feet

Scale: 1 inch = 254 feet
1 : 3,049.51

Created By: S. Croteau Apr 13, 2001



**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number _____ Page _____

SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

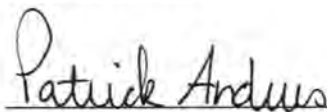
NRIS Reference Number: 02000904 Date Listed: 8/30/2002

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Hampshire State: MA

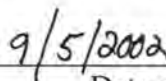
County:

Multiple Name

This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.



Signature of the Keeper



Date of Action

Amended Items in Nomination:

Because this property is nominated for its historic significance in the area of Religion, it must meet National Register Criteria Consideration A for religious properties. This SLR makes a technical correction to the form to add National Register Criteria Consideration A.

DISTRIBUTION:

National Register property file

Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)















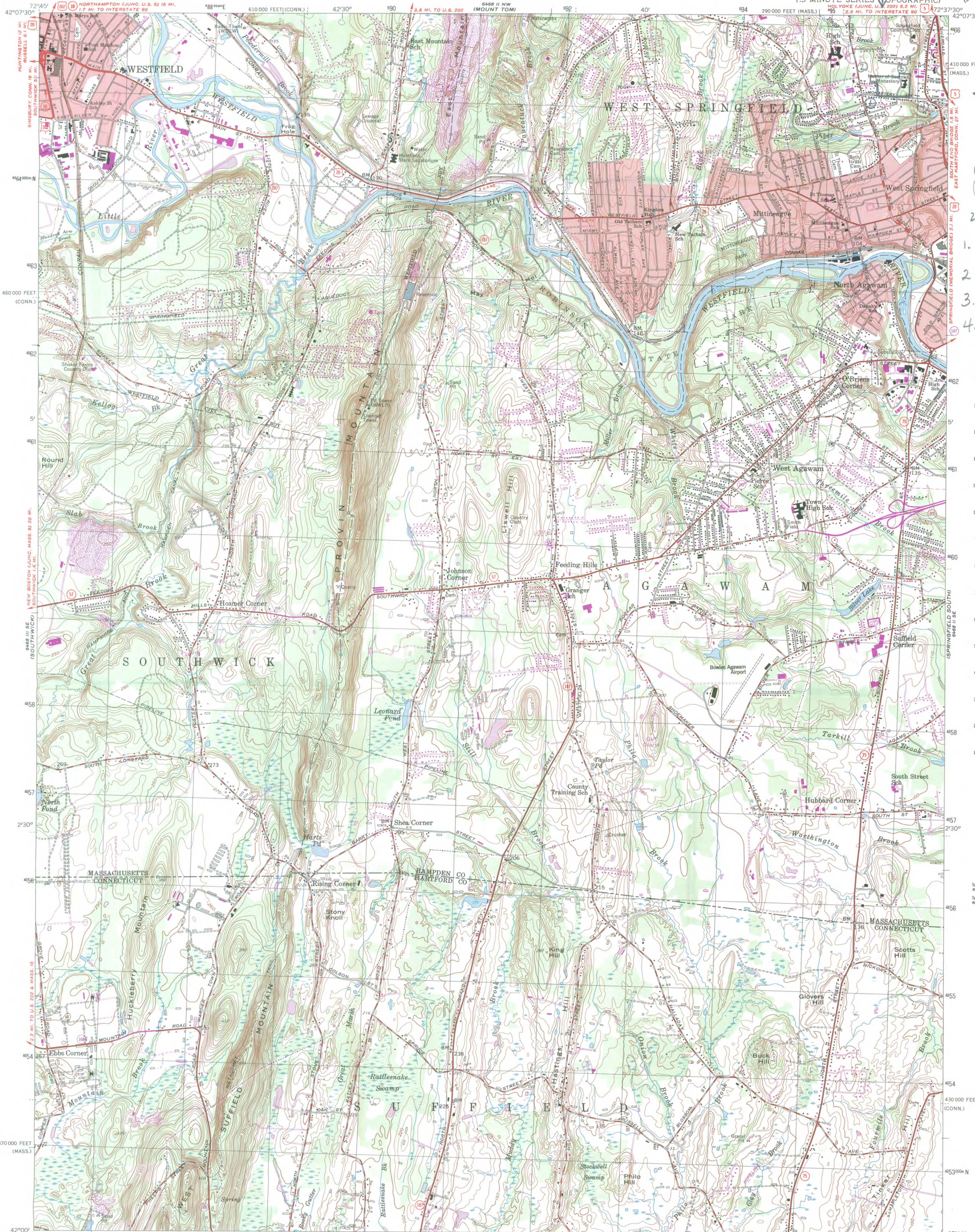




UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

STATE OF MASSACHUSETTS
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

WEST SPRINGFIELD QUADRANGLE
MASSACHUSETTS-CONNECTICUT
7.5 MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC)



Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey

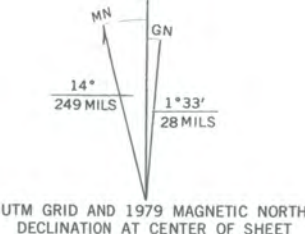
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Connecticut Geodetic Survey

Topography by planetable surveys 1933 and 1942-1943
Culture revised from aerial photographs by photogrammetric
methods. Aerial photographs taken 1957. Field check 1958

Polyconic projection, 1927 North American datum
10,000-foot grids based on Massachusetts coordinate system,
mainland zone, and Connecticut coordinate system
1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid,
zone 18

Red tint indicates areas in which only
landmark buildings are shown

There may be private inholdings within the boundaries of
the National or State reservations shown on this map



UTM GRID AND 1979 MAGNETIC NORTH
DECLINATION AT CENTER OF SHEET

SCALE 1:25 000
CONTOUR INTERVAL 10 FEET
NATIONAL GEODETIC VERTICAL DATUM OF 1929

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS
FOR SALE BY U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY
DENVER, COLORADO 80225, OR RESTON, VIRGINIA 22092
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

Revisions shown in purple compiled in cooperation with State of
Massachusetts agencies from aerial photographs taken 1977 and other
source data. This information not field checked. Map edited 1979



QUADRANGLE LOCATION

WEST SPRINGFIELD, MASS.-CONN.
N 4200'-W 7237.5/7.5

1958
PHOTOREVISED 1979
AMS 6468 II SW-SERIES V814

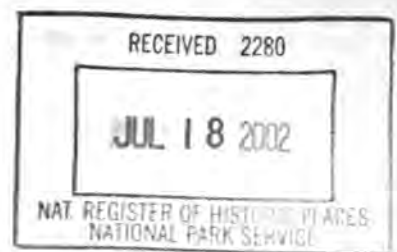


47-001
ADVENTURE
\$49.95
9 780601 02843

Our Mother
of Sorrows,
V. Sprague W.

1871
AUG 30 1891

MASS. HIST. COMM.



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
William Francis Galvin, Secretary of the Commonwealth
Massachusetts Historical Commission

July 11, 2002

Ms. Carol Shull
National Register of Historic Places
Department of the Interior
National Park Service
Mail Stop 2280, Suite 400
1849 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Ms. Shull:

Enclosed please find the following nomination form:

Our Mother of Sorrows Monastery, W. Springfield (Hampshire), MA

The nomination has been voted eligible by the State Review Board and has been signed by the State Historic Preservation Officer. The owners of the property were notified of pending State Review Board consideration 30 to 45 days before the meeting and were afforded the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

Betsy Friedberg
National Register Director
Massachusetts Historical Commission

Enclosure

cc: Bonnie Parsons, PVPC, consultant
Simsbury Associates, owner
Bernard Lally, West Springfield Historical Commission
Richard Werbiskis, West Springfield Planning Board
Anthony DiStefano, Chair, Board of Selectmen

220 Morrissey Boulevard, Boston, Massachusetts 02125
(617) 727-8470 • Fax: (617) 727-5128
www.state.ma.us/sec/mhc