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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: Massachusetts	
COUNTY: Hampden	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

1. NAME

COMMON:

Hampden County Courthouse

AND/OR HISTORIC:

Hampden County Courthouse

2. LOCATION

Congressional District No. 2

STREET AND NUMBER:

Elm Street

CITY OR TOWN:

Springfield

STATE:

Massachusetts

CODE
025

COUNTY:

Hampden

CODE
013

3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
☐ District ☒ Building ☐ Site ☐ Structure ☐ Object	☒ Public ☐ Private ☐ Both	☒ Occupied ☐ Unoccupied ☐ Preservation work in progress	Yes: ☐ Restricted ☒ Unrestricted ☐ No

PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

☐ Agricultural	☒ Government	☐ Park	☐ Transportation	☐ Comments
☐ Commercial	☐ Industrial	☐ Private Residence	☐ Other (Specify)	
☐ Educational	☐ Military	☐ Religious		
☐ Entertainment	☐ Museum	☐ Scientific		

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:

Hampden County Commissioners

STREET AND NUMBER:

Hampden County Courthouse, Elm Street

CITY OR TOWN:

Springfield

STATE:

Massachusetts

CODE

025

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC:

Hampden County Courthouse

STREET AND NUMBER:

Elm Street

CITY OR TOWN:

Springfield

STATE:

Massachusetts

CODE

025

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:

Inventory of Historic Assets of the Commonwealth

DATE OF SURVEY: 1971

☐ Federal☒ State☐ County☐ Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:

Massachusetts Historical Commission

STREET AND NUMBER:

Office of the Secretary, State House

CITY OR TOWN:

Boston

STATE:

Massachusetts

CODE

025

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

STATE:
MassachusettsCOUNTY:
Hampden

ENTRY NUMBER

FOR NPS USE ONLY

DATE
FEB 1 1972

7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	☒ Excellent	☐ Good	☐ Fair	☐ Deteriorated	☐ Ruins	☐ Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	☒ Altered	☐ Unaltered	☐ Moved	☒ Original Site		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

H. H. Richardson was awarded the commission for Springfield's Hampden County Courthouse in a competition held in 1871. The architect employed the basic I-shaped plan, with the entrance (northwest) facade on one base of the I, a very simple rear facade on the other. The two-story main facade of the Courthouse faces Elm Street just off Court Square. The original high, hipped roof with its tall dormers (removed when Shepley, Rutan and Coolidge remodeled the Courthouse in 1906) added another story to the central mass of the building. A bell tower rises from the cornice line at the center of this facade. The material used in all the random ashlar facades of the Courthouse is a local Monson granite (light grey in color) of the kind used in two of Richardson's earlier Springfield works, the Agawam Bank and the Western Railroad offices.

The first floor of the main facade of the Courthouse contains a tall slit window on either side of a triple-arched entrance porch. A wide double flight of stairs originally descended from the porch to the street. On the second floor, a double window with stone mullions is located over each of the three arches in the entrance-way. A balcony at the northern corner of the second story creates the only real break in the symmetry of the facade; it is supported by a number of corbelled brackets. An attempt has been made to counterbalance the asymmetrical balcony with a narrow slit window to the right (southwest) of the second story windows. The base of the balcony interrupts a granite string course that runs around the building separating the first and second floors. The height of the main facade is marked by a narrow corbel table; above this rises a parapet with stepped crenelation which projects from the facade the width of the table. Over the center of the main facade the crenelation is broken by the bell tower which projects the width of the corbel table and rises above the central mass. The entire tower, minus the tall pyramidal roof on the bell stage, bears a close resemblance to the watchtower above the Palazzo Vecchio in Florence (1298-1314). At the base of the tower, just above the break in the crenelation, is an empty clock casement. A large triple window divided by stone mullions is positioned directly above the casement. Above this large window, machicolations and crenelation separate the bell stage or belfry from the main section of the tower. The bell stage itself, with its tall Romanesque arches, is topped with more crenelation at the base of its pyramidal roof.

The dormers in the original high, hipped roof "were of stone with gables and mullions of Late Gothic type."¹ One was placed on each side of the tower helping to integrate it with the main mass of the building. The tall triple window in each of these dormers was basically a smaller version of the triple window at the base of the tower. Existing sketches and photographs of the original roof give little information about dormer placement other than the location of a single dormer at each of the narrow ends of the hipped roof over the main facade.

Finally, the rear facade has regularly spaced mullioned windows in both stories, with bearing arches in the masonry above the lintels of the lower row. Similar windows are used around the sides of the building on both floors.

[see Continuation Sheet]

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

3. SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|
| ☐ Pre-Columbian | ☐ 16th Century | ☐ 18th Century | ☐ 20th Century |
| ☐ 15th Century | ☐ 17th Century | ☒ 19th Century | |

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known)

1871

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|--|--------------------------------------|--|--|
| ☐ Aboriginal | ☐ Education | ☐ Political | ☐ Urban Planning |
| ☐ Prehistoric | ☐ Engineering | ☐ Religion/Philosophy | ☐ Other (Specify) _____ |
| ☐ Historic | ☐ Industry | ☐ Science | _____ |
| ☐ Agriculture | ☐ Invention | ☐ Sculpture | _____ |
| ☒ Architecture | ☐ Landscape | ☐ Social/Humanitarian | _____ |
| ☐ Art | ☐ Literature | ☐ Theater | _____ |
| ☐ Commerce | ☐ Military | ☐ Transportation | _____ |
| ☐ Communications | ☐ Music | | |
| ☐ Conservation | | | |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Hampden County Courthouse was designed in 1871 by Henry Hobson Richardson, who is generally considered the first great architect to work in a truly American idiom. Richardson is best known for his massive, monumental works of stone and brick and his use of very low arches which rise, in Syrian style, almost from the ground. The three arches in the entrance porch of the Hampden County Courthouse are rather high, however, indicating that the low Richardsonian arch had not yet evolved as part of the architect's style.

The bell tower is the most prominent feature of the Springfield Courthouse. A similar tower was a major feature in Richardson's two previous works, the Brattle Square Church (July, 1870) and the Worcester High School (November, 1869), but in this case its use marked a change in his style:

While this tower... may be agreeably seen from a distance and from all sides above the building, it is really an integral part of the building and not an attached independent motif like the Worcester or even the Brattle Square Tower.³

Richardson's next commission was Trinity Church (1873) and in it one detects an even greater integration of tower and central mass.

Much of the success of the Courthouse, as it relates to the tower, was negated by the Shepley, Rutan and Coolidge remodeling of the building in 1906. The whole question of the removal of the original roof and dormers suggests other ideas concerning the significance of the building. Speaking of the 1906 alterations, Professor Henry-Russell Hitchcock remarks,

The difference in architectural quality due to these modifications, made only twenty years after Richardson's death by men who were his collaborators and pupils in the early eighties, provides an extraordinary demonstration of the sureness of his hand at this early date. It also indicates the almost total incapacity of his imitators and pupils to understand what really made his work so fine.⁴

In Mrs. Marianna Van Rensselaer's opinion, it is the rear facade of the Courthouse, not the elaborate front facade, that is more significant architecturally.

[see Continuation Sheet]

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Hitchcock, Henry Russell, THE ARCHITECTURE OF H. H. RICHARDSON AND HIS TIMES, Cambridge, The M. I. T. Press, 1966.

Van Rensselaer, Marianna Griswold, HENRY HOBSON RICHARDSON AND HIS WORKS, Boston, 1888.

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			OR	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds
NW	0 1 "	0 1 "		42 ° 06 ' 01 "	72 ° 35 ' 21 "	
NE	0 1 "	0 1 "				
SE	0 1 "	0 1 "				
SW	0 1 "	0 1 "				

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: c. one acre

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE: Anne Wardwell, Survey Director

ORGANIZATION: Massachusetts Historical Commission DATE: October 1, 1971

STREET AND NUMBER: Office of the Secretary, State House

CITY OR TOWN: Boston STATE: Massachusetts CODE: 025

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National ☒ State ☐ Local ☐

Name: John F. X. Darnon
 Secretary of the Commonwealth, Chairman, Massachusetts Historical
 Title: Commission

Date: July 27, 1971

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

Ann + A Connolly
 Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date: FEB 1 1972

ATTEST:
William H. Hunt
 Keeper of The National Register

Date: JAN 28 1972

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

18/699350/4663500
 UTM REF
 4663500

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Continuation Sheet)

STATE Massachusetts	
COUNTY Hampden	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
	FEB 1 1972

(Number all entries)

(7.) DESCRIPTION, Hampden County Courthouse, Springfield, Massachusetts

In 1906 Shepley, Rutan and Coolidge remodeled the courthouse to meet the need for more space. The most drastic change involved the removal of the high roof and dormers. They were replaced by a flat roof that severely damaged the three-dimensional relation of the tower to the rest of the building. The addition of an east wing created the extra space needed without architectural conflict. The northwest and southeast facades of the addition contain a single range of mullioned windows on the first floor. The first and second story windows of the northeast facade of the addition repeat the arrangement found on the rear facade of the main building. A major change to the main facade has been "the inexcusable substitution of a direct flight of stairs for the wide double flight before the entrance and the equally pointless introduction of Italian Gothic tracery in the belfry."²

¹ Henry-Russell Hitchcock, THE ARCHITECTURE OF H. H. RICHARDSON AND HIS TIMES, Cambridge, The M. I. T. Press, 1966, page 126.

² Ibid., p. 128.

(8.) SIGNIFICANCE, Hampden County Courthouse, Springfield, Massachusetts

She prefers the rear facade "which is very plain, frankly utilitarian in accent, yet so massive, dignified and well proportioned as to be really monumental."³ In elaborating on her preference, Mrs. Van Rensselaer states:

It shows how much may be done for the simplest walls by carefully designed, strongly battered foundation courses. No device was used by Richardson more constantly or artistically than this, and there is none which plays a greater part in explaining the admirable sturdiness of all his structures.

³ Ibid., p. 127.

⁴ Ibid., p. 128.

⁵ Marianna Griswold Van Rensselaer, HENRY HOBSON RICHARDSON AND HIS WORKS, Boston, 1888, p. 55.

⁶ Ibid.



Springfield, Massachusetts
Hampton County Courthouse
Northwest (front) facade

NPS Number

Feb 1, 1972

Title:

Hampton County Courthouse

Loc.

Hampton County, Mass.
Hampton County Courthouse
Northwest (front) facade

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
PROPERTY PHOTOGRAPH FORM

(Type all entries - attach to or enclose with photograph)

STATE	
Massachusetts	
COUNTY	
Hampden	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
	FEB 1 1972

1. NAME

COMMON: Hampton County Courthouse
AND/OR HISTORIC: Hampton County Courthouse

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:
Elm Street

CITY OR TOWN:
Springfield

STATE:
Massachusetts

CODE
025

COUNTY:
Hampden

CODE
013

3. PHOTO REFERENCE

PHOTO CREDIT: Massachusetts Historical Commission

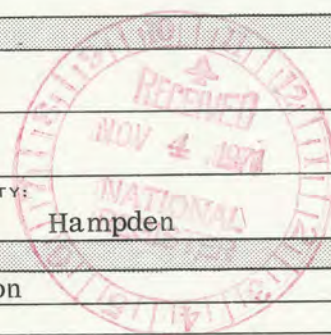
DATE OF PHOTO: July 1971

NEGATIVE FILED AT:
Massachusetts Historical Commission

4. IDENTIFICATION

DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC.

Hampton County Courthouse
Northwest (front) facade



SEE INSTRUCTIONS

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

1958
PHOTOREVISED 1970
AMS 6468 II SE—SERIES V81



MASS.

1958
PHOTOREVISED 1970
AMS 6468 II SE-SERIES V814



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Office of the Secretary
State House, Boston 02133

John F. X. Davoren

Secretary of the Commonwealth

October 27, 1971

The Office of Archeology and Historic
Preservation

National Park Service
801 19th Street, N.W.
Washington, D. C. 20006

Attention: ~~Ms./Sally Marvash~~ Miss Mary Means

REGISTERED MAIL

Dear Sirs,

Enclosed are National Register submissions for:

Rocky Hill Meetinghouse, Amesbury

Major Joseph Griswold House, Buckland

Hampden County Courthouse, Springfield

These have been declared eligible for submission by the Massachusetts Historical Commission, the State Review Board, and have been signed by Secretary of the Commonwealth, John F. X. Davoren, Chairman, Massachusetts Historical Commission and designated the State Liaison Officer.

Sincerely yours,

Richard W. Hale Jr.

Richard W. Hale, Jr.
Acting Chairman
Massachusetts Historical Commission

RWH:aw

ENTRIES IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

STATE MASSACHUSETTS

Date Entered FEB 1 1972

<u>Name</u>	<u>Location</u>
First Church of Christ, Congregational	Springfield Hampden County
Hampden County Courthouse	Springfield Hampden County

Also Notified

Hon. Edward M. Kennedy
Hon. Edward W. Brooke
Hon. Edward P. Doland

Director, Northeast Region

HR NRowland:mm 1/31/72

State Liaison Officer
Hon. John F. X. Davoren
Secretary of the Commonwealth
Chairman, Massachusetts Historical
Commission
Office of the Secretary
State House
Boston, Massachusetts 02133