

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only

received MAY 6 1987  
date entered JUN 11 1987

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Pennington Infirmary

and or common Greer Building

2. Location

street & number 411 Main Street

not for publication

city, town London

vicinity of

state Kentucky

code 021

county Laurel

code 125

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other: office

4. Owner of Property

name Rex Greer, Elmo Lee Greer, Jerry Greer, Lanny Greer, Elmo Greer

street & number Post Office Box 730

city, town London

vicinity of

state Kentucky

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Laurel County Courthouse (Office of County Clerk)

street & number Main Street

city, town London

state Kentucky

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Survey of Historic Sites in Kentucky has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date 1986  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records Kentucky Heritage Council

city, town Frankfort

state Kentucky

## 7. Description

<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved      date _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

### Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Pennington Infirmary is a two-story, four-bay brick building of rectangular configuration that is centrally located in the town of London, Kentucky. It occupies a large lot, which encompasses an entire city block, and faces eastward toward London's Main Street (see site plan).

London, having had a population of 4,002 in 1980, is Laurel County's largest town and the county seat. Laurel County is situated in the southeastern portion of the state and lies within the Appalachian Plateau Cultural Landscape Region. The topography of the region is characterized by the western foothills of the Appalachian Mountains, with elevations in the vicinity of London of 1,200 to 1,400 feet. The Laurel River, a tributary of the Cumberland, runs through the southern portion of the county and is its major drainage. Both the wooded foothills and the Laurel River have been developed for tourism, and a large portion of the county is publicly owned. The Daniel Boone National Forest occupies approximately one-third of the county's western territory, and Laurel River Lake lies within the National Forest. The Levi Jackson Wilderness Road State Park is located in the eastern section of Laurel County.

The section of London in which the Pennington Infirmary is located contains the town's concentration of historic buildings. The 1910 Poynter Building (National Register 10/8/85) is located three blocks south of the Infirmary on Main Street. Other National Register properties in London include the Sue Bennett Memorial Building at Sue Bennett College (listed 9/11/79) and the 1909 Federal Courthouse (listed 8/9/74).

Built ca. 1895, Pennington Infirmary is a vernacular turn-of-the-century institutional building having a blocky rectangular (30'5" W x 41'3" D) mass and overall appearance comparable to contemporary American Four Square dwellings. The two-story, four-bay brick building has walls of six-course common bond, rests on a coursed mortared limestone foundation and is capped with a hipped roof of shallow-pitch covered in asphalt shingles (photos 1-4; 14). The Infirmary originally contained six chimneys--three spaced evenly along the interiors of each the northern and southern walls--however, only two of three remain, and are located toward the eastern end of the southern wall (photos 4 and 14). The other chimneys were dismantled during the 1960s due to their deteriorated condition in an adaptive re-use of the building by Comprehensive Care.

A limestone water-table runs along three (all but the rear, or western) sides of the building, separating the stone foundation from the brick walls above, while a stone belt course likewise defines the second-floor level on the walls of the same three sides. Limestone also accents the Infirmary's windows, forming both sills and lintels. The majority of windows retain their original size and pane configuration having one-over-one sash; however, the present sash and panes are replacements of the originals. A few windows have been more heavily altered: the paired first-story windows at the western end of the northern facade have been shortened, while the second-story window directly above these appears to have been altered from an original set of paired windows. Another change to the Infirmary's fenestration is apparent at its rear (western) facade, where a door was created from an original window to serve as a fire escape during Comprehensive Care's renovation of the building during the 1960s. A steel fire stair leading from this door was added at the same time.

# 8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400–1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500–1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600–1699	<input type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

**Specific dates** ca. 1895–1920

**Builder/Architect**

Unknown

## Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Pennington Infirmary is locally significant under criterion A and B for the period 1904–1926. The building is important for social/humanitarian reasons under both criteria. The Infirmary is associated with the history of health care in the southeastern Kentucky region (criterion A), and its founding was the initial step in London's establishment as a center for regional health care. Pennington Infirmary is also associated with, was named for, and was founded by Dr. H.V. Pennington, the physician whose efforts were instrumental in these developments (criterion B).

The Infirmary building itself is a vernacular institutional building that retains the majority of its integrity. Although the integrity of setting has been somewhat compromised by the construction of a concrete block building and a parking lot toward the southwestern corner of the block which forms the Infirmary's lot, these intrusions appear at the rear of the property, and the setting is minimally altered. The building remains in the place where it was initially constructed; on a large lot equivalent to a city block, with open space on both sides and behind the building. Integrity of design and materials has likewise been somewhat decreased by alterations to the windows and the construction of the fire escape as described above. Changes in the size and shape of windows have, however, been confined to the sides and rear of the building. Integrity of workmanship remains to a large degree and is particularly evident in the Infirmary's intact interior details. Because the Pennington Infirmary retains the majority of its integrity of location, setting, design, materials, and workmanship, integrity of feeling and association remain as well. The Infirmary is, in the minds of local people, the primary surviving place associated with Dr. H. V. Pennington, and its founding marked the beginning of an era of better health care in London and Laurel County.

Throughout most of the nineteenth century, health care was difficult to obtain in the rural areas and small towns of southeastern Kentucky. Hospitalization was only available in larger cities outside the region. In times of epidemics such as smallpox and typhoid, selected dwellings were put to use as "pest homes" to house the infected, and these facilities were usually burned after the epidemic subsided. Local health care professionals were few and many traveled from place to place throughout a county or several counties, dispensing treatment when and where it was needed. The Frontier Nursing Service, established in the 1920s to provide medical assistance in childbirth, still maintains this pattern of health care in Kentucky mountain counties.

Dr. H. V. Pennington came to Laurel County from Virginia in May of 1891. His skills as a physician and surgeon quickly gained recognition and he achieved a widespread reputation for his treatments performed without the benefit of modern facilities or assistance.

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

Dyche, Russell, Laurel County Kentucky. (London, Kentucky: The Sentinel-Echo Press, 1954).  
Dyche, Russell, "From Infirmary to Modern Hospital," Centennial Edition, The Sentinel-Echo, 1975.

(See Continuation Sheet)

## 10. Geographical Data

Acree of nominated property .77

Quadrangle name London

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

### UTM References

A 

1	6	7	5	9	2	0	0	4	1	1	2	8	4	0
Zone		Easting				Northing								

B 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

C 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

D 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

E 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

F 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

G 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

H 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

### Verbal boundary description and justification

See Continuation Sheet

### List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code
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state	code	county	code
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## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Lisa Greer, Interior Designer

organization

date January 1987

street & number Post Office Box 985

telephone 606/878-9249

city or town London

state Kentucky

## 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national  state  local

As the designated State Historic Preservation 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.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

*David L. Moya*

title State Historic Preservation Officer

date 4-30-87

### For NPS use only

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

*Amy Schlager*

date 6/11/87

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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

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Pennington Infirmary, London, Laurel County, Kentucky

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Each side (northern and southern) facade bears toward the rear of the building a square window smaller than the rest which contains a single pane of clear glass framed by a series of small rectangular pieces of stained glass (photo 6). These two windows remain unchanged.

The building's primary entrance is located in the southern bay of the eastern facade. It contains the original carved oak and glass door (photo 5). A similar but less heavily ornamented door is contained in the northern bay of the western facade (photo 2).

The interior of the Pennington Infirmary remains largely intact. The plan is nearly symmetrical containing six large rooms arranged two across (north to south) and three deep (east to west). Between the northern and southern rooms along the western side of the building is a narrow passage and a small room which has been converted into a modern bathroom.

The southeasternmost room serves as an entry hall and contains the stair (photos 6 - 9) which retains its original oak newel and balusters. Other woodwork remains intact as well, including oak door and window surrounds, which are reeded and have bull's eye corner blocks; the oak baseboard with pendants at rooms' corners (photo 10), the doors with louvered transoms above, and the floors. The mantels in the Pennington Infirmary are predominantly Neo-classical in design. Those on the first floor are oak and have mirrored overmantels (photos 11 and 12), while those of the second floor are marble, with painted designs and without overmantels (photo 13).

The nominated area incorporates approximately .77 acres, or most of the entire city block that was lots #17 and #20 of the original town plat of 1826 and is the land historically associated with the Pennington Infirmary. A black-top parking lot located within this block at its southwestern corner is excluded. The area nominated encloses one contributing building and one non-contributing building. The non-contributing element is a one-story, rectangular (41' x 20' F), cement-block building constructed as a barber/beauty shop. It is currently vacant.

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**9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

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Jim Hayes, Historian, Interview, November, 1986.

Warren Scoville, Attorney-at-Law, Interview, December, 1986.

Carl K. Greene, Journalist, Interview, November, 1986.

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Pennington Infirmary, London, Laurel County, Kentucky

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Approximately ten years after his arrival in Laurel County Dr. Pennington opened the Infirmary. A trachoma treatment center, first established in Hyden, Leslie County, Kentucky, was moved to the Pennington Infirmary in 1916 because better facilities were present in London. The Infirmary functioned as the regional hospital until approximately 1920, when Dr. Pennington sold the building and opened a hospital on the second floor of the National Bank building in London. He maintained the hospital there until 1926, when he opened the Pennington General Hospital.

The Pennington Infirmary played a significant role in the history of health care in Laurel County. The efforts of Dr. H. V. Pennington to bring modern health care facilities to the area began with his establishment of the Infirmary and resulted in London being the medical center for southeastern Kentucky. Although he practiced in and is associated with other buildings in London--the National Bank Building and the Pennington General Hospital--these no longer survive. The Pennington Infirmary is, therefore, the surviving building most associated with his medical practice and is a symbol of London's role as a regional center for health care.

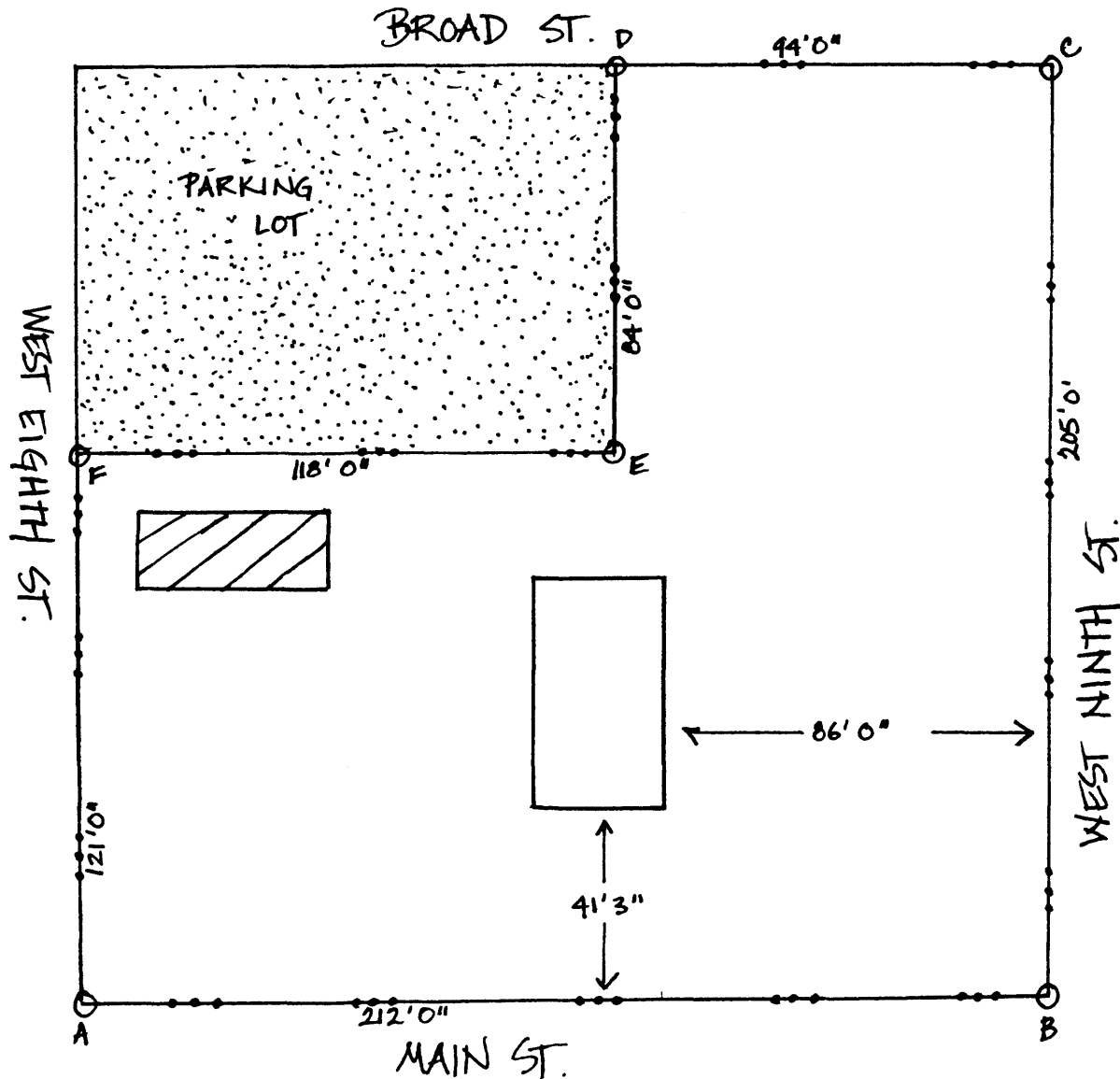
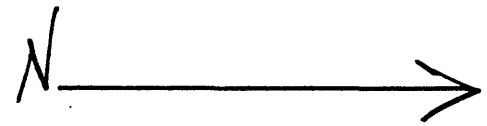
**10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA****Verbal boundary description and justification**

The nominated area includes .77 acres within the city block of London, Kentucky, defined on the north by West Ninth Street, on the west by Broad Street, on the south by West Eighth Street, and on the east by Main Street. Beginning at the northwest corner of West Eighth and Broad Streets (point A), 212 feet northward along the west side of Main Street to the southwest corner of Main and West Ninth Streets (B); then 205 feet westward along the south side of West Ninth Street to the southeast corner of West Ninth and Broad Streets (C); then 94 feet southward along the east side of Broad Street to a point where an asphalt parking lot lies aside the road (D); then 84 feet eastward along the north edge of the parking lot to its northeast corner (E); then 118 feet southward along the eastern edge of the parking lot to West Eighth Street (F); then 121 feet eastward along the north side of West Eighth Street to the point of origin.



The boundaries were chosen to include the area historically associated with the Pennington Infirmary, that is the entire block as defined above which is lots #17 and #20 of London's 1826 plat, and to exclude the visually intrusive parking lot situated at the rear of the property.

# PENNINGTON INFIRMARY

## BOUNDARY MAP AND SITE PLAN



### KEY

-  BOUNDARY
-  NON-CONTRIBUTING BUILDING

MAY 6 1987

NOT TO SCALE