FORM B – BUILDING

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
MASSACHUSETTS ARCHIVES BUILDING
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Photograph

Topographic or Assessor's Map

Table: Form B - Building Details

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<tr>
<th>Assessor’s Number</th>
<th>USGS Quad</th>
<th>Area(s)</th>
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<td>UMASS No.121 &amp; 122</td>
<td>Williamsburg</td>
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Town: Amherst

Place: University of Massachusetts

Address: 100 & 102 Hicks Way

Historic Name: Hicks Physical Education Building (#121)
Hicks Physical Education Cage (#122)

Uses: Present: Academic/Administrative
Original: Academic

Date of Construction: 1931

Source: University of Massachusetts Facilities Dept.

Style/Form: Classical Revival

Architect/Builder: Clinton Goodwin, architect
Gilbert Small, engineer

Exterior Material:
Foundation: Concrete
Wall/Trim: Brick
Roof: Building #121: Unknown. Building #122: Slate

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures: None

Major Alterations (with dates): Hicks Physical Education Cage overall renovation and expansion to the south (1985), infill of Hicks Physical Education Cage windows (possibly 1985).

Condition: Good

Moved: no | X | yes | Date __________

Acreage: Total Campus Acreage: 1,348 Acres

Setting: Located along treed walkways in the original core of the University’s campus.

Recorded by: W. Maros/C. Weed/C. Beagan

Organization: VHB/Pressley Associates

Date (month / year): May 2009

Follow Massachusetts Historical Commission Survey Manual instructions for completing this form.
Recommended for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

*If checked, you must attach a completed National Register Criteria Statement form.*

Use as much space as necessary to complete the following entries, allowing text to flow onto additional continuation sheets.

**ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION:**

Describe architectural features. Evaluate the characteristics of this building in terms of other buildings within the community.

The Hicks Physical Education Building (Building #121) and the attached Hicks Physical Education Cage (Building #122) on its west were both constructed in 1931.

The Hicks Physical Education Building is a two-story brick Classical Revival building with Georgian and Federal architectural motifs. The building has a rectangular footprint, a concrete foundation and flat roof that is concealed behind a parapet wall. The building is 17 bays wide and five bays deep, with a 3-bay wide projecting section that is flanked by 7-bay wide wings. The building has stringcourses at the base of the wings’ first story windows and below the wings’ cornice.

The Hicks Physical Education Building’s main entry is in the three-bay wide projecting central portion of its east elevation, at the top of a nine-step stairway. The doorway is set at a height that is midway between the first and second story floor levels. The double-leaf door has a single pane in each leaf’s upper half and a square panel in its lower half. The wood door frame has simple pilasters on either side, and a swan’s neck pediment at the top. This wood door frame is framed by a larger stone door frame that has a keystone at its top and semicircular fanlight above the swan’s neck pediment. The projecting central section of the building has monumental paired stone pilasters at its corners, and single pilasters flanking the doorframe, which support a stone cornice. The central pair of pilasters flanking the doorframe also support a pediment above the semicircular fanlight. A set of paired 6/6 windows are located at either side of the door, between the pilasters. The projecting central section’s second story has paired 6/6 windows with 3/1 transoms flanking the swan’s neck pediment, between the pilasters. The east elevation’s wings each contain seven 6/6 windows on their first story and seven 6/6 windows on their second story. These windows have brick lintels and stone keystones.

The Hicks Physical Education Building’s 5-bay wide south elevation has a central doorway, accessed by a seven-step stairway. The doorway has a plain, projecting brick frame that supports a stone cornice. The door is a double-leaf door, with two solid panels in each leaf, and a 5/1 transom over the door. A paired 4/4 window is set above the door’s stone cornice. The south elevation’s first and second stories have two evenly spaced window frames on either of the door and central window. These frames all contain 6/6 sash except for the blind opening that is located on the immediate east side of the door.

The Hicks Physical Education Cage is attached to the west side of the Hicks Physical Education Building, by way of a short link structure between the two buildings. The Cage is a two-story brick structure that is topped by a very tall slate hip roof with a ventilator on the roof ridge. The exterior walls have regularly-spaced projecting brick piers, with blocked square window frames just below the roofline and several modern metal doors along the north elevation’s first story. A gabled porch hood juts out from the north elevation, just below the roofline. An undated historic photograph on file at Special Collections and Archives, W.E.B Du Bois Library, University of Massachusetts Amherst shows that the blocked square window frames once held 3/3 windows and the gabled porch hood once sheltered a loft door, which has been removed and blocked with brick. This undated photograph includes several automobiles that are from the 1960s.

The Cage was renovated and extended on its south side in 1985.
Landscape – Visual/Design Assessment
The Hicks Physical Education Building and Cage are located to the east of Garber Field, a synthetic turf field. The Hicks Physical Education Building is attached to the Hicks Physical Education Cage on the west side. On the west, north, and south sides of the buildings are bituminous concrete drives and parking areas. A strip of mown lawn separates the buildings from the adjacent paved surfaces on these three sides. The landscape to the east of the buildings, between the Hicks Physical Education Building and Herter Hall, consists of bituminous concrete walks with areas planted with deciduous trees over mown lawn.

2005 orthophotograph of the Hicks Physical Education Building (center, right) and Hicks Physical Education Cage (center, left) and surrounding landscape, north is up (MassGIS).
INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE
Discuss the history of the building. Explain its associations with local (or state) history. Include uses of the building, and the role(s) the owners/occupants played within the community.

Overview
The University of Massachusetts, Amherst was chartered as the Massachusetts Agricultural College in 1863 but did not accept its first class until 1867. As one of two land grant universities in Massachusetts, the university’s original mission was agricultural education. Its mission, however, evolved within the first 20 years in response to the changing needs of the United States. While agriculture remains, even today, a mainstay of the University’s mission, the University now also supports engineering, science, education, and liberal arts colleges and departments.

A full historical narrative of the University of Massachusetts from its founding to 1958 is contained in the survey report. This narrative was prepared in 2009 by Carol S. Weed, Senior Archaeologist with Vanasse Hangen Brustlin, Inc.

Shown below are selected highlights from the text of the full historical narrative, along with additional information pertinent to the specific building that is described in this Massachusetts Historical Commission Building Form. This section contains: (1) highlights of the historic periods in the development of the University of Massachusetts, leading up to and including the period when the building was constructed, (2) information about the university in the decade when the building was constructed, (3) information about the circumstances that led to the construction of the building, along with information about its architect, if known, and (4) an analysis of the historic landscape of the building.

1863-1867: Administration and Initial Campus Layout
As the educational mission evolved in the years after 1863, so did the university’s approach to its facilities and its landscape. There was no accepted plan for the layout of the college, despite the preparation of various plan proposals in the 1860s, including separate proposals from the country’s preeminent landscape planners, Calvert Vaux and Frederick Law Olmsted, who had formerly worked together on the winning design for New York City’s Central Park. Neither Vaux’s plan, nor Olmsted’s plan to create a campus around a central green, were accepted by the University Trustees.

1867-1916: The Early Growth
In the absence of a coordinated plan, the Trustees put existing buildings that were acquired with the campus land into service as agricultural laboratories. Campus development for several decades after 1863 was sporadic and focused on the construction of individual buildings to meet specific functional needs of the fledgling university. It was not until after 1900, during a period of rapid student population growth and resultant new building construction, that the University Trustees again sought proposals for comprehensive campus planning.

In 1912, a professional landscaping publication reported that Warren H. Manning, formerly affiliated with the Olmsted firm, had spent over four years preparing a comprehensive plan for the University Trustees. The Trustees had considered it imperative for the college to plan harmonious development that would conserve the beauty of campus grounds while meeting the needs of a growing student population whose expanding range of activities was unprecedented.

Manning’s plan designated three distinct sections of the campus, the Upland, Midland and Lowland Sections. Each section was intended to be the locus of specific functions, with clusters of purpose-built structures to serve those functions. For example, one section would be designated for faculty, women’s and horticultural facilities. A second section would contain administration, research, science and student life (dormitory, dining hall, and sports) facilities. The third section would be dedicated to poultry, farming and sewage disposal facilities.

Although Manning’s Upland, Midland, and Lowland sections are not fully realized, it is apparent that discipline specific groupings were developed. Building clusters, especially those related to agriculture, administration, and the hard and earth sciences (physics, chemistry, and geology) continued to expand through the present day.
1916-1931: World War I and the Transition Years

Long range building programs were developed beginning with Landscape Gardening Professor F.A. Waugh’s 1919 plan. Like Manning’s 1911 plan, Waugh’s 1919 work emphasized building groups in order to maintain the proper balance between buildings, cultivated fields, meadows and lawns, forests and trees. By World War I and continuing through the 1920s, University records frequently refer to the inadequacy of the physical plant; the lack of class room space; the lack of properly ventilated and lighted spaces; and the danger of having to cancel classes because of a lack of appropriate facilities. Expansion of the campus through acquisition of additional land was considered essential if the University were to construct new and better facilities to address these deficiencies and excel as an institution of higher education.

The 1920s, however, had the fewest buildings constructed of any decade in the campus history to that point. The slow pace of building is largely attributed to the annual funding levels that were appropriated by the Massachusetts Legislature during the decade.

1931-1941: Great Depression, New Deal

The change in campus orientation wrought by the expansion of the school’s mission began in the 1930s with its name change to Massachusetts State College. With that program expansion there was a concerted effort to modernize and expand the campus facilities. The campus population had grown steadily during the 1920s.

In 1933, the campus was hosting about 1,200 students in its graduate and undergraduate sections. By 1935, there were 1,300 students enrolled representing a 53 percent increase in five years and of 80 percent in ten years, prompting the University to limit the freshman class to 300 students due to the inadequacy of facilities and staff to care for a greater number. This student population was putting extreme pressure on basic resources such as the library.

Despite the growing student population and an identified need for additional and improved campus facilities in the 1920s and 1930s, the onset of the Great Depression with its wide-ranging consequences effectively restricted funding to the bare minimum needed to operate. By late 1933, the funding outlook had improved through the economic stimulus initiatives of the Federal Government, and National Recovery Act funds were available for the construction of a library, a new administration building, and other unspecified buildings for the University.

As part of the University’s planning effort to select a site for the new library, the Campus Planning Committee charged with this work issued a final report in late 1933, which contained five recommendations for campus development: 1) That the general organization and building program on the campus be planned so as not to interfere with the sightliness [sic] and beauty of the present central open space, 2) That buildings of such a general service nature (library, dining hall, etc.) that they affect the entire student body be located in the first zone immediately adjacent to the central open space, 3) That buildings dealing with services more specialized (agriculture, home economics, etc.), and therefore affecting only certain groups of students, occupy the second zone, 4) That buildings used by students, but not directly contributing to organized instruction (dormitories), occupy the third zone and 5) That buildings dealing with problems of general maintenance and physical service (heating plant, carpenter shop, horse barn, etc.) occupy the outer, or fourth zone.

The committee went on to note that with these five recommendations in mind, they would site newly proposed buildings according to the defined zones. These zones were basically the ones that Professor Waugh had recommended in his 1907 and 1919 planning reports and Manning had proposed in his 1911 plan. The zones or sections were designed to focus significant elements of the college’s mission to its physical core which was defined as the broad, central bench with its hallmark pond. Everything that supported these core elements were dispatched to outer zones.

Despite documents entitled “Final Report of the Campus Planning Committee,” the group operated in one form or another as the primary planning unit on campus for the next 15 years, until 1948. The committee continued to focus on where buildings and facilities would be best sited relative to the campus missions.
Hicks Physical Education Building and Hicks Physical Education Cage

These structures were built in 1931 and renamed for Curry Hicks in 1941. Hicks was Professor and Head of the Physical Education Division of the Massachusetts Agricultural College/Massachusetts State College/University of Massachusetts between 1911 and 1949. He is credited with shaping the physical education program so it emphasized the development of physical fitness skills that students could use throughout their adult lives. Hicks Physical Education Cage was originally a men’s gymnasium.

The architect Clinton Goodwin, member of the MAC Class of 1916, accepted no fee for his designs and only charged for the draughtsmen’s work, as an expression of appreciation to his alma mater. Engineer Gilbert Small did the calculations for the large glass skylight over the Hicks Physical Education Cage.

Landscape Analysis

The eastern façade of the Hicks Physical Education Building and Cage (1931) faced an extension of Lincoln Avenue (no longer extant) that ran from Massachusetts Avenue to North College (no longer extant), which stood on the approximate site of Machmer Hall (1957). The southern axis of Lincoln Avenue was obstructed by the construction of Whitmore Hall in 1967. Historically, Lincoln Avenue was tree-lined and featured some open lots interspersed with athletic fields. Garber Field and the Upper Tennis Courts remain.

The Hicks Physical Education Building and Cage historically featured an elliptical access walk off Lincoln Avenue like the Old Drill Hall and South College. The alignment of the approach walks has been modified from its historic condition. Historically, vegetation at the east side of the building included upright evergreen shrubs and foundation planting (extant, now overgrown). The loss of Lincoln Avenue has resulted in a change in vehicular access to the building to the rear (west) side of the Hicks Physical Education Building and Cage.

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES


Joseph S. Larson, Personal communication to VHB 25 March 2009 concerning information about the architect and engineer for Hicks Physical Education Building and Hicks Physical Education Cage.
Hicks Physical Education Building (UMass Building #121), view northwest, September 2008
Hicks Physical Education Cage (UMass Building #122) on the left, showing 1985 expansion on the south side of the building
Hicks Physical Education Building (UMass Building #121) on the right
View northwest, September 2008
Hicks Physical Education Cage, with Hicks Physical Education Building at extreme left, view southwest, September 2008
Hicks Physical Education Cage at left, Hicks Physical Education Building at right, no date (1930s)
Courtesy Special Collections and Archives, W.E.B. Du Bois Library, University of Massachusetts Amherst
Hicks Physical Education Building at left, Hicks Physical Education Cage at right, no date (1930s)
Courtesy Special Collections and Archives, W.E.B. Du Bois Library, University of Massachusetts Amherst
Hicks Physical Education Building, no date (mid 20th century)
Courtesy Special Collections and Archives, W.E.B. Du Bois Library, University of Massachusetts Amherst
Hicks Physical Education Cage, no date (mid-1960s to early 1970s)
Courtesy Special Collections and Archives, W.E.B. Du Bois Library, University of Massachusetts Amherst
First established in 1863 under the provisions of the Federal Morrill Land-Grant Colleges Act, the University of Massachusetts Amherst retains a significant collection of buildings dating from its first period of operation as the Massachusetts Agricultural College (1863-1931). These include, but are not limited to: substantial brick and masonry classroom, laboratory, research and administrative buildings dating to the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, barns and stables related to its function as an agricultural college, pre-existing wood frame buildings (including two 18th century buildings [117, 118]) incorporated into campus functions, the power plant [107], the Chancellor’s House [124], and the Old Chapel [126] and Memorial Hall [112], historic centerpieces of the campus. The historic buildings from the “Mass Aggie” period for the most part are concentrated in three areas: (1) an arc that extends west to east between the Mullins Center and the Northeast Residential Area, including the Grinnell barn complex [109, 110, 111], Blaisdell [108], the power plant [107], Flint [104], Stockbridge [105], Draper [103], Goessmann [106], and West [114] and East [113] Experiment Stations; (2) a smaller grouping that includes, Wilder [115], the University Club buildings [117, 118], Clark [116] and Fernald [119]; (3) and the group of South College [128], Old Chapel [126] and Memorial Hall [112] at the center of the campus. Other individual buildings [including 120, 124, 125] also survive outside these areas. Although the campus has expanded significantly in and around the Massachusetts Agricultural College core, both individual buildings and groups of buildings that still convey their relationship to each other as part of the Agricultural College are campus plan, are eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places under criteria A and C at the state level.

The University of Massachusetts Amherst also retains a significant collection of buildings dating from 1931-1958, which is a period characterized by the expansion of the school’s mission and physical plant that began in the 1930s with its name change to Massachusetts State College. At this time, the Trustees made a concerted effort to modernize and increase campus facilities, through the post-World War II mid-20th century period when there was unprecedented growth in the size of the university student population and a concurrent growth in specialized academic research and degree work.
Significant buildings that were constructed to meet the University’s needs between 1931 and 1958, as well as significant buildings predating 1931 which have no prior Form B on file with the Massachusetts Historical Commission, include (listed in order of construction date): [UMass 58]; Hatch Laboratory, built 1891 [UMass 118]; Clark Hall Greenhouse, built 1907 [UMass 84]; French Hall Greenhouse, built 1908 [UMass 105]; French Hall, built 1909 [UMass 104]; Waiting Station Shelter, built 1911 [UMass 63]; Apiary Laboratory, built 1911 [UMass 74]; Hicks Physical Education Building, built 1931 [UMass 121]; Hicks Physical Education Cage, built 1932 [UMass 122]; Thatcher House, built 1935 [UMass 30]; Research Administration Building, built 1939 [UMass 579]; Lewis House, built 1940 [UMass 28]; Butterfield House, built 1940 [UMass 5]; Greenough House, built 1946 [UMass 24]; Chadbourne House, built 1947 [UMass 6]; Mills House (New Africa House), built 1948 [UMass 29]; Skinner Hall, built 1948 [UMass 128]; Gunness Laboratory, built 1949 [UMass 91]; Brooks House, built 1949 [UMass 4]; Hamlin House, built 1949 [UMass 25]; Knowlton House, built 1949 [UMass 26]; Marston Hall, built 1950 [UMass 92]; Paige Laboratory, built 1947 [UMass 6]; Hasbrouck Laboratory, built 1950 [UMass 124]; Baker House, built 1952 [UMass 3]; Crabtree House, built 1953 [UMass 12]; Leach House, built 1953 [UMass 27]; Worcester Dining Hall, built 1953 [UMass 85]; Arnold House, built 1954 [UMass 2]; Durfee Range, built 1955 [UMass 96]; Van Meter House, built 1957 [UMass 32]; Machmer Hall, built 1957 [UMass 111]; Student Union, built 1957 [UMass 131]; Wheeler House, built 1958 [UMass 33]; and Johnson House, built 1959 [UMass 36].

The recommended University of Massachusetts Amherst historic district meets Criterion A for its association with the ongoing mission of this state university to meet the educational requirements of a rapidly changing world. From the inception of the University in 1863 as the Massachusetts Agricultural College, through the current day, the Trustees have sought to provide educational programming and facilities that would enable students to advance the practice of agriculture and a steadily increasing host of other fields, meet the needs of a rapidly-industrializing world, and succeed in leading a post-industrial information and technology-based economy.

The historic district also meets Criterion C for its stock of buildings and landscape features whose forms and functions reflect the evolving and expanding mission of the University in the 95 years between its 1863 founding and 1959 (1959 being the 50 year cut-off for National Register consideration). A number of architects, landscape architects and planners of local, regional and/or national prominence were involved in the design of the individual buildings and the overall plan of the current University of Massachusetts Amherst campus. The aggregate efforts of these design professionals produced a distinctive public university campus landscape, primarily of the mid-19th to mid-20th century, which is unique in Massachusetts.

Despite the loss of certain buildings and landscape features up to the present time in 2009 and incremental physical changes seen in new window, door and roofing replacements, as well as siding replacements in a small number of buildings, the district retains integrity of location, setting, design, feeling, association, workmanship, and materials.