

United States Department of the Interior  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

# National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

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

For HCRS use only

received SEP 10 1980  
date entered NOV 14 1980

## 1. Name

historic Polish National Home

and/or common

## 2. Location

street & number 136-144 Cabot Street \_\_\_\_\_ not for publication

city, town Chicopee \_\_\_\_\_ vicinity of congressional district 2nd

state Massachusetts code 025 county Hampden code 013

## 3. Classification

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

## 4. Owner of Property

name MB Group

street & number One McKinley Square

city, town Boston \_\_\_\_\_ vicinity of state MA

## 5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Hamden County Registry of Deeds

street & number 50 State Street

city, town Springfield state MA

## 6. Representation in Existing Surveys

Historic Resource Inventory  
title of the Commonwealth

has this property been determined eligible? \_\_\_\_\_ yes  no

date 3/29/78  federal \_\_\_\_\_ state \_\_\_\_\_ county \_\_\_\_\_ local

depository for survey records Massachusetts Historical Commission

city, town Boston state MA

## 7. Description

<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input 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

Bom Narodowy Polski, the Polish National Home, is a five-story masonry building with steel I-beam framing members. It was constructed in 1912-14 in the Georgian Colonial Revival style, and has been changed little since then. A brick annex was added in 1922 to accommodate athletic facilities.

The main building faces Cabot Street. Its facade is in original condition with the exception of the first floor storefronts. Until 1941, there were four separate stores on the first floor, and access to the second floor meeting hall was by two narrow staircases from the south and north ends of the building. In 1949, a larger staircase to the meeting hall replaced the southern-most storefront. The three remaining storefronts incorporate a band of translucent leaded glass approximately two feet wide in a grid pattern above the display windows. The storefronts are separated by masonry piers faced with white limestone, except for the bottom four feet of the piers, which are faced with a polished granite veneer. The building's original copper and glass canopy shelters the center doorway.

The piers rise to support a sign band which is a stuccoed steel I-beam. Above this is a white limestone architrave, the base of the Colonial Revival facade. The facade is organized symmetrically with a slightly projecting center pavilion four bays wide. The main block extends two bays out on either side of the pavilion. These bays are distinguished by their limestone quoins and quoin-like patterns framing the paired, double-hung sash. The windows have limestone sills and architraves. Red brick fills the spandrels and separates the bays, contrasting with the white limestone trim.

The center pavilion's four bays are separated by paired pilasters of white brick rising from the second to the fourth floors. The second story windows have pedimented limestone lintels, above which is a red brick spandrel. The spandrel above the third story windows is paneled wood, and the fourth story windows are round-arched inside of limestone arches with keystones.

A terneplate architrave separates the fourth and fifth stories. The fifth story window architraves are part of a continuous band of white limestone across the entire facade, which supports a terneplate modillion cornice. A brick fascia above the center pavilion carries the "Dom Narodowy Polski."

The building's one renovation occurred in 1941, when the meeting hall occupying nearly all of the second and third floors was altered. Access was provided from the front of the building as mentioned above, and the stage and balcony were reversed. The balcony, originally located at the northern end of the building, was moved to the southern end, while the stage was changed from the southern to northern end. In the process, the interior of the meeting hall was completely updated.

In 1922 an annex was constructed to provide more space for athletics. The front building on Cabot Street had two bowling alleys in the cellar, but more were needed. The annex is a three-story structure of brick over a steel frame. It

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 2

had shower facilities in its cellar, four bowling alleys on the first floor, and a gymnasium on the second and third floors. The gym still has its balcony, which extends completely around the room and is supported by large iron brackets. Several more bowling alleys were built on the gym floor in the early 1950s, but have since been dismantled. The annex has no formal facade, having been intended as a purely utilitarian building.

## 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/ humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other (specify) Immigration
<b>Specific dates</b>	1912-14	<b>Builder/Architect</b>	Unknown	

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Polish National Home possesses integrity of location, design, setting, materials and workmanship and was significant as a focus of social life for Chicopee's Polish population for many years, and also as a strong symbol of acculturation, because the edifice bespoke the Polish immigrants' social and economic advancement in their new land.

This news item appeared in the local press three months after the Polish National Home (PNH) opened on September 21, 1914. It is both laudatory and critical of the Polish community but clearly expresses the idea that the PNH was a public symbol of the Poles' successful acculturation:

A matter in which the entire population is concerned, and which is more to the discredit of the Poles than their division among themselves, is the use of the club license at the new Polish home. There is no doubt that it is popular. There is a constant stream of "club members" into the barroom at the close of every working day. Fabulous tales have been told of the amount of beer consumed every Sunday. The boxing matches in the hall above, in connection with the license, are giving the new building a rapidly growing reputation, which is no credit to the Polish citizens or to the city. The Poles have made a place for themselves in Chicopee. In the main they are industrious and honest. There are many examples among them of the ability to assimilate American ways and to win success that may be envied by many of old American stock. Their new hall was an evidence of their growing importance in the community.<sup>1</sup>

In addition to its symbolic significance, the PNH served as a social club. "The purpose of the (Polish National Home Association) is to bring the members closer together and to give them a home that includes an assembly hall, society, reading rooms, and a library."<sup>2</sup> The PNH also contained two bowling alleys in its cellar, a barroom mentioned above, and small apartments on the fourth and fifth floors. The rooms were rented for modest fees by recent immigrants or members of the Polish community in need of nonpermanent housing.

The annex was constructed in 1922 to provide expanded athletic facilities. George P. Dion, a self-trained local architect, designed the annex, and many other Chicopee buildings. Plans and specifications for the annex have survived.

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

Shlakman, Vera, Economic History of a Factory Town: A Study of Chicopee, Massachusetts, Smith College, Northampton, MA, 1935.  
Springfield and Suburban Directory, Price, Lee & Co., 1926.  
"Springfield Union," Springfield, MA, 9/21/14.

ACREAGE NOT VERIFIED

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property less than one acre

UTM NOT VERIFIED

Quadrangle name Springfield North

Quadrangle scale 1:25000

### UMT References

A 

1	8	6	9	7	5	2	0	4	6	6	8	4	0	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

Please refer to the attached map.

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

state	code	county	code
state	code	county	code

# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Charles T. Lennon for Candace Jenkins, National Register Coordinator

organization Massachusetts Historical Commission date June 1980

street & number 294 Washington Street telephone 617-727-8470

city or town Boston state MA 02108

# 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 Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature Patrick L. Weslowski 8/19/80

title Executive Director, Massachusetts Historical Commission date  

**For HCRS use only**  
I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

  date 11/14/80  
Keeper of the National Register

Attest: Patrick Andrews date 11/12/80  
Chief of Registration

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER

8

PAGE

2

Dion began in the building trades as a carpenter, and was listed as such in the city directory for several years until 1911, when he was listed as an architect for the first time. Dion's first advertisement appeared in the 1926 directory, billing him as an "Architect, Notary Public, Specializing in Churches and Schools."<sup>3</sup> He was active until 1947. Unfortunately, research to date has not revealed the architect who deserves credit for the main building.

Chicopee's Polish population grew rapidly in the early 20th century. In 1885, the city's population was 11,516 and included 205 Poles. By 1895, the city had grown to 16,420, of which 1,445 were Poles. In 1914, the year the PNH was completed, the city of about 25,000 had 9,000 Polish-born residents.<sup>4</sup> Chicopee's textile industry employed most of the Polish immigrants.

In the 1910s and 1920s, the PNH was used for events heavily imbued with Polish culture, such as Polish language classes, theater and musical presentations featuring prominent Polish performers who toured the nation, and athletic contests between touring Polish boxers and wrestlers. However, in the 1930s, '40s and '50s, as the process of acculturation continued and the Polish became Polish-Americans, interest in Polish culture waned, and the PNH became a gathering place for social intercourse with a more multi-national emphasis.

In the 1960s and '70s, the PNH received much less use and generated less revenue for the Association. Maintenance was deferred and the conditions of the buildings declined. In 1979 the MB Group of Boston bought the main building and the annex from the Association with the intention of rehabilitating them for elderly housing. The Polish National Home Association will retain a meeting room and its Polish language library in the cellar of the main building after the rehabilitation project.

<sup>1</sup>"Springfield Sunday Republican," Springfield, Mass., December 27, 1914.

<sup>2</sup>"Springfield Union," Springfield, Mass., September 21, 1914.

<sup>3</sup>Springfield and Suburban Directory, Price, Lee, & Co., 1926.

<sup>4</sup>Economic History of a Factory Town: A Study of Chicopee, Massachusetts,  
Vera Shlakman, Smith College, Northampton, Mass., 1935.

Property

*Polish National Home*

*DUE 11/10/80*

State

*MA, Hampden*

Working Number

*9/10/80/2248*

**TECHNICAL**

Photos

*2*

Maps

*1*

**CONTROL**

*This building is locally significant as reflecting the development of the ethnic population of Chicopee. Built in 1912-14 this five story brick Georgian Revival style building has served as the focus of social life for the town's immigrant Polish population. Its construction, growth and eventual decline*

**HISTORIAN**

*accept  
Patrick Ardus  
11/12/80*

*of use reflect the rapid growth of the immigrant population in the late 19th/early 20th century and the eventual acculturation of the Polish community.*

**ARCHITECTURAL HISTORIAN**

**ARCHEOLOGIST**

**OTHER**

**HAER**

Inventory \_\_\_\_\_

Review \_\_\_\_\_

**REVIEW UNIT CHIEF**

**BRANCH CHIEF**

**KEEPER**

National Register Write-up \_\_\_\_\_

Send-back \_\_\_\_\_

Entered

*NOV 14 1980*

Federal Register Entry

*2-2-82*

Re-submit \_\_\_\_\_

DOM NARODOWY POLSKI

POLISH NATIONAL HOME

CENTER NEWS STAND

Sunshine Village Store



Polish National Home  
136-44 Cabot Street  
Chicopee, Mass.

*Hampden Co-*

Otto Dvorak                      1979  
Steffian-Bradley Associates  
66 Canal Street, Boston

Photo #1 of 2  
Front elevation from Cabot Street,  
facing east

SEP 10 1980

NOV 14 1980



Polish National Home  
136-44 Cabot Street  
Chikopee, Mass.

*Hampden Co.*

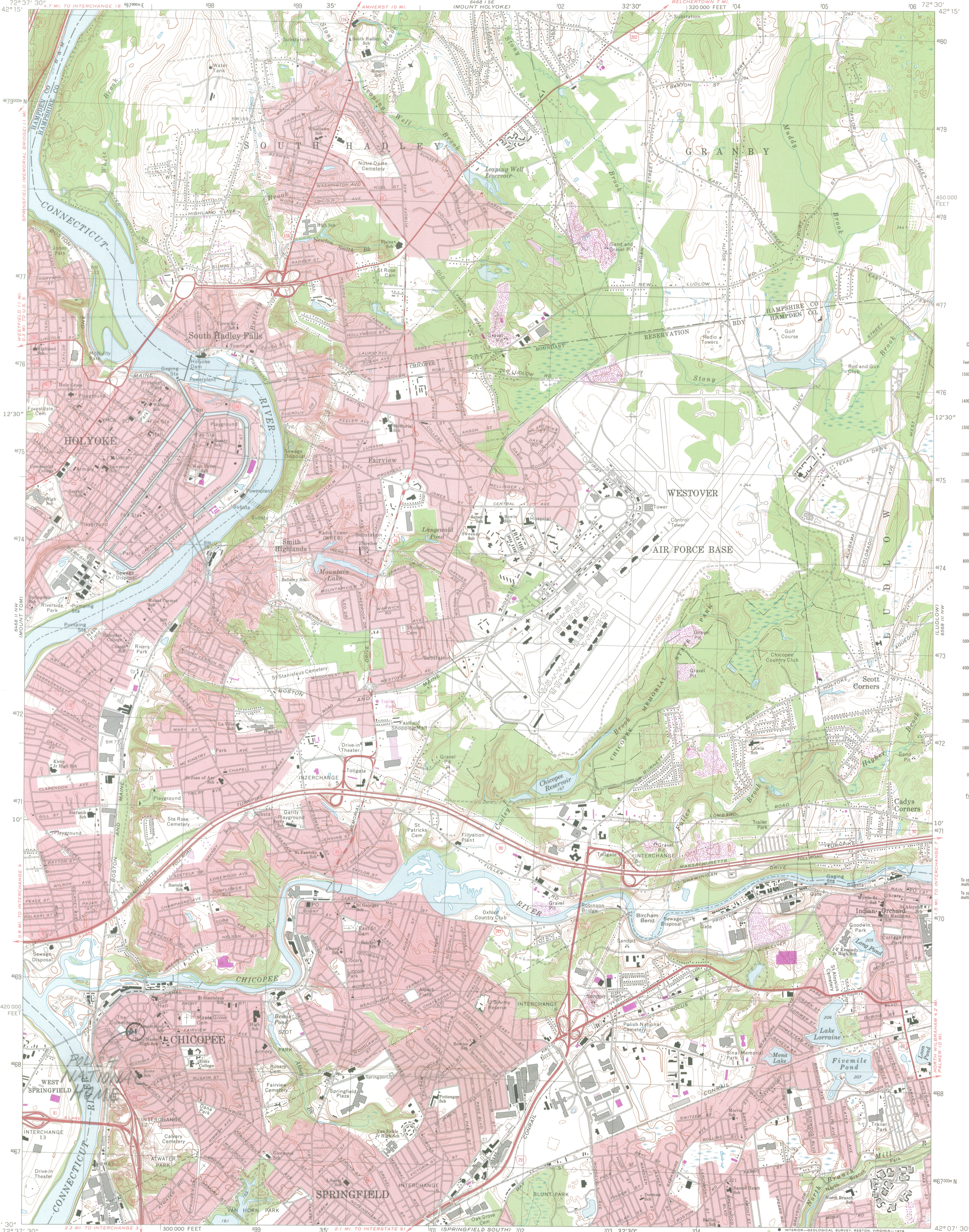
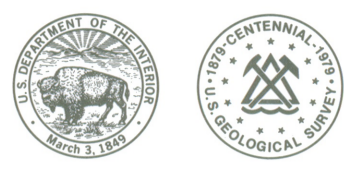
1979

Otto Dvorak  
Steffian-Bradley Associates  
66 Canal Street, Boston

Photo #2 of 2  
Side elevation and front of addition  
from Cabot Street

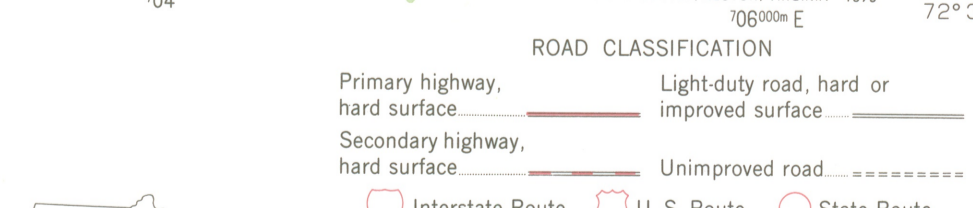
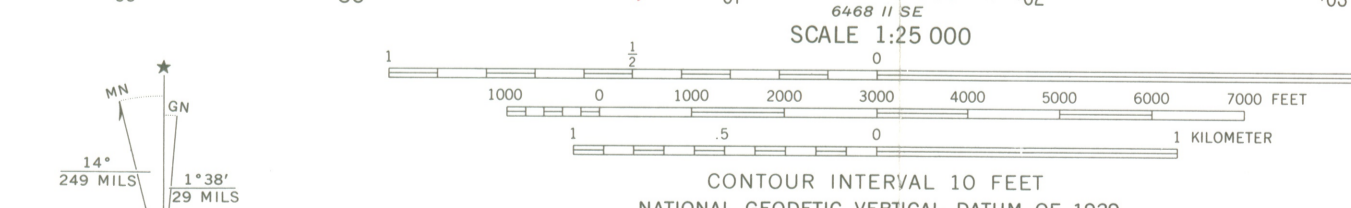
SEP 10 1980

NOV 14 1980



Floish National Home  
136-144 Cabot Street  
Chicopee, Mass.  
UTM REFERENCES:  
18/697520/4668400

Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey  
Control by USGS, USC&GS, and Massachusetts Geodetic Survey  
Topography by planetable surveys 1933. Revised from  
aerial photographs taken 1971. Field checked 1972  
Polyconic projection. 1927 North American datum  
10,000-foot grid based on Massachusetts coordinate system,  
mainland zone  
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  
Revisions shown in purple compiled in cooperation with the State of  
Massachusetts agencies from aerial photographs taken 1975 and other  
source data. This information not field checked. Map edited 1979



SPRINGFIELD NORTH, MASS.  
N4207.5-W7230/7.5  
1972  
PHOTOREVISED 1979  
AMS 6468 II NE-SERIES V814



NOV 14 1980



Polish National Home  
 136-44 Cabot Street  
 Chicopee, Mass.

Assessor's Map

NOV 14 1980

SEP 10 1980



CITY OF CHICOPEE  
 BULLEN PARK

ENTRIES IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

STATE MASSACHUSETTS

Date Entered NOV 14 1980

<u>Name</u>	<u>Location</u>
Polish National Home	Chicopee Hampden County

Also Notified

Honorable Paul Tsongas

Honorable Edward M. Kennedy  
Honorable Edward P. Boland

State Historic Preservation Officer  
Mrs. Patricia L. Weslowski  
Executive Director  
Massachusetts Historical Commission  
294 Washington Street  
Boston, Massachusetts 02108

NR Byers/bjr/11/19/80

For further information, please call the National Register at (202)343-6401.

NAME **Polish National Home**  
NAME

DATE OF REQUEST **8/20/79**  
DATE OF DOCUMENTATION REQUEST

CITY **Chicopee** STATE **MA** COUNTY **Hampden**

DATE DOCUMENTATION RECEIVED

ADDRESS  
**136-144 Cabot Street**

SHPO OPINION  YES  NO

FEDERAL AGENCY/REQUESTER  
**HUD/Edward Pollack**

DATE REQUESTED \_\_\_\_\_

DATE DETERMINED ELIGIBLE  
**9/27/79**

DATE RECEIVED \_\_\_\_\_

REMARKS

**NATIONAL REGISTER DETERMINATION OF ELIGIBILITY CONTROL**