

8. 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)

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

Aboriginal	<input type="checkbox"/>	Education	<input type="checkbox"/>	Political	<input type="checkbox"/>	Urban Planning	<input type="checkbox"/>
Prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/>	Engineering	<input type="checkbox"/>	Religion/Phi-	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other (Specify)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Historic	<input type="checkbox"/>	Industry	<input type="checkbox"/>	losophy	<input type="checkbox"/>	Medical History	
Agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/>	Invention	<input type="checkbox"/>	Science	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	
Art	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Landscape	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sculpture	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	
Commerce	<input type="checkbox"/>	Architecture	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Social/Human-	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	
Communications	<input type="checkbox"/>	Literature	<input type="checkbox"/>	itarian	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	_____	
Conservation	<input type="checkbox"/>	Military	<input type="checkbox"/>	Theater	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	
		Music	<input type="checkbox"/>	Transportation	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE (Include Personages, Dates, Events, Etc.)

The Western Lunatic Asylum of Virginia, or Western State Hospital as it is now known, was founded in 1825 by the passage of an Act of the Assembly authorizing the purchase of a site and the erection of the buildings of the institution near Staunton, Virginia. The asylum was established to relieve the pressures from the institution in Williamsburg, and to offer a more conveniently located asylum for the State's western citizens. Admission of the asylum was restricted to those "who are either dangerous to society from their violence, or who are offensive to its moral sense by their indecency, and to those cases of derangement where there is reasonable ground to hope that the afflicted may be restored."

William Small, a Baltimore architect, was commissioned by the Commonwealth to design the first and main structure. The building he produced ranks as one of the earliest and most important Greek Revival public buildings in Virginia. The structural quality and aesthetic appeal of Small's building reflects the remarkably advanced attitude toward mental treatment taken by the early directors of the institution. In the annual report of 1839 the directors stated ". . . everything like violence and coercion has been abandoned at the Western Lunatic Asylum, and the mildest and most soothing parental conduct has been substituted in its stead."

The next building to be built at the asylum was the massive Greek Revival structure to the north of the main building completed by 1839 by the builder William D. Phillips of Albemarle County. The large southern flanking building was completed by 1841. Two other Greek Revival style wards to the northeast and southeast of the main building were erected in 1842. The chapel building, with its interesting blend of Gothic and Greek architectural elements was designed by Thomas Blackburn, and was erected circa 1851. The chapel's tracker-action pipe organ was presented to the institution by William Wilson Corcoran, who while visiting there was deeply impressed by the patients' attention to religious service.

The ante bellum buildings at Western State Hospital stand not only as one of the Commonwealth's great architectural treasures, but as a testament to the tradition of enlightened care of the mentally ill in Virginia. It was realized by one of the hospital's early superintendents that the beauty of the site and surroundings of the institution, as well as the clean, comfortable and noble buildings could have an invaluable therapeutic effect on the patients. His view was supported in 1851 by an article in the New York Observer which stated that Western State was "one of the most comfortable and best ordered establishments of its kind in the country."

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

William B. O'Neal, Architecture in Virginia. New York: Walker and Company, 1968; interview 8 April 1969 with Dr. Hansen, superintendent of Western State; "A History of Western State Hospital."

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN ONE ACRE		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
NW	Degrees Minutes Seconds 38° 08' 46"	Degrees Minutes Seconds 79° 04' 18"		Degrees Minutes Seconds ° ' "	Degrees Minutes Seconds ° ' "	
NE	38° 08' 46"	79° 01' 35"				
SE	38° 07' 40"	79° 01' 35"				
SW	38° 08' 46"	79° 04' 18"				

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

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:
Staff, Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission, James W. Moody, Jr., Director

ORGANIZATION: Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission DATE: 9 April 1969

STREET AND NUMBER:
Ninth Street Office Building

CITY OR TOWN: Richmond STATE: Virginia CODE: 45

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

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 _____

Title _____

Date _____

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

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

Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

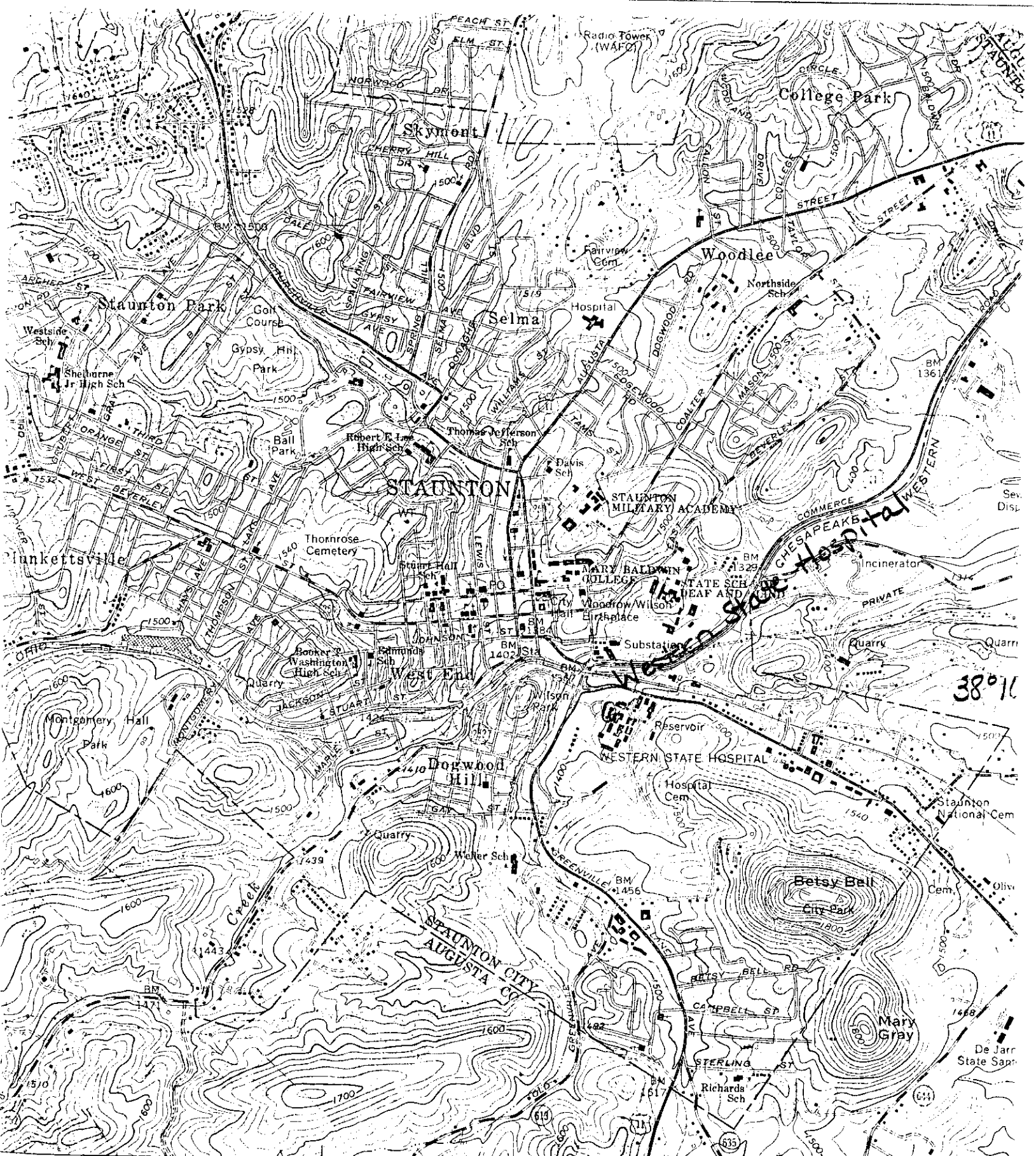
Date _____

ATTEST: _____

Keeper of The National Register

Date _____

SEE INSTRUCTIONS



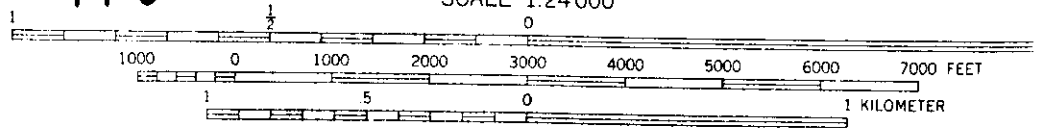
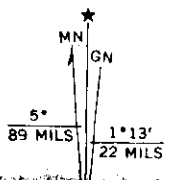
OK 8 MI.
N (VIA V.A. 39) 34 MI.

167 1 830 000 FEET 5'

GREENVILLE 10 MI. (STUARTS DRAFT) 5160 II SE
LEXINGTON 31 MI.

79°5'

SCALE 1:24000



CONTOUR INTERVAL 20 FEET
DATUM IS MEAN SEA LEVEL